

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Friday, 24 February 2010

### **Zambian orphan who helps thousands of youngsters to stay safe from HIV visits Oxford, May 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>**

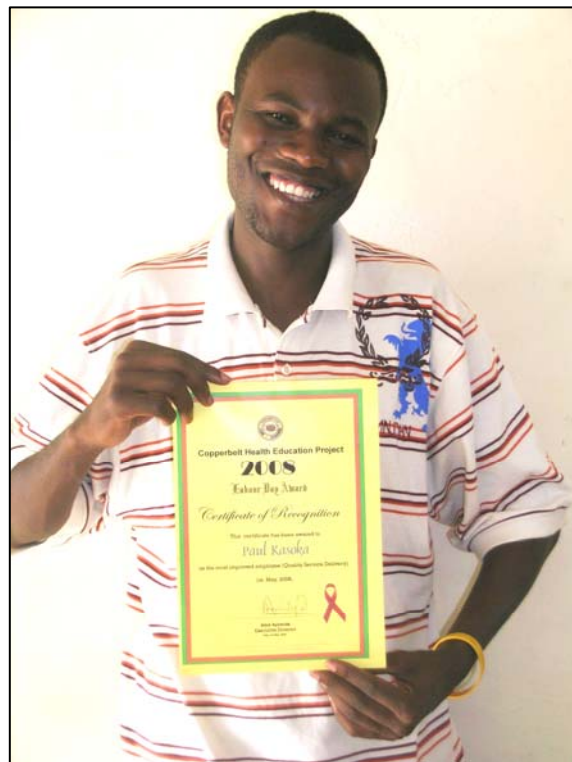
After Zambian Paul Kasoka lost his father, his mother could no longer afford to send him to school. He was rescued by Oxfordshire-based charity, Cecily's Fund, who provided him with support to complete his secondary school education.

With the help of donations from Oxfordshire residents and others, Cecily's Fund then supported him to train as a peer health educator with the Copperbelt Health Education project. Paul went on to become the coordinator of CHEP's whole peer health education programme in 2007.

The programme is helping to tackle Zambia's devastating HIV epidemic by training orphans and other school leavers who have been affected by AIDS, to run workshops for school children on how to stay safe, and keep others safe, from HIV.

The workshops use drama, song and dance, as well as more conventional teaching methods, to increase school children's knowledge about health issues, and to make them aware of their rights and how to defend them.

Paul is a charismatic and inspiring role model for Zambia's many orphans and vulnerable children and has helped to train over 150 others to overcome their perceived inferior status in Zambian society to become positive role models too.



Paul will be in the UK from May 7<sup>th</sup> – which is World AIDS Orphan Day – until May 21<sup>st</sup> and will be available for talks, workshops and media interviews.

**Notes for editors:**

Cecily's Fund was set up in 1998 in memory of Cecily Eastwood who died, aged 19 in a traffic accident while on her gap year in Zambia. Cecily's father is former British Ambassador to Switzerland, Basil Eastwood.

With funds raised by supporters in the UK, Switzerland and the USA, and working with local partner organisations, Cecily's Fund is currently supporting over 9,500 children in primary and secondary school. It also funds 35 young people to train as teachers and 50 a year as peer health educators to help teach other children about HIV and children's rights.

HIV has hit Zambia harder than almost anywhere else in the world. Already, one in five of all Zambian children are orphans and tens of thousands have been pushed into extreme poverty by the disease. HIV mainly affects adults, many of whom are parents. Many teachers have also been lost, are sick, or are frequently absent for funerals or to care for sick relatives.

Cecily's Fund won an Institute of Chartered Accountants' award for the clarity and user-friendliness of its Online Accounts in 2009.

Cecily's Fund is a UK Registered Charity number 1071660.

For more information please visit [www.cecilyfund.org](http://www.cecilyfund.org) or contact us direct.

**Contact Details**

**Name:** Sabita Banerji, Communications Officer

**Telephone:** Landline: 01993 869005 / Mobile: 07773 949787

**Email:** [sabita@cecilyfund.org](mailto:sabita@cecilyfund.org)

**Address:** Cecily's Fund, Unit C6, New Yatt Business Centre, New Yatt, Witney, OX29 6TJ