

Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

A UK charity supporting Matthew Rusike Children's Home in Zimbabwe

Newsletter, December 2025

Report from the home



Greetings from Zimbabwe.

As we approach Christmas, the situation in Zimbabwe has improved with the coming of the rains. Compared to a year ago when the country was still in drought and food security was a real concern, we can now look forward with some

optimism. Better rains also mean that supporters here in Zimbabwe are better able to offer the gifts in kind that are so essential to our work.

That said, the financial pressures are relentless. Even though we're reducing the number of children at the Home to save costs, our debt continues to rise as a result of higher salaries mandated by the government and severance payments to the staff we've had to lay off. We continue to work on the turnaround plan and expect the financial benefits to start coming through towards the end of next year. Of the two houses closed until the situation improves, one is being rented out to teachers at our college and the income is helping to support our care work. We hope the second will shortly be rented out as well.

Our children and former children have done well academically. Along with several completing O-levels, A-levels and skills training programmes this year, one of our students has completed a diploma in Design and Technology while another has graduated in Forensic Accounting from the University of Zimbabwe. We also have our first former student to enter the Methodist ministry.

I'm happy to report that the boreholes at the Donga and Mzinyathi outreach centres are now working well. The water yield at Donga is still very low, but we hope it will improve as the rains continue and the water table rises. As well as the centre, the new borehole serves 40 local households in this relatively dry area. At Mzinyathi, we supply water additionally to the

local manse and primary school and 150 households. With more water now available, both centres are embarking on agricultural projects to generate income with Donga concentrating on drought-resistant crops.

Back at the Home in Harare, the new classroom block made possible by a generous donation from Solihull Methodist Church in the UK is nearing completion and will be commissioned early next year. Given Zimbabwe's erratic electricity supply, we're hoping to install solar power to the classrooms as we have done with the houses on site. (Our generator remains functional, but the price of fuel means we have to limit its use.) And we still need to buy equipment for the classrooms.

Amid all this activity and the daily difficulties we face, we're determined to do the best we can to give our children a safe, secure space and the opportunity to excel. We're extremely grateful to you, our supporters, for helping us achieve this aim. We thank God for you and wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Rev Linny Mutendzwa
National Director



As part of the support for the community in Donga, local primary school children receive educational supplies provided by Matthew Rusike Children's Home and the Methodist Church.

Recycling old plastic bottles



The June newsletter introduced readers to the Ecobrick project – an innovative scheme that involves turning soft plastic waste and empty plastic bottles into bricks capable of being used in construction.

The first requirement is collecting the plastic and this has been the focus at Matthew Rusike in the last few months. Empty bags are distributed to churches in and around Harare to be filled and returned to the Home. Already the Home has collected some 25,000 empty plastic bottles towards its target of 60,000. The next stage will be to compress the plastic to turn each 500ml bottle into a single brick. In South Africa, where the technology was pioneered, there is already a school built in this way. The hope is that future building projects at Matthew Rusike will benefit both from the recycling of waste and cheaper construction.

... and planting new trees

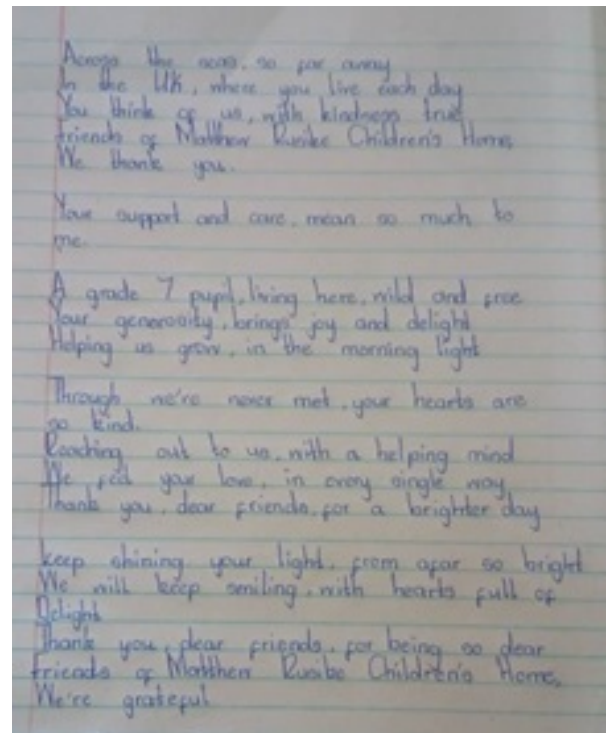
Also on the environmental theme, children at Matthew Rusike took part in a project in November to plant over 30 fruit trees donated by a local bank in the grounds of the Home. Other activities in recent months have included the annual marathon in support of the Home and a fund-raising dinner dance in October with some of the children also joining in.



Matthew Rusike girls at National Christian Union convention



In August, a group of Matthew Rusike children attended the National Girls' Christian Union Convention held at Pakame High, a Methodist Mission School in Midlands Province. They were accompanied by one of the care-givers, Joyce Chimowa, and the Home's chaplain, Rev Sarah Chiramba. Over 2,000 girls from all over Zimbabwe gathered for fellowship, fun and games, and a programme of life lessons.



'Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home, we're grateful.' It may be a little hard to read, but we thought it worth including this message to supporters from one of the Matthew Rusike children.



In October, the Home played host to a local school who brought gifts of stationery and food hampers and spent time playing and learning with the children.

Christmas cards

If you still have Christmas cards to send, why not save costs with one of our electronic cards? We have several designs you can choose from. You can email up to 100 cards to family and friends, customise each one with a personal message and make a donation to Matthew Rusike Children's Home at the same time. Make your choice at:



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

Electronic cards are also available from our website – www.friendsofmatthewrusike.org – and we still have a small selection of physical cards available by contacting Debbie Berrill. Designs can be seen on the website and Debbie's contact details are on the following page.

UK fundraising

New solar heating installed



Funds raised by Ben Rhydding Methodist Church in Ilkley – some £4,600 in total – are being used for solar-powered heating systems so the children at

Matthew Rusike can have warm water for washing. This will be much appreciated during the winter months when mornings and evenings in Harare can be surprisingly cold. Thanks so much to the church for raising this amazing amount.

Birmingham church raises £1,000 – with more to come

Cambridge Road Methodist Church in Birmingham held an open day in October in aid of Matthew Rusike Children's Home. Despite the wet and windy weather, the event was a great success with Executive Committee members, Don and Carol Banham, braving the conditions to travel down from Yorkshire. Committee member, Michael Mapako, gave an update on his recent visit to the Home while National Director, Rev Linny Mutendzwa, spoke via video link from Harare to emphasise the essential work the Home is doing and the challenges it faces.

Stalls in the church sold donated items while soup and samosas provided a warming lunch with plenty of cake to follow. Over the course of the weekend, and including gifts for Harvest, the event raised around £1,000. The church has now committed itself to raising funds to cover six months' salary for the Home's nurse – roughly £3,000 – over the next year. Thank you Cambridge Road Methodist!

The difference a legacy can make

Thanks to two legacies in recent months, the Friends' Executive Committee agreed in November to cover the cost of three of the Home's house mothers for one year and the salary of the Home's nurse for six months (a further six months to be covered by Cambridge Road Methodist Church – see above). The aim is that money freed up in this way can be spent on salary arrears so that all staff can

receive some of the back-pay they're owed. More of the legacy money will be spent on replacing beds and mattresses and refurbishing sofas in the houses. Other uses for the legacies are being considered and we hope to announce further funding in the next newsletter.

To be able to offer extra funding over and above our regular remittances allows us to target particular needs that otherwise might get overlooked in the day-to-day running of the Home. We're hugely grateful to those who remembered us in their wills: we hope they would have been pleased to see what their legacies have achieved.

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**To the friends and supporters of
Matthew Rusike Children's Home
– thank you for all your interest
and support during the year and
we wish you a very Happy
Christmas!**

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