



Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

September 2023

We give mainly financial support directly to the Home

News from the Home

Greetings from Zimbabwe.

June We had a wonderful day on 10 June celebrating Matthew Rusike Day and managed to raise US\$2784 (£2212.00) and a lot of food stuff was donated.

We had changed the usual day from Sunday to a Saturday event following a conference resolution to change the day so more people could attend. However the numbers did not improve as was expected. Maybe because people were used to a Sunday event, we are still to get feedback from church members.

We also invited a few children from two orphanages to come and have fellowship with our children. They all responded positively and our children enjoyed their company. The children also performed very well during their presentations and kept the crowd mesmerised. Donations are still in coming from circuits. We are very grateful to God for the gifts we received, they will go a long way in alleviating the plight of our children.

The hyperinflation environment now in Zimbabwe is a serious cause for concern. The ordinary poor are bearing the brunt and we find ourselves in that category. The official exchange rate is now pegged at US\$1: Zim\$5997 as at Tuesday 14 June and on the parallel market you need Zim\$10,000 to buy a US\$1. Goods and services are pegged at a parallel market rate and prices are changing every day. We are in the 2008/2009 scenario again. Salaries have not been paid for over 5 months. Elections are also around the corner on 23 August. We desperately need prayers.

We are paying our workers in United States dollars depending on availability. To date, we have managed to pay 40% of February 2023 salaries. We are also giving every employee a small food hamper on a monthly basis to cushion them in the harsh economic challenges we are going through. Thank God, we are generating a little revenue from our garden, poultry and piggery sales to keep breathing.

Despite the difficulties we are facing we continue to soldier on as a team offering the best services to the children under our care.

Siting for borehole water was done at Donga centre and the water engineers recommended a depth of 90m. A pre-survey was done and generally the area is dry with hard rock. However there is a fracture underground with prospects of getting water. We are banking on this.

New quotations received for drilling required \$2800 for drilling. After drilling, we then will proceed to work on the installation of the hole. We hope the Lord will hear our prayers and we get water.



July A brief update on the Donga borehole project.

No joy yet after the drilling was done up to 90m with a little water obtained at 25m. The drilling company recommended a further deepening by 50 more meters up to 140m.

You sent US\$4812 for both drilling and installations. However after siting and drilling up to 90m we have used \$3000. We are now left with \$1812. We kindly ask for your permission to use the balance to deepen the hole by another 50m. We are still hopeful that we may get the water if we drill deeper.



September Drilling was suspended in August due to the election period – we are waiting for drilling to restart.

(The money for drilling sent by the Friends came out of the gift aid money our treasurer claimed earlier this year Ed)

August It is with a heavy heart that I share with you the passing on of Esther, who was battling with diabetes during the early hours of Monday the 31st of July. Esther was placed at Matthew Rusike Children's Home in 2011 at the age of 5. She was in form 3. She was diagnosed with diabetes a few years ago and was put on insulin. All along she has been managing well until last Saturday when her sugar levels suddenly shot up. We rushed her to Harare hospital where Doctors tried everything until she succumbed.

The Home is shell shocked and struggling to come to terms with the untimely departure of Esther. She will be buried tomorrow 2 August in Chiweshe, some 100km away from Harare, where her mother was laid to rest.

The new classrooms and new hostels for the college are progressing well.



Matthew Rusike college classrooms



Girls' hostel



Hostel sited near the entrance

There are plans to build a school for the 6-12 year olds for residential and local children

September It has been a hectic period with a number of activities. Elections have come and gone, relatively peacefully although with some anomalies. The situation is calm but the economic environment is the big threat.

During the school holiday children went to annual conventions. 16 boys attended a District Christian Union of over 500 participants at Waddilove Mission school in Marondera on 31 August to 3 September. Girls attended an annual circuit Convention at Epworth on 1-3 September.

We took 2 groups of Sunday school children to the Robert Mugabe international Airport. They enjoyed the trip.

Social work students on attachment have been helping the children with studies during the holiday to cover up for their gaps in academic achievements. Those who are sitting for national exams were being helped by private teachers.

Rev L Mutendzwa

MRCH Half marathon

The event went quite well. Our registration ended at 320 although our initial target was 500. But considering it was the peak of winter and all the major runs had taken place the turn out was not too bad. We also take comfort in that we have made an impression on runners' calendars as we have managed to have the run consistently now. We have one event left for the year, the annual dinner dance in October. We have started making arrangements for it already.

School will be closing this month (July) We took a decision that the children will not be going to foster homes for holidays because the country is having its presidential elections this August and the political environment is not certain. We felt it will be safer for all the children to be in one place during this time. Zvirinane Matore

Donga Community Outreach Centre

At Donga, thanks to the use of the mended vehicle, children's case meetings were attended and school and home visits easier.

A family with 2 year old triplets was given clothes.

Thanks to Gweru Holy Trinity Society school fees arrears from 2021 were paid for 13 children.

A girl was enrolled in a local secondary school and given school stationery,



76 primary children were given stationery and writing materials



66 children were given knitted pencil cases and notebooks,



Repairs to the house roof and the pig unit are still outstanding. Safe storage of stock feed and maize grown at the site are also still outstanding. Manure compound is desperately needed for the food crop growing.

"We continue to face more challenges especially with foreign currency as opposed to our local currency in all our day to day activities, however we have great joy in that our children remain in school, thanks to the school heads for understanding us. May I thank sincerely all those who continue to support our programmes vehemently"

Lloyd Kupeta Gweru District Officer

Fundraising

Revs Ed and Audrey Standhaft, members of our committee, held a cream tea afternoon in July in their "tiny flat" and then banked £140. "Perhaps others could try - just 2 sessions of 6 people raised this amount!"

Thank you both for holding this event.

From our Treasurer

We have received yet another significant, unexpected donation (a random amount exceeding £6,300), this time via the Charities Aid Foundation. There is a note attached to the payment with the name 'The Carey Charitable Trust'.

Thank you very much for this generous donation.

New Secretary and Chair needed

We are still looking for a permanent secretary. FoMRCH has been extremely fortunate to have Michael Mapako continue doing the meeting minutes 5 years after he wanted to step down. Thank you Michael for your dedication to MRCH.

We shall be looking for a new chairperson in 2024 as I am stepping down after 20 years in post but hope to remain as a trustee. 27 years ago Don and I were part of the original team to set up the Friends in order to support MRCH. Most of the original team

who founded the Friends of MRCH had spent part of that July/August as volunteers in the home and so had first hand experience of the loving care given to the 145 vulnerable children then living in dormitories. We also learned of the huge struggle to feed, clothe and educate children in an economy which was just beginning to falter. Much has changed but much has also stayed the same so MRCH needs our support as much as ever. Thankfully the loving care has continued.

As **chair** I work closely with our secretary and treasurer preparing meetings which are held on Zoom and I am a key contact with the Home itself. I produce the annual report each year for the AGM. I bank money as it comes in, acknowledge donations and keep the treasurer informed.

Newsletter editor

Separate to this we hope someone else will step forward to take on this newsletter, which at the moment is produced 4 times each year. My last one will be June 2024.

Our meetings are now all held online so there is no travelling involved.

Please give these situations prayerful consideration and come and join us. Our support for the Home cannot continue without more people to join us. **Please contact any of the officers if you or anyone you know might be interested.**

Carol Banham (chair and editor)

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