

FRIENDS of M.R.C.H. NEWSLETTER

Sept 2000

Space left here to insert two photos of the Home

Good News from our Treasurer

I am delighted to report that the response we have received this year has been wonderful and so far the total of donations is £7,200. With one or two sizeable contributions to come before the end of the year and the usual Christmas Appeal, I am hopeful that we will reach £10,000 this year.

Unfortunately our application for charitable status was turned down as we are solely a fund raising organisation. However if anyone wishes to donate via the Charity Aid Foundation and they telephone me, I can arrange to clear the cheques. Life remains very tough in Zimbabwe with high inflation, food shortages, fuel supplies limited and a possible strike, our contribution is still very much needed.

Comments from the Home Superintendent

Our chairman rang Mr Mangobe in September and the following is a summary of his comments.

Inflation continues to be a problem and the Zim Dollar is now trading at 75 to the £, which raises the price of all imports such as oil. There are now 118 children in the home and the school term has started but fees have not been paid for any except the one sponsored by one of our members. For 12 children the fees are 9000 each for one term (£120), while for the others the fees are lower.

Some months ago a team of doctors from the children's unit in the hospital and another team from Australia sent by the Qantas cabin crew, examined all the children. About half were found to need and have received glasses. Some were sent to hospital for treatment but came away untreated, as the hospital had no medicine. A private doctor is willing to treat them but the cost of 2,000 (£270) cannot be found. Some children were found to have aids; another setback but not unexpected.

The Staff have not been paid for September, but are quiet about it, knowing the money is not there. Several of them are participating in training arranged at the school of Social Work, but are finding it difficult. The Clerk and the Bookkeeper have completed Diplomas in their areas, as has the Projects Officer. The Staff Salary bill is 150,000 a month (£2000) for the 24 Staff. Voluntary workers have been helpful but one was mugged near the home some months ago.

A much higher water bill of 152,000 has also not been paid and the electricity is 94,000 monthly. Although the Home is keen to have solar heating, difficulties in servicing arrangements may make such an investment questionable, even if the money could be found.

The Department of Social Welfare is expected to pay 15,000 (£200) a month (less than £2 per child,) but have not done so. – Mr Mangobe is hoping for a miracle !! but is also hoping that the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe may give a further grant. Finally but by no means least, Mr Mangobe is expecting to retire in February on reaching the church retirement age of 70. He has borne the worry and distress of problems which are well beyond his own influence and most of FofMRCH members have been recruited as a result of the warm welcome he has given to so many visitors.

Fundraising. The position in the Country remains difficult. Some of the Veterans occupying farms are being sent away, but then cause trouble elsewhere. The economic situation is still deteriorating and fundraising is in the doldrums. The main help has come from Qantas cabin crew and ourselves. Qantas airline is pulling out of Zimbabwe, but we hope the cabin crew support and that of the Uniting Church in Australia will continue. Our own support remains of great importance in ensuring that the home stays open and effective.

During the coming quarter we hope you can emphasize to people both the general financial plight of the home and the need for sponsors for School Fees and Medication

You will find attached, the Christmas Appeal letter issued by the Home: We recommend that you send donations through our treasurer Paddy Coles because he has established routes and this minimizes the bank charges

50th Anniversary Celebrations.

People who sent banners will be glad to hear they arrived safely and are now hanging in the dining room at MRCH.

The Harare Herald published a 50th Anniversary Supplement on the 28th July and the following are a few extracts showing the past and present activities at MRCH: -

“Today Matthew Rusike Children’s Home celebrates its golden jubilee of caring for the orphaned and abandoned children, The late Matthew Rusike, the founder of the home looked after the first orphan in his family home at Makwiro, in Mashonaland West. After being touched by the plight of the child. He used the popular Bible verse “ It is the will of my father that little ones should not perish”, to put forward his ideas of looking after needy children in society. By 1957 he could no longer sustain his now bigger family composed mainly of orphans and had to move to Kweenda Mission where he built 2 houses, one for the boys and one for the girls with the support of the Methodist Synod in that area. In 1958 the family became even bigger and he was given a place to build the now Matthew Rusike Children’s Home in Epworth, Harare”

In celebrating the anniversary, the Board Chairman, Rev John Jabangwe reported that there “are 120 children at the home which can only accommodate 100. With the Aids pandemic and the hard economic conditions, we are seeing more children at the home than we can accommodate. For the first time in the history of the home, they are looking after a family of six children, with the oldest being 13 and the youngest 3.”

“Having noted the achievements made by the home. It is also important to note some of its constraints. The harsh economic conditions have seriously affected the donor community and this has forced the home to survive on a shoestring. Some of its traditional donors have found it difficult to maintain their support and stopped their sponsorship. Thieves recently stole clothing worth 60,000, including other valuables. There are also a few cases of unhealthy children and the home has been finding it difficult to look after them, especially in terms of medication that has become out of reach for many people.”

“The Home will launch a fundraising campaign to raise 3 million Z dollars for projects at the home. The home intends to build at least one family home in each district and move from the hostels to family-based care. It also hoped to establish a drop-in centre in each district and open an endowment fund so that interest accrued can be used to run the home,”

NCH Action for Children

NCH confirms that their training programme has begun: The first step towards a development plan will be the appointment of a local Development Officer who would work with all involved. There is much sympathy about the delay in this planning as result of the recent disruption and economic uncertainties. However the allocated funds are being kept available. Barry Barnes now hopes to visit in October 2000 and we all hope the move forward can be achieved.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on 20th January at Methodist International House, 52 Oakwood Road, Selly Park, Birmingham.29 Lunch will be at 1pm and the meeting will start at 2pm. Please note this is a new Venue for us. Please contact me if you need directions.

Everyone is welcome to join us and we would ask you to bring food to share. Tea and Coffee will be provided. For catering purposes it would help if you could let me know if you intend to be there. Nominations for any of the Officers and the two Committee posts need to be sent to me in writing 3 weeks prior to the day.

Finally if anyone would prefer to receive our Newsletter by Email please let me know. This would enable NCH to cut down on postage. My Email address is given below.

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