



Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

Christmas 2022

We give mainly financial support directly to the Home

News from the Home

Greetings from Zimbabwe.

There are serious challenges in education following the long standing impasse between the Government and the teachers over poor pay. Standards are plummeting and learners are deprived of their right to education. As a result there is selective learning where teachers make arrangements for extra lessons and charge some fees as much as \$5 US per child per week for primary school learners or \$10 US per subject per child per month.

This development put us in a difficult position for it is not legal practice and we do not have the money required. This prompted us to come up with an **Educational Expo** in which we invited voluntary teachers to come and assist our children through coaching clinics from Early Childhood Education, infants, juniors and secondary school. The response was **overwhelming**, we got 18 voluntary teachers from the church, surrounding schools and from Seke Teachers College. The tag was **"Donate your time and talent to educate a child at MRCH"**. The purpose was to assess, assist, inspire and improve the academic performance of our children at MRCH.

We had 2 sessions, one for staff, mainly our Caregivers and a session for children. We invited a senior Lecturer from Seke Teachers College, Epworth Primary School Headmaster Martin Guranungo and two retired school Administrators to teach and train our Caregivers



on 1. Assisting children at home in the light of the new curriculum; 2. The role of the Caregiver and teacher in improving academic performance of the child and 3. Parent/teacher relationship.

The engagement was exciting and very fruitful. Our Caregivers were enlightened, motivated and received very useful tips.



Our children enjoyed the close attention given to them and were assisted in their learning gaps.



We are trying to expand these arrangements as we strive for the best for our children. We are unable to provide the technology needed for online learning but we have 7 student social workers helping us.

Rev Linny Mutendwa

In November the FoMRCH committee had another very useful virtual meeting with our colleagues in Zimbabwe. Once again we were able to share our concerns for the children at MRCH and Rev Linny reported on a list of queries we had sent to him a few weeks before.

60 of the children will go to foster families for Christmas for the first time since 2019. Others don't have foster families or can't leave the Home because it is their place of safety.

There are no serious health problems at this time, all chronic illnesses are stable. Sadly a young person who left the home in 2020 died this year and MRCH paid for the funeral because there were no relatives.

Elections next year will bring instability and it is expected that MRCH will have to take in up to 20 more children so in spite of drought, heat and cyclones they hope to grow more food. They are looking for more support from the church and local business.

Drug abuse is rampant on the streets.

Payment of staff salaries are once again 2 months behind.

The Home has enough basic food stored to last until April.

One young person in lower 6th was the 2nd best student with 12 points and hopes to do A levels next year. A former MRCH young person has just been accepted as a candidate for the ministry. The MRCH university student is doing well and each term MRCH asks for donations from the churches to pay the fees for that term.



The ECD (pre-school) is doing well, with 74 local children attending and more on the waiting list. MRCH is no longer able to subsidise fees for local children. 2 teachers are now employed.

The solar panel project is progressing well. The clinic, admin block, 2 bore holes and houses 1-5 all have solar panels now. Houses 6-8, including staff houses, the Outreach centre at Donga and finally the poultry and piggery projects will be in the next two phases and \$12,000US is needed for these stages. The panels cover lighting and refrigeration but not cooking so the carers are cooking meals over fires in the outdoor kitchens.

A long term project being discussed with the Church and the Board is to have a primary school on site which will provide education for residential and local children and generate some income for the residential home as well. The secondary college on the site contributes 6% of the Home's income.

It was expressed at the meeting that MRCH has a very motivated team looking for solutions to many very challenging problems and that in spite of all the hardships they face the children are loved and cared for.

News from the Outreach centre at Donga

51 children are supported at Donga with school fees, hygienic items and basic stationery. 6 of them will go into grade 7 next year and MRCH will continue to support them through Secondary school. Here some of them receive bags of stationery and gifts.



In October the land was being prepared for the new season's planting in anticipation there would be better rains. Much of last season's crop was lost after poor rains, so far there is drought yet again.



This is a platform for drying a crop of maize



This is Donga's repaired entrance gate. Both are made from whatever can be found locally.

A successful event

Our Treasurer, Niki Phillips, spoke at a Café Church event at Saltash Wesley Methodist Church in Cornwall on 11th September.

Saltash has a Partnership with Mbare Methodist Church in Harare and as part of their visits to Mbare some of them have visited MRCH, most recently in 2011 and 2017. When the congregations at Mbare found it difficult to fulfil their commitment to the children's home due to economic circumstances, Saltash decided to do some fund raising in their stead and have over the years also sent donations to FoMRCH.

The Café Church included a short interview where Niki talked about becoming involved

with FoMRCH and how the Home currently operates, the cost of caring for the children including food, shelter, clothing and education and the financial difficulties the Home is facing as well as the devastating effects of severe drought to their crops.

Finishing with a full afternoon tea, where Niki got to speak with members of the congregation who had previously visited the Home, the event was a great success. FoMRCH extends grateful thanks to the Saltash/Mbare Partnership and the members whose generous donations on the day raised £433, with one person setting up a standing order. This will go a long way in fully supporting the daily needs of the children at MRCH. Saltash hospitality was much enjoyed by Niki and her husband, Geoff.
Niki Phillips

Thank you

Huge thanks to UK taxpayers who have signed a gift aid form for us – the Gift aid for 2018-2019 received so far this year is above £10,000 including interest, An extra £1,000 will be sent with the next remittance towards any extras for Christmas. The committee will be discussing where to direct the rest of the gift aid windfall early in 2023.

If you are able to let us claim gift aid on your donations and don't think you've signed one, our gift aid form can be found on our website or requested from our Treasurer on

treasurer@friendsofmatthewrusike.org

Christmas cards

There is still time to send our electronic Christmas cards, beat the postal strikes and donate the postage you save to MRCH. Just go to our website and click on the [card website](#) link on the Home page.

There are 9 designs to choose from.

I have just done ours and it works well. Ed

We received this response after our trial launch last year.

"I did the electronic version last year which was so much easier!!

Thanks for organising that again!"

Check out the website **How you can help page**

There are updated ways of donating online including a dedicated link to Amazon Smile

You can pay directly into the charity account which is now with the Cooperative Bank.

Name: Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

sort code: 08 92 99

account number: 65869309

Or you can send a cheque to me or to our Treasurer, payable to FoMRCH, our postal addresses are below, and please state if it is a subscription and/or a donation to one of the appeals in this newsletter.

Donations come in all sizes and we're grateful for every one for the care of the children

Please remember that annual subscriptions of £10 per person are due in January.

Once again we thank you on behalf of the children for all the support you have given throughout this year. We need your continued support to help them thrive through these hard times

An MRCH staff member sent the following

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Paul wrote,

"In everything give thanks."

So often we focus on small disappointments that cause us to grumble and complain rather than focusing on the wonderful things God has brought into our lives - His everlasting love and eternal salvation.

Contacts

Chair: Carol Banham
64 Saffron Crescent
Tickhill, Doncaster
S Yorkshire
DN11 9RU
carol2021@banham.net
01302 744 920

Secretary: Michael Mapako
michaelmapako61@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Niki Phillips
3 Badgers Green, Kingsbridge,
Devon, TQ7 1UE
phillipstaxservices@hotmail.com

Website:
www.friendsofmatthewrusike.org

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