



Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

March Newsletter 2022

We give mainly financial support directly to the Home

News from the Home

We started 2022 gripped with anxiety about the omicron variant that was spreading like a veld fire. As a result the Government extended the lockdown restrictions and schools remained closed until the first week of February. One staff member reported positive just on opening and went into self quarantine until recovery. All our children and the remaining staff members were spared this time around and we thank the Almighty God for His love, care and protection. However, a dark cloud covered the Home as we learnt of the passing on of Zvirinani's newly born child in January. She is now on compassionate leave with her family.

We are so grateful to God for all our children are in good health, more so for those with underlying conditions. The girl living with diabetes is doing extremely well, keeping sugar levels in safe ranges although she occasionally has some biscuits and sweet drinks. She is receiving extra counselling from a visiting volunteer and progressing well. The girl living with epilepsy has not had a seizure for the past five months and this is very encouraging. The rest are taking their medication under the watchful eye of Litta the Health Sister.

There has been so much school closure that our children all need remedial help to cope with the new curriculum so my wife Mercy is assisting with grades 1,2,3 and 4. We are working to get extra teachers on a voluntary or hiring basis to make up for the schooling the children have lost.

Four children sat O level exams which spilled over into January 2022 and are waiting for results. 2 children are in upper six class and will write A level exams at the end of this year. Two boys are doing very well at University, one is studying Forensic Accounting at University of Zimbabwe and the other is studying for a degree in Social Work at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University. 7 children sat grade seven exams last year. Results were mostly disappointing except for a girl who managed 16 units (top marks) All 7 children are going into form 1 at Matthew Rusike College.

Our children are involved in a rabbit rearing project. The herd is steadily growing, they now

have 34 rabbits. They feed the animals, take care of the sick and mend the cages under minimum supervision from staff. These projects help our children to develop self-help skills and prepare them for life after the institution.



On 27 January the Home was graced by author, Priscilla Musoki who writes Gogo's diaries. Priscilla is a Zimbabwean writer and previous headteacher who published her books in Sweden in 2021. Her series is based on African folktales full of moral lessons. She presented 30 books to the Home and we are very grateful for this valuable gesture. She can be found on Utube telling stories to her grandchildren.

Programming is going well in Donga. Lloyd visits children under our care in the community. He has reunited one child with her mother and she is now in school. The piggery project has started with a bang as one of the sows gave birth to 8 healthy piglets. 3 portions of land under the Government *Pfumvudza* program were doing well until the maize was affected by



drought. Donga is still without electricity or solar panels which severely affect urgent communications and report writing. They still urgently need a toilet block for the children.

On 5 February we held a MRCH coordinators workshop which was well attended by 33 circuit coordinators. They are the foot soldiers and representatives of the Home in the local circuits and play a crucial role of mobilizing material resources for the Home from the local Methodist communities.



In spite of all the challenges our committed staff remain resolute in offering support, love and care to children at Matthew Rusike as we wait upon the Lord Isaiah 40 vs 31.

Recovery from my operation in early December has been delayed by some complications but I am improving and I hope to be back at work by mid March.

We are very grateful for the unwavering support we are getting from Friends of Matthew Rusike. God bless you good people. Without your support life would be extremely difficult at Matthew Rusike Children's Home. Every contribution you make changes our situation in a big way.

Rev Linny Mutendzwa

December We are currently having a fourth wave of the Covid pandemic, and so far Litta tells me that none of the children at the Home have been affected. Two staff members have tested positive. (I have had to self isolate after my husband and kids tested positive). But the good thing is no-one has experienced severe symptoms. I would like to assume that it's the vaccines that have really helped. Even nationally although cases are high, the number of deaths

remain very low. Normally the children go to foster families for Christmas holidays but we have had to close the institution from outsiders again to protect the children which is really sad during this period as many people like to host parties for the children but the safety of the children comes first. Luckily they are people that are still interested in doing something for the children even if they are not part of it themselves, so there are some activities going on. We had a virtual dinner last Friday, Turn out was quite low this time but nonetheless we managed to raise about £918 and a few pledges towards school uniforms for the children.

Zvirinane Matore

The work on the play area in the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD) is finally completed.



Thanks to the generous donation from a donor in the UK of £5000 specifically for this project the area is newly landscaped and safely fenced with places to gather, climb, swing and have fun.



On fun days bouncy castles were hired for the day now they have one of their own.



In a previous newsletter we had photos of the redecoration of the ECD itself with murals on several walls.



The ECD staff provide a hot meal of sadza, maybe flavoured with peanut butter, with some home grown greens or sometimes it could be rice and chicken.

This generous donation has brought more colour and fun into the lives of the children.



New Treasurer

We have had an answer to prayer. We warmly welcome our new treasurer, Niki Phillips who decided to offer her valuable expertise after she was approached by a member of FoMRCH. They have saved our small but much needed charity.

Niki is a qualified chartered accountant who has worked with several high end companies. In the last 20 years, Niki and her husband have spent a lot of time long distance sailing, including three transatlantic crossings, but are now focussing on renovating their new home in Devon. We look forward to her working with us and thank her for volunteering her time for the sake of the children at MRCH. Please take note of her contact details.

Immanuel has been treasurer since 01/01/2017 and we say a huge thank you to him for extending his tenure 3 times to keep our charity going and we're very glad to say he is staying with us as a trustee and member of our executive committee.

Christmas appeal

Another big thank you to those people who responded to our appeal for donations for university fees for one student and towards Christmas for the children unable to travel to foster homes for the holidays due to the pandemic. £916 was raised for fees and £200 for Christmas. These have all been forwarded to MRCH.

Donations received between December 2021 and February 2022

Cheques/deposits **£3272**
Standing orders/direct deposits **£6139**
Stewardship **£75**
Amazon Smile **£40**
Paypal **£85**
Christmas e cards **£216.50**

Our current bank balance will cover 7 monthly remittances to MRCH @ £2,250 per month.

Bi monthly remittances of £4,500 are up to date til 30th April.

Only 3-4 years ago we were sending £5000 each month and we really need to try to increase the monthly remittance again. We have all been unable to have fundraising events for 2 years so we're hoping you will be inspired to begin them again. I received £130 today from a staunch supporter who has been selling jam and cards during the pandemic. If everyone had a coffee morning or hosted an afternoon tea it would be a great help but I know some of you are into running half marathons, and the 2 intrepid adventurers on our committee, David and Wayne, will be off on their sponsored travels for MRCH again in May driving a 1927 Ford from John O'Groats to Lands End. Please plan to have a fund raising event and let us know what you have done so we can inspire others.

We received this list from Tapiwa, the MRCH finance officer. More details will be in our June newsletter.

To feed and clothe a child for 1 month **£34.53**
Monthly medication for a diabetic child **£30.69** and an epileptic child **£15.34**.

The government provides free HIV medication.

Primary school uniform **£57.54**
Secondary uniform **£92.07**

Skills training for a young person for one month **£153.44**. MRCH can only afford to pay for one person at a time. Currently there are 5 young people so 4 must wait their turn for the training.

I'm sure you will appreciate that the cost of caring for the children at MRCH continues to rise due to inflation, challenges brought by covid and the unique socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe. So we invite our donors to review their standing orders and increase the amount, where possible. Maybe tell your friends and family about charitable giving when they shop online. We are registered with Pay Pal and Amazon Smile (maybe more in future) so they can choose FoMRCH without any extra cost to themselves and it provides a small but steady cash flow into our general fund.

Once again we thank you for staying with us in the last 2 years. Please remember it is even more difficult coping with drought and a failing economy as well and we need you to help them thrive through these hard times.

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