



Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

Christmas 2023

We give mainly financial support directly to the Home

News from the Home

On November 18th we had another online meeting with Rev Linny Mutendzwa when he gave us an update on life at MRCH.

Warm greetings from Zimbabwe.

Generally all the children are in good health and are going to school. The children taking public exams this month are making last minute efforts in their studies. There are no secondary children needing sponsors at the moment but 2 boys and 3 girls need sponsors to attend primary school.

On 4th October we bid farewell to another long serving house parent. Fungayi Mahlakapane popularly known as Mrs Tunha, retired after 27 years. It is very sad that she is retiring without a gratuity and with us still owing her US\$6000 salary as we continue trying to meet salary obligations. We hope this situation will improve early 2024 by an increase in government grants for 66 children placed at the Home without valid court orders. Children in care without court orders are not supported by government grants. We plan more fundraising activities, more partnerships at home and abroad and more income from more projects.

180 of the 200 targetted people attended the annual dinner dance in October and raised US\$6200, which is going towards staff salaries. We look forward to a better event next year.

Salaries cost US\$9000 per month. All levels of staff are owed 4 months salary including the Director and outreach staff.

Local Methodist Circuits and Districts now fund the 2 Outreach Centres at Donga and Mzinyathi, only the staff salaries are funded by MRCH at Epworth.

We are still waiting for the drilling company to deepen the borehole at Donga but there is no money left to install the pump, we are looking for quotes for the cost of installation.

The piggeries need new sows and feed, the poultry project was hit by a virus and we lost 200 chickens, we have since recovered. The two greenhouses produced a good crop of tomatoes many of which were sold.

Development plans *Disruption to the children's education due to the deteriorating learning environment has made management realise they*

must try to provide their own education establishment for the primary children. This will fill the gap between the ECD and the secondary school on site and was endorsed by the Methodist Conference. Ed

We are engaging the Government Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as we prepare to start our Primary school in January 2024. Using the existing infrastructure at the ECD centre we are able to enrol ECD A and B (4-6 yrs) and Grades 1&2 (6-8 yrs) We plan to build a new block each year. The school will be open to local children who will pay fees and our own residential children.

Rev L Mutendzwa

ECD is the Early Childhood Development centre at MRCH

Fundraising plans

*With new buildings needed over the next few years to accommodate the new school the Board is engaging in a recruitment drive locally and among the Zimbabwe Fellowship diaspora to raise funds for these new buildings and for the upkeep of the Home generally. **MRCH Associates** is the name chosen by the Board designed to publicise and campaign for desperately needed funds to keep the Home going in the serious economic situation in Zimbabwe.*

This is a separate organisation from FoMRCH.

Donations received or planned for

I received the following endorsement of our charity from a long time member of the Friends of MRCH.

"With a lot of charities you don't know where the money goes but we know exactly where this money goes - directly to the children and we have the regular newsletters to keep us up to date"

Thank you for your positive comment Sue Ed

In September, £500 was donated towards the piggery projects at Epworth and Donga "as this was our son's project when he was a volunteer there in 1999/2000"

Thank you Hester, it is much needed as I'm sure you have just read. Ed

An anonymous donor sent us £645 which is to be spent on picture text books for the children.

Thank you, Zimbabwean curriculum texts are always needed for the Home's library.

We recently received an unexpected donation of £5000. The committee has decided that £2000 will go directly to the children for Christmas and £2000 will go as extra Christmas bonuses for all the staff.

Thank you for these generous gifts which will go directly to the home in time for Christmas. Ed

A long term promise of support

Solihull Methodist Church has adopted MRCH for a year. This is excellent news indeed and is a first since Covid 19 struck. They have expressed an interest in supporting the Home's development projects and will be channelling their support through FoMRCH. Welcome on board Solihull we look forward to supporting your efforts for the children, please keep us informed so we can report your progress in this newsletter.

More of the 151 vulnerable children in the community receive free school stationery.



A new crop is planted and begins to grow



...but so much more rain is needed



To any of our readers who are former children of MRCH or please pass on the following information to anyone you know

As former Children we want to create an Alumni for children who have left Matthew Rusike Children's home, the reason being to try and help each other to re-integrate fully in the community. As you know the law of Zimbabwe says a child should be discharged from the Institution when they attain the age of 18 years, but you and I agree that at the age of 18 the young person still needs support and help for further development to become a sustainable person.

I have known about you way back since 2000 when I was still at Matthew Rusike and I have been following you guys in newsletters up to the current one.

In regards to your response thank you very much, yes please help us even to make reference to your friends and other organizations that can also help us. Please add us on your mailing list and also include us in the newsletter we will appreciate that. Jeffrys Chasi

This is an excellent idea Jeffrys, all power to your new group. It is good to know that you have been able to see our newsletters for so long. We would welcome any stories from former children of MRCH for our newsletter.

alumni is a Latin word and means **"one who is being nourished"**

Please contact me and I'll forward your email to Jeffrys. Carol Banham Ed

Christmas cards

A variety of ecards is available directly from our website and you can also see the 'real' card designs also available. Here's the link

<https://www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/friends-of-matthew-rusike-childrens-home/christmas>

We have a new Secretary. Rev Audrey Standhaft, a long time committee member has stepped forward to take on the post. Thank you Audrey. A huge thank you to Michael for holding the fort for 5 years longer than he wanted to, your dedication has been greatly appreciated. Michael is staying on the committee and if he is contacted will be happy to pass on information to Audrey. aud.standhaft@outlook.com

Please join our committee, we need you

We shall be looking for a new chairperson in 2024 as I am stepping down after 20 years in

post but aim 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 team had spent part of that summer as volunteers in the home and so had first hand experience of the loving care given to, then, 145 vulnerable children living in dormitories. We also learned of the huge struggle to feed, clothe and educate so many 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.

I work with the secretary and treasurer preparing meetings and am a key contact with the Home. I produce an annual report each year for the AGM. I bank money when it is sent to me, acknowledge donations and keep the treasurer informed.

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

Newsletter editor

Separate to this we hope someone 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.

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

Carol Banham (chair and editor)

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