

FRIENDS of M.R.C.H. NEWSLETTER

June 2000

URGENT NEWS FROM THE HOME.

The following Message was received from Superintendent Mr Mangobe on Friday June 23rd.

The Home has used up all money available. The staff have not been paid for June. This is a desperate situation for the Home

To give some idea of how money is used, the monthly average costs during Jan to April this year breaks down as follows.

Water	29 Thousand Zim Dollars	=	£ 410 at 70 Zim per £
Electricity	26	=	£ 371
Salaries	104	=	£1,485
Food	37	=	£ 532
TOTAL	196 Thousand Zim Dollars	=	£2,800 per month

To make it more difficult, inflation is very erratic at present.

The situation is clearly desperate!

This organization has sent £3,000 this year and another £1000 will be sent this week – if you can help, please let the Paddy Coles have contributions as soon as possible.

Donations are urgently needed and more fund raising to cover the next few months

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**Paddy Coles, treasurer.**

I am pleased to let you know we have received over £4,300 so far this year. This is nearly as much as the total for 1999 and I am very grateful for this splendid effort to date.

Just when I think that there is a lull in money coming in, the postman turns up

with another significant contribution. No doubt all the publicity that Zimbabwe is receiving helps to highlight the children's needs, so I hope that amounts large and small will continue to come in

**This very moving article was written by  
Katie Robinson – an MRCH Friends  
Executive member following her recent  
visit**

Almost a year ago (July 1999) I returned to England after spending 10 months living at the Matthew Rusike Children's Home, in Harare, Zimbabwe. I often think of how thrilled, and in some ways surprised, I am that so few of my attitudes and beliefs have altered since that return, remembering how much they'd change throughout that short space of time. A life changing experience does not give it justice throughout that short space of time. The children amazed me – so full of life, drive, enthusiasm, even contented with the little they had to call their own. I often felt humbled, sometimes even selfish or guilty at the life I have led in England – so stable and secure, but the children were so content with their life that this gave me hope that they could continue to enjoy life as much as they could. I hoped to become a friend to the children, a sister figure rather than a member of staff or a mother and the children were quick to help me assume that role. Being on the same level as them, and being around the same age as many enabled them to trust me, talk to me about things they felt they could say to no one else. I was proud of myself and of them that our relationship had reached such a height that they could entrust me with secrets and know that I could keep their confidence. I gave my all those ten months, but I gained more that I or the people of the MRCH will ever know. The political situation at the moment in Zimbabwe has by no means clouded my love and commitment to MRCH if anything, making me more determined to do all that I can to continue the support that I was able to give during that time.

Newsletter prepared by Shirley Richer 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2000  
Secretary Friends of MRCH

Enclosure: May edition of the MRCH Newsletter

Throughout my time in Zimbabwe I knew the end would have to come. To begin with it seemed a world away but as I busied myself with the day to day running of the Home – washing and ironing clothes, driving the truck, running the Crèche, getting to know the children as individuals rather than as a group or tutoring the children in the evenings, the time flew. As time passed I became more and more attached to the children and of course the dedicated staff members. I asked both the children and the staff members many times, if once I had gone they would reply to my letters, which I knew I would be writing on my return. In less than one year I have received over four hundred letters (and am proud to say I have replied to everyone!) This has helped me come to terms with returning to the rushed English society, and has helped me to think that I have said "Farewell" and not "Goodbye" to all those amazing, smiling faces. As one letter said "God has a plan. If we are to meet again in that plan so be it. If not we are never far away from each other in thought"

Being nominated on to the Friends of the MRCH UK Executive Committee was a great unexpected pleasure for me. I hope to be able to contribute all that I can to this, and thus continue to support the Home and remain a part of their lives. The impact these children had on my life has, I believe, changed me forever. The stories of these children who are victims of AIDS crisis, abandonment, neglect and rejection really touched my heart. At 20 years of age I still feel privileged to have been able to take part, sharing in these children's lives and living on site was a real eye opener for me.

The Matthew Rusike is such a happy place despite all the challenges they've to deal with at present. It has altered my views and put my life into perspective. I hope to make as many people aware and as involved in the projects as possible.