

**HOPE  
AND  
HOMES  
FOR  
CHILDREN**



THE  
**SENECA**  
TRUST

# **BOOK OF STORIES!**

**OCTOBER 2025**



THE  
**SENECA**  
TRUST

# WELCOME

We are delighted to invite you to explore the inspiring journeys of children, young people, and families touched by the project to support families of children with disabilities by Hope and Homes for Children. Each story reflects courage, resilience, and the transformative power of love, support, and community. From reintegration to prevention, these narratives show how children with disabilities can grow up in safe, nurturing environments when families, local leaders, and support organizations work together.

These stories are not just about individual journeys; they reflect a collective commitment to family-centered care, community solidarity, and the belief that every child deserves love, dignity, and the chance to flourish. Through the project to support families of children

with disabilities, families have been supported to remain united, children have been safely reintegrated into loving homes, and communities have strengthened their understanding of inclusion and positive parenting.

Peer support groups provide spaces for parents to share experiences, learn, and empower one another, while local leadership ensures consistent guidance and support at every stage.

Join us in reading, reflecting, and celebrating the extraordinary impact of the project to support families of children with disabilities, a program that continues to transform lives, build resilience, and demonstrate that with care and collaboration, every child and family can thrive.



A photograph of a family of four—two men, a woman, and a young person—smiling and embracing each other outdoors. The man on the left wears a black jacket. The person next to him wears a colorful jacket and sunglasses. The woman in the center wears a pink headscarf and a grey hoodie. The person on the right wears a black t-shirt. They are all smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a blurred natural setting with trees and foliage.

**KEEPING**

**FAMILIES OF CHILDREN  
WITH DISABILITIES**

**TOGETHER!**



# DISTRICT OFFICIALS



**AND LOCAL LEADERS AT THE CLOSURE OF  
AN INSTITUTION FOR CHILDREN WITH  
DISABILITIES !**



# BEHIND THE SUCCESS: WE CELEBRATE THE EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP OF MUSANZE DISTRICT OFFICIALS

The Excellent Leadership of Musanze District Has Strengthened Child Reintegration and supported the families to remain together.

The leadership of Musanze District has been instrumental in keeping families together while supporting the reintegration of children and young persons with disabilities. Officials at the district, sector, and cell levels worked closely with Hope and Homes for Children, providing guidance and creating an enabling environment that fostered trust between families and project staff. Their active involvement encouraged families to participate openly in the reintegration process and reinforced a sense of belonging and security within the community.

District leaders helped identify families at risk of separation and collaborated with Hope and Homes for Children to ensure children with disabilities remained safely in their homes. They ensured that children were included in local development plans and that families received the social and community support needed to stay united. By maintaining close coordination with community structures, leaders enabled timely responses to challenges, strengthened child protection, and promoted family cohesion.

Leaders actively supported the entire process of deinstitutionalization; from assessing children in institutions, preparing families, facilitating reintegration, to monitoring children once they returned home.

During family and child assessments, they helped in case management and ensure children and young persons with disabilities are ready for reintegration

In the preparation phase, they explained the reintegration process to families, addressing concerns and easing fears.

During reintegration, leaders organized community meetings, ensured families were welcomed warmly, and encouraged neighbors to embrace children with disabilities.

In the monitoring phase, they conducted home visits with social workers to confirm children were safe, cared for, and thriving in their family environments..





# MEET \*ADAM

— From Rejection  
to a Home Filled  
with Hope!





## Adam's Story

In the peaceful village in the Northern part of Rwanda, a remarkable transformation is taking place, showcasing the strength of family resilience and the power of community support. Eight-year-old Adam, born with multiple disabilities including physical, mental, and verbal impairments, as well as epilepsy, now lives safely and happily with his family.

Adam's early life was full of challenges. Born in 2015 to his single mother, Adele, he faced stigma and rejection from relatives and the community. Overwhelmed by poverty and discrimination, Adele was left homeless after her family turned away from her because of Adam's disabilities. Without a stable home, their future looked hopeless.

Hope arrived when HHC, together with local leaders, intervened to support the family. Although it was initially difficult to locate and communicate with Adele due to her unstable living situation, the HHC team remained determined. Through continuous follow-up, they reconnected her with her family, especially her father, who lived in a small, dilapidated house.

HHC provided individual and family counseling sessions to rebuild trust and promote reconciliation.

Gradually, relationships healed, and the family was ready to rebuild their lives. With the financial support, the family renovated their home cementing the floors, raising walls, adding doors, and replacing the leaking roof with new iron sheets. They also purchased essential household items, including bedding and utensils, transforming the once unsafe shelter into a dignified home.

Through the project supporting families of children with disabilities by Hope and Homes for Children, Adam received medical consultation from an orthopedist, who recommended physiotherapy. The family now ensures that Adam receives regular treatment three times a week from the hospital, giving him a chance to improve his mobility and overall health.

Working closely with local leaders from the sector level, HHC continues to monitor the family's progress. The support provided has not only improved their living conditions but also restored harmony, dignity, and hope.

Today, Adam lives in a safe, loving home. His mother proudly ensures he receives proper care and dreams of a better future for her son. From rejection and homelessness to stability and hope, Adam's story shows how compassion and partnership can truly rebuild lives.





# MEET \*MONIQUE

**A Mother  
Against All  
Odds!**







Monique, born in 1973, grew up in a large, loving family as the seventh child. In 1995, she married and had one child, but tragically, her husband passed away two years later, leaving her to raise their son alone. Despite these early hardships, Monique's compassion and determination shaped her path as a foster mother.

In 1997, Monique welcomed her first foster child. Over the years, she has become a trusted caregiver in her community, fostering more than five children referred by local leaders—many abandoned or at risk of institutionalization due to disabilities or lack of family care. Driven purely by love, she opened her home to children with complex needs, including Gad and Rebecca, and later received formal training as a foster parent from the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), which strengthened her confidence and skills in child protection, trauma-informed care, and disability support. In 2011, Monique took in Gad, a young boy with mental, physical, and speech impairments, as well as

epilepsy, who had been abandoned in her neighborhood. Gad has thrived under her care, growing into a kind, affectionate child who participates in Boccia, a sport for children with physical disabilities, and inspires his community with resilience and joy. Today, Gad attends the newly built Community Hub, where he receives physiotherapy and occupational therapy to develop his independence and daily living skills.

In 2019, Monique welcomed Rebecca, a young girl with severe disabilities abandoned by her mother. Though Rebecca faces profound challenges, Monique treats her with love, dignity, and patience, ensuring she feels safe, valued, and included every day. Monique's biological son has been a constant support, assisting with caregiving and offering emotional strength.

As caregiving demands grew, Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) partnered with local leaders to support Monique, ensuring her children remained with her and

preventing unnecessary separation. HHC helped renovate her home for safety and comfort, provided a sewing machine to give her economic independence, and ensured access to health services, therapy, and psychosocial support. This support reinforced her care, providing both practical and emotional resources.

Monique was also trained by HHC as a peer support group facilitator, helping other families of children with disabilities, sharing experiences, and offering guidance. Her dedication and lived experience make her a role model and a source of hope for others, proving that families can care for children with disabilities at home, not in institutions.

Monique's extraordinary commitment has been recognized nationally, honoring her as a model foster parent. Her story demonstrates that with love, resilience, and the right support, ordinary individuals can achieve extraordinary impact for children and families alike.



# MEET \*DON AND CLAIRE

— Parents  
of child with  
disabilities !



# Don de Dieu and Claire – Saving a Family, Building a Future!

Don de Dieu\* and Claire\* were young, hopeful parents when their daughter Sem\* was born—fragile and fighting for life. Sem had multiple disabilities, including a serious heart condition, and her care was overwhelming and costly.

Under intense stress and poverty, Don de Dieu began to see Sem's disability as a curse. He considered abandoning his family and leaving Rwanda, leaving Claire alone to care for their sick child. Everything changed when local authorities referred their case to our team.

"If it weren't for Hope and Homes for Children, I would have left my family. I was drowning in challenges with no clear solution. But now, I feel calm and ready to continue caring for my home," Don de Dieu shared.

Our team provided psychological support and guidance about disability, helping Don de Dieu understand his daughter's condition and rebuild trust with Claire. The couple reconciled, legally married, and began to heal. Through our Active Family Support model, we helped them build a safe and accessible home and start a mobile money business, giving them financial stability. Sem received urgent medical treatment and is now healthy enough to attend the community hub, where she takes ECD classes and receives physiotherapy.

Claire beams as she talks about the change: "I was alone with nowhere to go. Now I'm joyful in my own home, just like other people."

Today, this once-struggling family is thriving. They are active in local income-generation and peer support groups and are planning carefully for the future. They have decided to wait before having more children until they can fully provide for Sem. Their story shows that with understanding, resources, and love, families can stay strong even in the most challenging times.





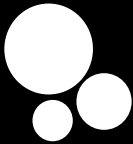


**MEET  
\*GAD**

**- How Family Love  
Transformed a  
Child's Life"**



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Gad\* was one of the final 29 young people to leave an institution for children with disabilities, and his story shows just how much an nurturing family environment can change a child's life.

Born with a serious disability, Gad had been placed in the institution after his mother and grandmother felt unable to support him, and his father denied him because of his disabilities. After ten years, he was still crawling, could not eat or use the toilet independently, and received no medical care or schooling.

When the institution closed, Hope and Homes for Children, together with the National Child Development Agency (NCDA) and National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), reached out to Simon\*, Gad's maternal uncle. Although his home initially lacked a toilet, electricity, and running water, the team helped renovate the house and supported the family to start a small soap-making business alongside their farming, ensuring a stable income for Gad's care.

Once Gad returned home, the transformation was remarkable. He began to walk independently, feed himself, use the toilet without assistance, and take part in daily family life. Surrounded by love, patience, and encouragement, Gad started attending a disability-inclusive school, where he is learning to read, write, and has even begun speaking French.

Simon\*, who was initially doubtful about reintegrating children with disabilities from institutions, has become "a true believer" after seeing Gad's progress. "Today, he walks proudly down the road, more than a mile from home. He learns something new every day, and the joy he brings has strengthened our entire family," Simon shared.

Gad's early struggles were severe — he could not control his body, would relieve himself anywhere, was aggressive, constantly hungry, and withdrawn. But through consistent therapy and the warmth of a caring family, he has made extraordinary progress. His story illustrates that institutions alone cannot replace the power of family bonds.

Today, Gad is thriving. He plays with other children, takes pride in his independence, and participates fully in school and community life. The love, attention, and stability provided by his family have unlocked his potential and given him hope for the future.

Gad's journey is living proof that family love and inclusion can transform the life of a child with disabilities. What once seemed impossible — walking, speaking, learning, and enjoying life — has become reality through the dedication and care of a supportive family, guided by the partnership and assistance of Hope and Homes for Children.



## MEET \*DIVINE

**A Divine Enjoys  
Being Home with Her  
Family !**

## **After a Long Separation, Divine Enjoys Being with Her Family Again!**

Divine, a young girl born in 2002 with physical disabilities, is the second of five children. She currently attends her second year of high school at a boarding school, with her education and medical expenses supported by a local NGO. Divine is being raised by her mother, Dusabe, who also faces physical challenges and uses a wheelchair and a medical catheter.

For nearly a decade, Divine was separated from her family. At age 11, her mother, unable to afford school fees due to her medical condition, made the difficult decision to place Divine in an institution for children with disabilities. From 2013 until 2022, Divine lived in the institution, returning home only occasionally during holidays.

Reflecting on that period, Divine said, "When I was in the institution, I used to think, 'Why is it me who is here and not anyone else in my family?' I felt alone and missed my family so much."

In July 2022, when Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) professionals began work at Centre St. Vincent Musanze, Divine learned about a reintegration program that could reunite her with her family. "I was filled with joy and excitement



hearing about how we would reunite. I looked forward to living with my mom and being with my siblings again, with the hope of continuing my education and accessing healthcare services," Divine shared.

The reintegration team visited the family, assessed their needs, and discovered that Dusabe's only challenge was affording scholastic materials. HHC confirmed that Divine's education would continue to be supported by the NGO. On 29th September 2023, the family welcomed Divine permanently back home alongside her four siblings.

To strengthen the family's economy, HHC also helped build a rental house for Dusabe, allowing her to earn income and provide for her children, including Divine, despite her own disabilities. This support has given the family greater stability and security, empowering them to thrive together.

By December 2023, just three months after her return, Dusabe observed remarkable improvements. Divine's leg strength had increased, she could perform household tasks without

relying on crutches, and she walked confidently, often showing her siblings her progress. Her siblings encouraged her, celebrating her independence and newfound abilities.

Divine now attends school regularly, excels academically, and aspires to become a journalist or lawyer to stand for children with disabilities. Her mother shared her gratitude: "When my child lived in an institution, I was constantly in distress, not because I preferred it that way, but because I had no other choice. Now, I see the positive changes in my child every day. I especially appreciate the support from professionals and my community. I no longer feel burdened by my child's situation."

Today, Divine thrives at home, enjoying time with her siblings, advancing in school, and growing stronger and more independent each day. With education, care, and economic support in place, the family has found healing, hope, and renewed joy, and Divine dreams of a future where she can advocate for others like her.





# MEET A PEER SUPPORT GROUP

**Parents of  
Children with  
Disabilities**





## **“Healing Hearts, Strengthening Families, a circle of hope to families”**

In the heart of Musanze District, Northern Province, a group of parents have turned shared pain into shared strength. The Tubahoze Peer Group, based in Muhoza Sector, is made up of 26 members, most of them parents of children with disabilities.

They meet on the first Friday of each month to share experiences, exchange advice, and uplift one another. What began as a small circle of parents seeking comfort has grown into a vibrant community of healing, love, and empowerment.

With the support of Hope and Homes for Children (HHC), members received training on positive parenting, child rights, disability inclusion, and emotional healing. These sessions have helped parents rebuild confidence, learn positive ways of caring for their children, and strengthen relationships within their families. Many say they now communicate better, understand their children's needs more deeply, and create warmer, safer homes.

One parent shared, “Before joining Tubahoze, I used to hide my child. I didn’t know how to care for them or talk about disability. But now, I love my child openly and proudly. Our home is peaceful again.”

The group has also become an example of economic empowerment and mutual support. Each member contributes 3,500 RWF per month, creating a savings fund of 1,092,000 RWF per year, with part kept in a solidarity fund called “Ingoboka” to support members in times of need.

Their pig farming project, launched with 1,600,000 RWF from HHC, has been a great success. With teamwork and dedication, they built a modern pigsty in Cyuve Sector, starting with four pigs that have now multiplied. Every member now owns a pig at home, marking a turning point in their journey toward financial independence and dignity.

Another parent said, “Before, I depended on others to survive. Now, my pig helps me earn money. I can feed my children and pay for their school. We feel secure as a family.”

With continued support from Hope and Homes for Children, Tubahoze members continue to grow—emotionally, socially, and economically. They are now proud role models of positive parenting, resilience, and unity, showing that when families are supported and connected, children thrive, and communities grow stronger together.





# MEET \*SOLOMON

**– Lost, Found,  
and Loved  
Again!**





## Solomon's Story

On an ordinary day in April 2022, a boy wandered alone into a wedding in Musanze District. He couldn't say his name or where he came from. Local authorities called him "Bagabo\*" and placed him in Musanze Institution, hoping someone would claim him. But no one came forward.

"For two years, we thought our son was dead," said Pita\*, Solomon's father. The family's only clue was the name "Lorenzo," which led nowhere. Just as plans were being made to place him in long-term foster care, a breakthrough came: a caregiver at the institution mentioned that a patient at the hospital recognized the boy and thought he might be from Nyabihu District.

Our case management team followed the lead tirelessly, traveling to remote villages until someone recognized him. They found his parents, who wept with joy and disbelief to learn their son was alive. His real name was Solomon\*; Lorenzo had only been a nickname. Love brought new challenges: the

family was extremely poor, and their house was unsafe and unfenced. Together with the local community, we rebuilt their home, added a sturdy boundary wall, installed a water tank, and supported the family to start a new business—potato farming.

On the day of reintegration, neighbors and relatives gathered to celebrate. There was food, singing, and tears of gratitude. "We used to eat once a day; now we eat three times. Our child, once seen as a burden, is now our blessing," said Solomon's father. His mother added, "A person with a disability is just like anyone else when cared for with dignity."

Since returning home, Solomon has flourished. He eats well, manages basic self-care, no longer wets the bed, and his epileptic seizures are controlled with regular medication. Most importantly, he is safe, loved, and fully restored to his family and community.



# 029

## **Children and young young persons with disabilities**

The SENECA Project has reintegrated 29 children and young persons with disabilities into their families, providing loving and inclusive home environments.

They are now thriving in their communities, with access to school, medical care, and support for families through income-generating activities.

Housing support has also been strengthened: 8 houses renovated, 4 newly built, and 3 purchased, ensuring safe and stable homes for these families.

# 117

## **Families of children with disabilities**

Equally important, the project facilitated the creation of three peer support groups with more than 117 parents of children with disabilities, With 885 children including 117 children with disabilities.

These groups provide a safe space for parents to share experiences, gain confidence, and learn positive caregiving practices.

Through counseling, trainings on child rights, and mutual support, parents are better equipped to nurture their children, advocate for their inclusion, and collaborate economically and socially to improve household stability.

# 017

## **Families of children with disabilities**

In parallel, the project actively supported 17 families to prevent separation, helping them stay united despite challenges such as poverty, disability, or social stigma.

These families received guidance, access to essential services, and continuous follow-up, which strengthened parenting practices, fostered family cohesion, and ensured children could remain safely and happily at home. One new house was built, 13 houses renovated, children received medical assistance, and families were supported with income-generating activities.





**Support for  
farming, access  
to water, income-  
generating  
activities, and house  
construction...!**



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# AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY HUB NEWLY BUILT!



**ZOO** PARTNERS IN  
CONSERVATION



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# FROM INSTITUTIONALIZATION TO INCLUSION: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY HUB!

An institution for children with disabilities in Northern Rwanda has officially closed, marking a milestone in advancing inclusive childcare and ensuring children grow up in families rather than institutions. Through years of collaborative work between local authorities, the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), and Hope and Homes for Children, 29 children and young persons with disabilities were successfully reintegrated into supportive family environments.

Families received holistic support, including counseling, home renovations for accessibility, household materials, medical care, and income-generating activities. This support empowered families

to nurture their children, strengthen family bonds, and prevent future family separation.

A new inclusive Community Hub was established in Musanze District to continue supporting children and families. The Hub currently receives 83 children, including 69 with disabilities, offering services such as physiotherapy, transitional classes, occupational therapy, and special needs education. After completing the services, children return to their families, ensuring they continue growing up in loving, supportive, and inclusive home environments.

At the closure ceremony, the Vice-Mayor of Musanze District said: "This is a moment of pride and hope. Reintegration of these children into families was achieved

through strong collaboration. Your dedication has given children a better life."

The Country Director of Hope and Homes for Children added: "Children once hidden in institutions are now surrounded by love. Families bring healing, confidence, and joy. Love and care don't just change lives—they build them."

The closure of the institution and the establishment of the Community Hub represent a transformative shift in Rwanda's approach to caring for children with disabilities, moving from institutionalization to family-based, inclusive, and community-centered support.





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