

# Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

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

**Newsletter, June 2024**

## Reports from the Home

Greetings from Zimbabwe.

After reporting last time that all the children were keeping well, we've had a number of health incidents in recent weeks. One boy broke a leg and a girl fell and broke her arm: I'm pleased to say that both are recovering. Another boy received a knock on the head while playing and had to be taken to hospital for stitches. We also had a girl hospitalised for two weeks, but she's now been discharged and is much better.



Sadly, I have to report the death of five-month-old Mukundi (*left*) on 18 June, barely two weeks after he was placed at the home. His condition started as flu, but he developed breathing problems and we rushed him to Harare

General Hospital at 3am. Despite efforts to save him, he died at 6am. The Home is still in a state of shock at the loss of this young life. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

In happier news, our projects are in good shape. We're now selling 300-400kg of tomatoes per week, our piggery has expanded to 73 units, our layers and broilers are doing well and we've produced about 500 mealies.

Much of my time has been spent visiting district synods to mobilise resources and seek support for our annual Matthew Rusike Big Sunday event when we aim to raise funds and increase awareness of the home among potential future donors – all the more necessary in light of the recent drought. This year's Big Sunday took place on 9 June and was followed a week later by our half marathon (see more details in this newsletter).



We at the Home are grateful as always for your support and send our warmest wishes. May the Lord our God bless you.

Rev Linny Mutendzwa  
National Director

## Fundraising in tough conditions

It's becoming increasingly difficult to meet all the requirements of the Home and the amount we get in income and gifts continues to be stretched. Over the next few months we expect to see the real impact of this year's drought. Donations in kind, particularly grain, are likely to be low because grain-producing rural areas were hit hard. Other donations are generally declining due to factors such as the economy, the drought and donor fatigue.

We've been busy preparing for two fund-raising events in June – the Matthew Rusike Big Sunday and the half marathon. The Big Sunday was well attended, though the turn-out was not as high as in pre-Covid times. There were various fun activities and children from the Home played an active part with a choir, poetry readings and dancing. We also had a cake sale and music from the popular musician, Kudzi Nyakudya.

For the half marathon, we set a target of 500 runners but ended up with 240, mainly because there were four other runs taking place over the same weekend. All the same, we were well supported by our sponsors and grateful to the runners who braved a very cold morning to 'run for a child'. We also received quite a lot of donations in kind and these are still coming in.

Zvirinane Matore



*The Matthew Rusike Big Sunday choir*

## Donga Outreach Centre



The Matthew Rusike Outreach Centre at Donga provides practical support for vulnerable families in a remote part of Zimbabwe badly hit by the drought. Among other things, it helps with school stationery, clothing and sanitary wear. *Left:* local children celebrate the arrival of much-needed donations.

## Alumni support group

Former Matthew Rusike child, Jeffreys Chasi (*right*), is looking to create a support network to help others who've left the Home to integrate into the community. He writes of one practical way that the group was recently able to help.



'One of our former children at Matthew Rusike lost a child, so we attended the funeral in order to be there for her. We also paid for the funeral as she's an unemployed single mother and wasn't able to meet the cost herself.'

The support group is still in the process of being officially registered. In the meantime, you can contact [jeffreyschasi@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreyschasi@gmail.com) for more details. We'd also welcome other stories from former Matthew Rusike children reading this newsletter to let us know what you're doing.

## UK fundraising

Support from churches in the UK is invaluable to the Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home. Chair Carol Banham and her husband, Don, report from one church that has really made a difference:

'In March, we visited Norton Methodist Church near Stockton-on-Tees to thank them for the £4,250 plus Gift Aid raised during 2023. We were warmly welcomed and showed some slides detailing progress at the Home since our first visit in 1995. We also spoke about the ongoing difficulties at the Home and met seven-year-old Luca who, with the help of his mum, raised a magnificent £300 towards the total.

'We also met Rev Vincent Jambawo from Zimbabwe who would love to take a group from his church to visit the Home.'

*Right: champion fundraiser Luca with a thank-you gift for his efforts*



## Report from the Treasurer

Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home recently applied for two funding grants, one from the Gibbs Trust, which has a long association with FoMRCH, and one from The Morel Trust, also associated with the Gibbs family.

We were very fortunate to be accepted for both grants and have now received £2,000 and £1,500 from the respective trusts, enabling us to boost our regular remittances to the Home.

Together with a small raise agreed earlier in the year, we can now increase our funding of the Home for the next 12 months to help with the harsh financial circumstances it's now facing.

We also received a generous legacy from the estate of one of our supporters. The Trustees are now considering how best to use it to further the ambitions of the Home.

Niki Phillips



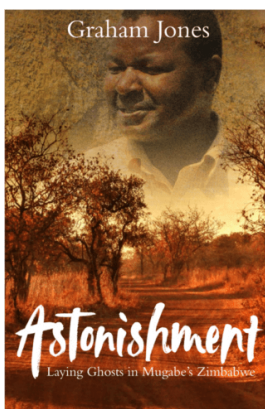
*Visitors to the Matthew Rusike Big Sunday on 9 June, wrapped up against the winter cold*

## A new editor

Carol Banham is stepping down as editor of this newsletter and writes:

‘Supporter Graham Jones, has offered to take over this newsletter. I’m very grateful for his offer. If all news continues to be sent to me as usual, I shall forward it to him in time for each issue to be produced. The newsletter is an important way of keeping supporters in touch with life at the Home.

‘Graham also wrote the book *Astonishment* about his travels in Zimbabwe with former Matthew Rusike Director, *Astonishment* Mapurisa. If you remember *Astonishment*, and even if you don’t, you’ll enjoy Graham’s description of his childhood in the country and *Astonishment*’s account of his very different history on the other side of the racial divide – a child slave, rejected by his family, whose mission became to help Zimbabwe’s most disadvantaged children.



‘Zimbabwean cricketer, Henry Olunga, called the book “a fascinating portrait of two contrasting societies and what happens when forgiveness and reconciliation replace hatred and division ... moving and evocative.”

*Astonishment* is available from Amazon or from [Instantapostle.com](http://Instantapostle.com).

[Thank-you, Carol, for your many years editing this newsletter – greatly appreciated.]



Above and right: young performers at the Matthew Rusike Big Sunday



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## Contacts

Chair: Carol Banham\*  
64 Saffron Crescent,  
Tickhill,  
Doncaster,  
South Yorkshire DN11 9RU  
[carol2021@banham.net](mailto:carol2021@banham.net)  
Tel: 01302 744 920

Secretary: Rev Audrey Standhaft  
[aud.standhaft@outlook.com](mailto:aud.standhaft@outlook.com)

Treasurer: Niki Phillips  
3 Badgers Green,  
Kingsbridge,  
Devon TQ7 1UE  
[phillipstaxservices@hotmail.com](mailto:phillipstaxservices@hotmail.com)

Website:  
[www.friendsofmatthewrusike.org](http://www.friendsofmatthewrusike.org)

Registered charity 1120944

\*Carol will be stepping down as Chair at the AGM on 6 July, but will stay on as a trustee and point of contact with the Home. As a matter of urgency, we’re still looking for someone to take over the role of Chair at subsequent meetings. Do please pray for the right person to come forward.

Scenes from the fundraising events in June



Rev Linny Mutendzwa (second left) along with the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe (left) and other invited guests at the Matthew Rusike Big Sunday on 9 June



Above and below, medal-winners at the 'Run for a child' half marathon



Prize-giving



Entertainment from Kudzi Nyakudya, a multiple award-winning Zimbabwean gospel artist with 16 albums to his name



Also on 9 June, more celebrations at the Outreach Centre in Donga as children are presented with goodie bags