

**Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home**  
The Home is based in Epworth, a suburb of Harare, Zimbabwe.

**We give support, mainly by cash but also by advice and assistance, to the Home for the benefit of the Children.**

Newsletter  
Sept 2004

**Chairman's Report.**

**Latest News from the Children's Home**

Dear Friends,

We were able to meet Barry Barnes in Doncaster August 04 and hear about his recent trip which included visiting MRCH.

here is a summary of his views. The Home continues to function and the Superintendent tells us this is largely due to our continued funding to care for its children (see also the Treasurer's report). It is expanding into the new family units funded by NCH. However the Home is also being linked to child care in other areas around Zimbabwe and to do this it is working with other bodies

In the Home, the cost of building the third housing unit has soared due to inflation but NCH has committed the money for it. The question is who will build it and Mr Mapurisa is talking to the army who may build it free of charge.

Plans have been drawn up to change the girls' dormitory unit into another family group home. Staff are committed to the smaller family units but are finding it difficult as, so far, time off has not been possible. Relief is needed for the 2 house mothers.

The new sewing block is being used well. The Australian Church has provided new poultry sheds. However the chickens project is not doing so well because of the difficulty obtaining feed. The pigs project and the garden produce are doing well.

The government places the children in the home but no money has come from the government for 2 years.

The Home now has a permanent phone line and email facility with a satellite link supplied by NCH to make contact easier.

**Developments outside the Home**

**Support for Children**

The Zimbabwe Methodist Church is more involved with childcare nationally but doesn't have the financial resources. They are already putting more money into MRCH through the church districts. MRCH is the agency for this work to develop into communities across Zimbabwe. Already it is part of the UNICEF network and moves are underway to involve World Vision and Care International. The home is becoming more broadly based.

**Epworth** –MRCH's own locality.

Care International may be able to provide food for the Epworth school children to take home. MRCH will be the new community contact to distribute food.

**Mzinyathi.**

There are 1000 aids orphans in this area. People from 6 local villages met together and became strongly committed to building a small residential unit. They will dig the foundations and make all the bricks. Craftsmen to do the actual building have still to be found. The aim is to ask Care International to perhaps provide "food for work" In their plans the community has used the general plan developed by Mr Mapurisa

at MRCH and will replicate it to their own needs.

MRCH are already supporting 50 children here with school uniforms and school fees. Children cannot attend school unless fees are paid in advance and they have a uniform and shoes.

MRCH also provides support for a grandmother who is caring for 11 grandchildren after their parents died and a disabled grandfather caring for 5 grandchildren neither of whom receives money from elsewhere.

#### **Gweru**

In Gweru an old house has been bought using MRCH reserves. NCH are committed to paying for a person to develop services both here and in Bulawyo. Care International will be approached to provide food and agricultural advice and support.

#### **Bulawayo**

It is hoped that another centre may start here. NCH is enabling these projects but they are all under the MRCH banner. Astonishment Mapurisa is in reality becoming the national director of the childcare agency for the Zimbabwe Methodist Church [this needs to be formalised by the MRCH board]. NCH is supporting him with money and advice. NCH is encouraging a link with the heads of residential care in South Africa to provide him with support locally.

**NCH** is also committed to providing training for care staff across S Africa and Zimbabwe. This also is beginning to change gradually to community and home based caring. Government officials attend all these training sessions so they know what is happening. A Swedish organisation has funded a training manual for use around the country. Everything is done officially through MRCH rather than NCH.

It is hoped that the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children will get involved with these projects.

Carol Banham

### **MRCH VISIT AUGUST 2004**

This article is extracted from a report by Susy Bunker, who is a Qantas Airlines  
Air Hostess

In Zimbabwe, there are no longer enough resources to provide the entire country with water and electricity simultaneously, so rations have been established. At least the water situation is a little more under control now than it was during my visit last February. Then, the water and electricity were disconnected at any time for any length of time, without anyone knowing when either facility would be reconnected. At least now, the staff at MRCH knows that water supply rotates on a 24hr cycle. That is, from 11am, or so, of one day to 11am, or so, of the next day, there is a likelihood that water will flow from the taps. For the next 24 hours the supply will be disconnected. The electrical blackouts can happen at any time. During the 24 hours that the water is disconnected, the Home is fortunate enough to have an underground well. However, it is a large property when everyone, including the little children, have to carry water in whatever containers are available to the various buildings throughout the property. Can you imagine what a challenge it is for the staff to feed and look after 140 children without running water and at times no electricity as well? Think about what happens in our homes with only a handful of people, when our facilities are disrupted, which is almost never, depending where you live!

MRCH is a hive of activity early in the mornings. Children getting dressed, performing their morning grooming - the matron stands in the courtyard of each dorm, one for boys and one for girls, with a toothpaste tube in hand, topping up each toothbrush as each child holds out their brush; morning chores - making beds, sweeping floors, changing sheets (once per week), and general tidying of the Home. In the dining hall there is a well choreographed procession for eating breakfast. The queue starts with the little ones first; each holding a normal sized plastic plate with a large amount of porridge, two large pieces of bread and once per week, a boiled egg. And so the procession continues until finally the staff gets to sit down to their hot breakfast, which is the same as the children.

I was invited to morning tea at one of the semi-detached houses where 10 children and a 'mother' are now living. The

other attached half of the semi also houses the same number of children. It is a tremendous job for the 'mothers' who have both been staff members within MRCH for many years. It is their job to cook, clean and look after all her 10 'children'. The children however, are big helpers when it comes to performing their chores, including learning how to cook. As I found out, the children who are still living in the dorms are very keen to move to the houses and learn how to cook and live as a family unit. There is another pair of houses that is almost finished, however due to the contractor doubling his price to complete the job, the project is on hold until another contractor is found to finish the house. The project is funded by the "National Children's Home" in the UK.

Visiting the 30 children in the crèche within MRCH was also a lovely experience. Mr. Mapurisa has ensured the crèche facility is used to its capacity by accepting children from the community at a small fee. Therefore the crèche has become another small income producing facility within the Home.

Leaving MRCH is never an easy thing. I could not imagine living without the joy of seeing these beautiful children, and feeling forever grateful that my job as an air hostess, allows me easy access. I feel like they give more to me than I give to them!

### **Treasurer's Report.**

I am very grateful once again for the wonderful and consistent giving which has realise just over £33,000 to date this year. I have sent £31,000 to M.R.C.H. so far and expect to send another £5,000 in the next few weeks. Astonishment's reaction to the last remittance which I sent 10 days ago, was that it would go a long way to alleviating their present plight. So you can judge for yourself that they have a continuous financial problem. He wishes to pass on his sincere thanks for our support and indicates that they rely very heavily on us for funds. I would like to add my thanks to his and hope and trust that you will keep up the good work.

Paddy Coles

The FoMRCH Treasurer is:  
Mr P Coles  
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### **Notes from the latest Executive meeting held on the 17th of July 04**

The meeting opened with prayer and then Carol our Hon Chair distributed copies of several messages from the Home and from a person visiting Zimbabwe and from a group of Ministers who had also visited. These all confirmed the many problems of daily living.

We agreed we should update our leaflet and aim to expand our appeals.

The Treasurer confirmed the continued generosity of our donors.

### **Notices.**

1. Please help us to keep our address list up to date by sending all changes or corrections to the Secretary.
2. The AGM will be held on Saturday the 5th of February 2005 in Birmingham.
3. Your ideas on Fund Raising are always welcome to the Secretary.

This is a Newsletter distributed by the  
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