

Reflections of Amani Matabaro's visit from Democratic Republic of Congo

by Manon, grade 7

We are America.

There are many states, countries and continents including America that have millions of people; with food, water, fabric to make clothes, plenty of jobs that will make good money and schools to educate us. There are other continents, countries, states, including the Congo in Africa that aren't as fortunate as we are.

We in America etc. have plenty. Most of us have nice clothes, we have a house with a sturdy roof, we have a bed to sleep in and have so much food that some of us even eat too much of it and get way too fat.

The Congo, a country in Africa, has so little that families don't have enough money to buy enough food to get fat.

Most of the children in the Congo don't go to school. They usually work each day, carrying bricks on their heads, mining, and more.

They live in houses with their families with walls that are made of mud and sticks, and a roof that's made of grass. The floors are dirt and the houses usually have only two or three rooms.

It depends on their job but most of them have the salary of 1 dollar a day to buy food, clothes and pay for school. Some villages don't even have schools for the children to be educated by. Most of the people there eat cabbage for every meal. Everything they eat practically is home grown from their backyards.

Young girls my age (younger and older) are being taken off the streets by terrorists. The girls that get taken are being raped, whipped, beaten up or worse. This happens to young girls every day. They come back pregnant and are forced to become teen mothers. They are shunned by their families and thrown out of their home onto the streets (just to mention the streets are all made of dirt).

But there are people that are standing up and helping. One of which I met. Man named Amani Matabaro runs a program called Action Kivu, who came to talk with our class about what is happening over there. He showed us pictures and helped us understand.

Since 2011, Amani has been creating programs for the people who do not have anything at all. He has created schools in villages where the children can learn for a year in school for only \$55. He has created a sewing program for women of all ages to

come and learn how to sew and then sell the things they make to get money. He has created a program where men can come and grow fish (aquaculture). He has also created a program for teen mothers so they feel like they are accepted and learn how to care for their babies.

In the Congo, many children are orphaned because their parents die in attacks from terrorists or by getting sick, or they are abandoned by their mothers. But Amani gives them a chance to learn, eat proper food, sleep with a roof over their heads and feel like someone cares.

I think what Amani is doing is so amazing! He's giving these people a chance or another chance at life. And that's something we should all be doing along with a lot of other things!