

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

October 2002

Latest News from the Children's Home

Dear Friends,

We are very pleased to give you an up-date on life at the Home based on feedback from Barry Barnes of NCH who visited there in September. I wish therefore to make just the three following points. Firstly the needs of the children and the staff who care for them continue to be very high and without the contributions we make, the Home would probably be unable to continue.

Secondly, We are very appreciative of your generosity which has enabled us to send more this year to the Home, to meet the immediate running costs. We are also pleased that we will be able to contribute towards the plans to improve the conditions for the children, by setting up smaller, family like, units at the Home.

Thirdly, We take great care in these turbulent times, to ensure that your donations reach the Home safely by paying directly into the Home's bank account. Because of inflation and currency regulations, the exchange rate is variable according to the channels used and our Treasurer makes every effort to secure the best rate within proper channels, obtaining typically 450 Zim Dollars to the £1.

John Bromley Chairman

**A Visit to Matthew Rusike
Children's Home, September 02
By Barry Barnes**

NCH is keenly involved with the care of children in needy countries and has given support to groups in Zimbabwe for many years. Barry Barnes is the NCH Director of Child Services and is currently helping the Matthew Rusike Home staff to develop its activities and to plan the best way for future child care. One particular idea is to find ways to move children into smaller family-like units wherever possible.

The FoMRCH focus on the children's immediate needs of food, clothing, schooling, etc, and this is complementary to the longer term promotion of improved child care being pursued by NCH.

Barry visited MRCH in September and then updated our Chairman on his findings. The following is based on his comments. Barry felt that his visit was both wonderful and very sad. Wonderful for the spirit shown by the staff and children, very sad because of the current situation in the country. He said that in spite of the difficult national position, MRCH is doing very well—the children are being fed, cared for and given schooling. There is a feeling of purpose and progress in the Home. They are hugely dependent on external funding to maintain the service given to the children.

The training projects such as the garden, the piggery and the poultry are doing well and generating surplus products which are being sold to raise extra funds. Their Australian friends (a group started by Qantas airline staff) are supporting the poultry section. The pump that has been hired to replace the broken irrigation pump is working well and the development of a second bore hole is being considered. The milling machine is also grinding corn for local community in its spare time. At present the Home is allowed to buy two tons of maize from a government store each month. This is ground to make flour and then boiled to make a stiff 'porridge' called sadza which can be eaten as made or flavoured by mixing with vegetables or meat.

The Zimbabwe Methodist community is also now able to give more time to consider the needs of children.

Some early steps are being taken to provide small family units at the Home and there has been discussions on creating similar homes in other parts of the country drawing on the knowledge built up at MRCH.

The new Superintendent Astonishment Mapurisa and his new deputy, Joyce Chavarika are both coping well with their new duties and this is shown by the positive spirit in the Home.

Child Care activities in Zimbabwe

The NCH supports a Child Care Co-ordinator based at the Matthew Rusike Home and the following are extracts from a quarterly report.

An Outreach week was held at the Home from 2nd to the 9th of June, during which representatives of the Methodist Districts in Zimbabwe were invited to visit the Home and see the care being provided. The aim was to increase awareness of the needs of all children in Zimbabwe, not just those in the Home. District Co-ordinators have been appointed with the aim of continuing to build up this concern.

The co-ordinator has visited other childcare activities and particularly two which provide 'family' sized groups for the children to live in. One of these was funded by a German group. The aim is to see 'families' in action and learn about the problems so that Matthew Rusike can implement a similar policy. For example, whereas staff currently have a set work pattern, in a family home the mother figure is always on duty and this needs a very different sense of responsibility. While the children see staff around them and relate to a group, in a family each child will have a very personal relationship with one person.

Plans to build units at MRCH are well advanced so that the Home needs to understand the issues and prepare its ideas on family living.

As Friends, we will seek to keep you up to date on these developments.

Our Chairman

We elect our volunteer, unpaid leaders at each AGM. Our Chairman John Bromley, said at the last AGM that he wished to step down from the office of Chair Person, though he would be happy to continue as an Executive member. He feels that the FoMRCH is now 6 years old and it is time to seek fresh ideas and renew our vision for the Home. It is therefore appropriate for him to prepare to step down and hand over leadership. The key responsibility is to maintain the link with the Home and then to lead the Executive to make the best use of our funds. John has close links with NCH and would be happy to continue to maintain this link.

The Executive much appreciate John's very great commitment, knowledge and leadership and this major change would give us a new challenge. He has offered to continue for the next year while a new Chair Person designate can be chosen and can prepare to take over.

Now we need a volunteer to take on this responsibility. While knowledge of the Home is important, it is not essential to have visited the Home, because the key staff have only recently been appointed and so new relationships are still being created. What we need is a candidate who can relate to the needs of the Home and is committed to helping them to maintain and grow the service given to the children.

If you would like to know more about the duties and the opportunity offered, please contact the Chairman or the Secretary as soon as possible. We aim to have a proposal to put to the AGM when it next meets in February 03, so we would welcome your ideas.

We recognise also the major contribution made by Mary Bromley, both by her professional child care skills and by her concern for and understanding of the Zimbabwean people.

Treasurer's Report for the October 02 Newsletter

I am delighted to be able to update you regarding our income and so far this year we have received over £37,000. This is a wonderful achievement and is the result of so many of you showing a real concern for the welfare of the children by organising a variety of events to raise funds. In addition we have received a number of substantial gifts which have greatly lifted our income. I continue to remit money on a regular

basis and in conversation with Mr Mapurisa I am assured that not only do our funds reach their Bank Account, but also that we are a major contributor to their budget, and without which they would not survive. Whilst I have a good balance on hand at present, we need to bear in mind that they will be relying on us as a major source of funds for the foreseeable future. So please keep up the good work. Apart from bank charges, printing and postage, we have virtually no expenses and all your donations are held for the benefit of the Home.

The FoMRCH Treasurer is:
Mr P Coles,

Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

Notices.

1. The leaflets explaining the needs of the Home and the aims of FoMRCH has been well received and we still have a few in stock, so if you could use them, we will be pleased to send you some.
2. We have also 8 A4 size posters each showing a photo of the Home, with space for your own additions if appropriate. These can be distributed by post but it is easier to send them by email so that you can adapt and print off whatever suits your needs. Please contact the Secretary.
3. A video has been created showing activities in the Home together with a script, so that you can play the video and read the script. If you think you can make use of this, please contact Carol Banham.
4. We hope all recipients of our Christmas Cards will feel not only the warmth of the sender but will also enjoy seeing the glow of the children in the Home.
The doll shown in the crib is the only one in the Home and is now sadly worn so we have sent them two more, one being donated by Westgate Nursery, Highworth.
Thank you to the families who have planned and distributed the cards and made a profit for FoMRCH funds.
5. All members of the Friends are invited to the **Annual General Meeting** which will be held on Saturday the **8th of February 03** at 2.00pm at the Birmingham International Student Homes (formerly MIH).
If you wish to come for lunch at 1.00, please contact the Secretary.
Please note the new date.
6. We hope to arrange for the MRCH Superintendent Astonishment Mapurisa, to make a speaking tour of the UK in April 03. This will be a great opportunity to build up our understanding of the life of the children and the work of the Home.
7. Lloyd Kupeta, one of the staff at the Home is due to start an external degree course in Management in his spare time. This should prove valuable to him and to the Home in due course.
8. May we remind you that subscriptions of £5 minimum, are due by the AGM. Please send them to the Treasurer.

Spreading the news.

We are grateful to Barry Barnes for his comments after his recent visit to MRCH. If any readers have any other news of MRCH which can be shared with members, please send it to the Secretary.

This is a Newsletter distributed by the
Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home
Chair Mr John Bromley
Secretary Mrs Shirley Richer