



Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

June 2022

We give mainly financial support directly to the Home

News from the Home

Greetings from Zimbabwe. I am back at work and feeling strong after surgery, thank you for your prayers

(In May we once again had an online meeting with our Zimbabwe colleagues and it is so useful to be able to ask for details personally instead of always relying on emails Ed)

Poor rainfall has seriously affected our maize crop and 2 hectares at Waddilove farm and some at Donga. Unfortunately we are not going to get anything from all the effort. Zimbabwe is most likely facing a devastating food crisis due to crop failure.

The economy is turbulent, our general dependence on grain imported from Russia is affected by the war in Ukraine and we are feeling the impact of fuel prices going up. The direct impact of covid has been minimal to the home in the sense of illnesses, children have been going to school and are now back for the second term. Litta, (the nurse) has been monitoring and ensuring that WHO safety guidance is followed but obviously the general impact on the national economy impacts on the home.

3 students are doing well with their A level studies, 2 sponsored locally the other by a UK donor. 2 girls got excellent O level results, one is receiving local sponsorship **the other still needs a sponsor** and our 2 university students continue to make us proud though **we have some difficulty paying their fees**

One of the MRCH children has been made **head prefect** at Epworth Primary School and this has been a huge morale booster for MRCH children and staff alike.

Social Worker, Rumbidzai, has updated all the children's records in line with new Government care standards and there are some children going through age estimate assessments so they can obtain their birth certificates.

With the support of the Chaplain, and a volunteer counsellor 29 children were identified as having a variety of behavioural difficulties and with follow up counselling there are signs of

improvement. Counselling has helped the 15 year old diabetic child realise the importance of the diet regime.

There were two 18 year olds still living at MRCH because they were still in school. One has since been reunited with her sister and as there are no known relatives of the other, the Methodist Church is trying to find employment and accommodation for the other one.

The home tries to keep in contact with the leavers and give them some support for at least 3 months (ideally it should be 2-3 years but funds are very limited) These young people try to survive by starting their own buying and selling projects or farming.

Staff salaries are up to date, though we struggle to achieve the 15% salary increase across the board set by the Government.

We are working hard planning Matthew Rusike week when supporters visit the Home and bring donations of money they have raised and food or clothing for the children. In the past there could be 1000 visitors attend during the week for celebrations, entertainment and workshops but this year will be the first time since 2019 so we have great hope for a good turn out again.

In July the annual half marathon returns with the hope of passing the original record of 500 participants. The runners leave from Connexional Office in Harare and run the !5k to MRCH in Epworth where they receive refreshments when they arrive.

At these events we aim to raise money towards the £24,000 needed to install solar panels at the Residential home in Epworth and the Outreach Centre at Donga. The panels will not provide enough electricity for cooking for the 100 residential children but we shall have light so they can do their homework in the evenings. We must limit the use of electricity to only a few hours each day as generator fuel is now too expensive to use often.

(We hope for photographs and successful reports of these events for the September newsletter)

We are looking into selling one of our vehicles to buy a smaller vehicle more suitable for the rough rural terrain at the Outreach Centre at Donga.

Currently there is only 1 teacher in the Early Childhood Development Centre. Generally the staff continue to be committed to the loving care of the children with the support of 7 students supporting the teacher, the social worker and the finance officer. Rev L Mutendzwa

Caring for a Child in Zimbabwe

[In our last newsletter I gave these details of the cost of caring for a child](#)

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 promised further details about various other costs incurred at the Home.](#)

12 children are enrolled in the ECD centre. We do not pay fees but we pay for stationery (plus other early years equipment) and uniforms at £56 per child

32 children attend local primary schools and 36 in secondary schools. Most of them receive sponsorships for their fees from Methodist Church circuits in Zimbabwe or other donors but uniforms, stationery and various requirements for the curriculum changes such as flat files for each subject are not included. We seriously struggle to fund requests from the schools for tablets and laptops, now the new normal since the Covid era, thereby disadvantaging our children in their learning process.

Indirect cost to childcare includes ZESA (electricity supply) security, water and sanitation as well as salaries and wages for house parents is around **£800 per month**.

The minibus (paid for by UK fundraising) is performing very well but is at times being overwhelmed by trips as it has become the **ONLY** reliable vehicle available at the moment.

Maintenance cost from reputable service providers like Croco motors as well as Toyota are well beyond our reach and so we end up

taking the vehicle to layman mechanics for general service. Tapiwa Magonya

MRCH Week

Today, June 6th, is the beginning of MRCH week of workshops, fundraising and worship. For 2 years visitors have not been allowed at MRCH due to covid19 so there are high hopes for the return of their annual big effort to raise awareness of the needs of the children at the Home. In the past up to 1000 people have visited over the week bringing with them goods of all kinds, including food and clothing as well as cash. BBQ refreshments are available to buy and the children love the excitement of so many visitors. Prayer and worship is also part of the week. I hope to have a report of successes and photos for the September newsletter.

So how can you help?

Could your church or circuit adopt us for a year as your charity?

Could you have a fundraising event – a coffee morning or afternoon tea, maybe a fun run - every little helps.



These friends raised £62 selling their plant holders Thank you Rosemary and Norman.

Sponsored drive

In May, David and Wayne drove a 91 year Ford from London to John O' Groats to Lands End then back to London (almost 2000 miles) aiming to raise £1000. Here are some pictures of their adventure through beautiful countryside, picturesque villages and towns, good cuisine in cafes and restaurants, meeting up with like minded owners of more beautiful old cars and unfortunately having to use the break down services a couple of times. David says:

Set off at 4:30am to get through the Blackwall tunnel before the queues built up, I really didn't want to break down in there!



Escaped London and drove north through pouring rain,

skirting Lincoln and heading for the Humber Bridge. My uncle was an engineer from Hull who was passionate about the Humber Bridge and I remember his excitement as he took us to see the bridge being built. Then I paid my £1.50 to travel across and up into the wonderful market town of Beverly. About 230 miles and the car behaved impeccably. Only once refusing to start, but opening and closing the bonnet seemed to do the trick.

Approaching Sutton Bank, so steep that caravans are banned, I wondered if the car would make it up the hill. Then I realised we were at the top of the hill so the problem would be getting down not up. The car had other ideas and stopped altogether 200metres from the start of the descent. Nothing for it but to ring breakdown services.



A fellow driver from the Model A Ford club was able to help.

I stopped off to join a Park run where I came 88th and only 3 seconds off my personal best.

On the A9 there was a horrible noise from the front of the car. Sorted

again by the Model A folk and after filling up a little later the car wouldn't start. I had to get a lift to Wick to meet Wayne. So I make it to northern Scotland in a model A but without my own car! We take a taxi to John O'Groats where we meet

up with the 2 Model A's that will travel south with us. We see the famous sights then a lift back to Inverness to pick up our car. This may not be John O'Groats to Land's End now but it certainly has the makings of Inverness to Land's End. Here's to the 7th day travelling together.!



Through Glencoe and the beautiful Scottish Highlands, quiet roads between Glasgow and Edinburgh and only a few minor problems with the car and some road closures. We meet other Ford enthusiasts and lunch together and so on through more beautiful scenery through England down the old Great North Road running parallel to the A1 About 14 cars set off together from York. A brief, not so pleasant time on the M1 then heading for Warwick. At last we are able to travel with the hood down as the weather improves. Into Devon and the hills cause us problems. At one point Wayne had to walk while I coaxed the car up the hill and a smell of burning clutch.



Day 12

Lands End at last and then home on day 14.

I have a long list of jobs to do on the car. Not least

changing the oil which is now well overdue, and sorting out the brakes which are also well past their best but for now a good sleep and some taking stock before we start thinking about the next adventure.

David Graaff

There is still time to help them reach their £1000 goal, they're almost there!

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/john-o-groats-to-lands-end>

or send a cheque directly to Niki ,our treasurer, and tell her it's for the charity drive.

If you are able to have a fundraising event (a coffee morning, afternoon tea, sponsored run or whatever you can think of) please contact me so I can send you some of our brochures.

A much easier way is as you shop online.

Niki has now fully registered FoMRCH with Give as you Live (in addition to Amazon Prime and Pay Pal) and passive donations can now be raised via this channel.

It is very easy to sign up for an account and start to raise funds for FoMRCH, simply going into the Give as you Live website or downloading the Give as you Live app on your tablet or mobile device - it's completely free and FoMRCH will receive 100% of the donations raised! Then you just shop as normal. They have over 5,500 stores registered like John Lewis & Partners, eBay, Currys, Expedia, Booking.com, and Marks & Spencer.

If you sign up using my link below, Give as you Live Online will donate an extra £5 for FoMRCH too when you raise £5!

For anyone who regularly shops online, this target isn't hard to reach ... I'm already potentially up to £15 (although, to be honest, renovating a house does help!)

https://www.giveasyoulive.com/refer/R9UoZQ81jH1KIO7CYoLxqw7agEq7Mg-3D-3D?utm_campaign=mgm&utm_source=Osharesocial&utm_medium=Oshare_email&utm_content=refer&utm_term=20220511

This link can be used by anyone to raise additional funds in this way.

Past National Director and Superintendent of MRCH



Those who remember Astonishment Mapurisa, MRCH's former director, will be interested in a book called 'Astonishment: Laying Ghosts in Mugabe's Zimbabwe'. It's by MRCH supporter, Graham Jones, who travelled with Astonishment into rural Zimbabwe and heard his incredible story of abject poverty, child slavery and the grace of God. The book is that story, including some of Astonishment's time at MRCH. In 2019

the publishers called it "a moving account of nostalgia, race and reconciliation that celebrates the transformative power of forgiveness".

Graham is offering a free copy as part of any fundraising initiative, just let us know what you are doing and send me your name and address (UK only) so it can be posted to you.

It is also still available for £8.99 and can be ordered online from Waterstones

"I have just read the book about Astonishment – what an incredible man he is. I feel privileged to have met him in 2003 when you brought him over to Headingley Methodist Church in Leeds."

Christine Pickering

Virtual AGM on Saturday 18th June at 10am.

Everyone is welcome to join us for the AGM. Please contact our secretary for the online link to be emailed to you. We look forward to seeing some new faces as well as those who have previously joined us.

Minutes Secretary

We are still hoping for a volunteer to be our minutes secretary. We are still meeting online – does this help you to consider joining us? If so please contact us.

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