



Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

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

Newsletter, September 2026

Chair's report

The Chair of the Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home, Rev Ed Standhaft, reports on how the charity has continued to support the Home in 2025/26.



First of all, a word of thanks to the Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home committee whose hard work and commitment have enabled us to continue raising money this year for essential provisions for the Home.

We were very pleased that Annah Mwadiwa has joined the committee and that one of our members, Debbie Berrill, was able to visit the Home and see for herself the work at Epworth, Donga and Mzinyathi.

The committee was saddened by the fact that two Mathew Rusike houses had to close during the year, so that the present Home, previously able to take 100 children, now has only 61. This is despite the continuing and desperate need for children's care in Zimbabwe. During the year the committee has met with the Home's Principal and Board of Management to understand the financial problems which the Home currently faces.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, we were able to provide funds for winter clothing and blankets for the boys and girls at the Home. The Friends have also contributed to staff salaries for one year and provided money to buy furniture and solar panels for the new classroom block along with learning materials for the new primary school. Last Christmas we were able to provide £1,000 for staff

bonuses and a further £1,000 for presents for the children.

Grants of £2,000 each from the Morrell Trust and the Gibbs Trust will be spread over the year as part of our regular remittances to the Home. We're also grateful to Ben Rhydding Methodist Church and Ben Rhydding primary school for raising funds respectively for solar geysers for the houses and books for the school - as well as to Solihull Methodist Church who provided funding for two new primary classrooms. A church in Leeds is also now funding the Home.

We were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Paddy Coles, for so long a supporter and benefactor and a founder member of the Friends. We shall miss him very much and are so grateful for the donations given in his memory at his funeral.

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A dancing display by Matthew Rusike children at the Home's Big Sunday fundraising event in June – see page 3

The Home has plans to build more classrooms to complete the primary school and is also hoping to fund a manager to oversee on-site projects such as the market garden and piggery. These continue to supply the Home with food and income but the actual profit made is uncertain, thanks to the vagaries of drought and the possibility of theft and disease.

My thanks go to all the churches and their members who have raised money for the Home during the year. We look forward to another year when, hopefully, Matthew Rusike Children's Home will be able to take in more children and continue to be a major part of the work of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Please pray for this work and continue to support it in practical ways in the coming year.

Many thanks and God bless you.

Rev Ed Standhaft

Strong support for Big Sunday



Big Sunday which takes place every June is the Home's main fundraising event of the year. Friends and supporters from around the country gather at each of the Matthew Rusike sites to meet the staff and children and learn about its work. National Director, Rev Linny Mutendzwa, assesses this year's event.

After much preparation, the Big Sunday events at Epworth in Harare, Donga in Shurugwi District and Mzinyathi in Matabeleland South all went very well. On 7 June there were celebrations at Epworth for the Methodist Church community in and around Harare. The following Sunday saw separate gatherings at Donga and Mzinyathi while representatives of Methodist Mission schools came to meet the children at Epworth.

Donations were made in both cash and kind. US\$12,341 was raised at Epworth with 81 members pledging to support the Home with US\$1,200 per month for six months starting from July. The Donga gathering raised US\$3,100 plus donations in kind while Mzinyathi raised US\$902. Our thanks go to everyone who donated.

Pupils were given awards for academic achievement and good behaviour. All 13 of our relief house mothers received

certificates of appreciation and an award of US\$10. Long-service awards were given to Mrs Marugasi for her remarkable 37 years as a house mother, to project worker Mr Muziri for 32 years' service and to Mr Mwale who has been with us for 32 years. Awards also went to our stores worker and social worker student interns.

We're very grateful, meanwhile, for the contribution to staff salaries offered by the Friends for a 12-month period. This has allowed us to reduce our salary arrears and helps greatly towards the long-term goal of clearing our debt.

In August, the Epworth home received a US\$10,000 donation from Delta Corporation, a long-standing supporter and one of Zimbabwe's biggest companies. Delta has previously helped us with solarisation and water projects.

Scenes from Big Sunday



House mother, Faith Marugasi, receives her award for 37 years' service from Presiding Bishop, Rev Simbarashe Sithole



A bouncy castle (above) and individual gifts (below) for the children at Donga



The Big Sunday audience (above) entertained by speakers, dancers and the Matthew Rusike choir (below)



Community development at Mzinyathi

We've reported in recent issues on the successful installation of a solar-powered borehole at the Matthew Rusike outreach centre at Mzinyathi. This is part of a wider community project which also involves Mzinyathi Methodist Church and the local manse and primary school.

Through her connections with Methodist Women in Britain, committee member Annah Mwadiwa recently secured a £2,000 grant to complete some of the water project pipework at Mzinyathi. The money will also go towards protective fencing for vegetable gardens and a community gazebo – a shady, covered structure near the water point for local use and for hiring out to other groups to generate income for the Mzinyathi community.

The charity, Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund, has also shown an interest in contributing to Mzinyathi's development. Our thanks to them and also to Methodist Women in Britain.



Community members at the Mzinyathi borehole during drilling (top) and digging trenches to lay pipelines for connecting Mzinyathi buildings to the water tank

UK fundraising

A cream tea hosted by Ed and Audrey Standhaft in July attracted around 20 neighbours from Carlton Court, Wells, and raised £148 for the Friends.



The following weekend, members of Wells Methodist Church came for another cream tea and raised over £200 with a further contribution of £150 from the church knitting group. Cream teas, church knitters and a coffee morning together contributed over £560. Huge thanks to everyone involved.

We'd love to report on any fundraising events taking place in your area. With details, please contact Debbie Berrill on the email address opposite.

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