

## **RESTORING HOPE TO A FAMILY**

Claire is the second born in a family of three. She lives with her grandmother in Lungujja, one of the suburbs of Kampala City.

She is one of the pre-school pioneers with great vigour for studying at Uganda school for the Deaf. With barely two terms she spent in school, Claire has already taught her younger brother basic Sign Language with whom they communicate very well. This has also helped her to pass messages to her parents especially her grandmother who has not yet had the chance of attending sign language lessons. She is able to sign clearly that her family members are able to understand her communication. With the interaction with her classmates at school, Claire has extended the practice home. She is friendly to everyone, interacts with peers and it is hard to find her face gloomy; She is always smiling. With this, she has created friendship with community members who love her so much and feel like visiting her all the time.



**Clair (one of the children) taking a break in their preschool resting room**

While attending the preschool class, with difficulty in walking and outside play with her peers, due to her bracket legs that were also hampering her growth, Parents were referred for corrective surgery at CORSU rehabilitation hospital.

Around September 2011, the little girl had a successful operation on both legs after which she was further referred to Katalemwa Cheshire home for post operative care supervision. For three months, Claire was confined in one place with plasters on her legs. According to the doctor's report, Claire would be able to resume school after four months of close supervision from the date of operation.

On visiting Claire at Katalemwa Cheshire Home, despite the painful fresh wounds and blood oozing through the plaster, the little mermaid was so delighted to see her teacher whom she welcomed with a strong hug and chicks filled with her usual broad smile. ***"me want school"*** signed Claire soon after the hug. *"I wish I had moved with my sign language manual, I would be practicing with my child so that she does not deteriorate in her signs"*. Lamented the mother who also recited her story:

*"After three years, I realised that my daughter had stunted growth. Instead, she was growing shorter, contrary to her age, and when I went to different hospitals, they could not help and they wanted a lot of money to operate on her. By the time I took her to the preschool, Clair was eager to participate in all class activities but we were afraid she would be injured. When we talked about it at school, I learnt about CORSU hospital which has done wonders.*

On a follow up home visit, when asked whether she wanted to continue with school now that she was sick, she quickly folded her twist, moved it up and down a couple of times answering ***"YES YES YES"*** in Uganda Sign Language and nodding the head with a smiling face.

*"I so much thank SignHealth Uganda for initiating the pre-school program that has enabled me and my family to have a mode of communication with my granddaughter. Before, I felt much pain in my heart for not being able to communicate with Claire, that she even hated*

*me, but this program has strengthened the bond between the two of us".* Said Claire's grandmother with a tilted head, smiling face and tearing eyes.

Apparently, Claire has resumed her classes and the parents expect a lot from her. However, she was not able to make it to primary one due to the long time she spent out of school.