



# Our Children Your Children In Zimbabwe

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## Special Points of Interest

- MMC MHANDARA MONTHLY CARE is reaching the maturing girls with reusable washable supplies as well as mentoring!
- IT WAS HEARING THE SWEET MUSIC FROM ZIMBABWE that first captivated us in 1990. We continue with Shona music study, classes and performances. We also continue to reach into our depths to bridge the cultural diversity amongst us all, making building community "the priority and final frontier".

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## ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT CHANGES!



**People ask me,** what are we going to do, how are we affected, what is going to happen? All good questions. The answer to the first question is that we are doing the same thing as we have for 18 years...we navigate the terrain intuitively and do our best. We are still a principled organization, with a highly committed team on the ground there, and we "stand for" a positive outcome (we do not "stand against"). We don't really know how we will be affected

yet, but there are always unexpected turns...we have survived them since 2000 and I would expect we will continue to do so. Third, we don't know what will happen, but let me share email content from an elderly (80+ year old ) Zimbabwean friend.

*"Well, its happened! He's gone! That accounts for all the jubilation in the streets last night; everyone is so delighted that his 37 years are now behind us.*

*Only question now is what about the future. Mnangagwa doesn't have a clean sheet either; our main hope is that he lives by his comment when he was informed that Mugabe had gone:*

*... "I look forward to returning home soon and to join in the struggle for the economic Revival of our country which is so endowed with agriculture, industrial and commerce, and Mining opportunities, and with a rich human resource Bedrock to support our endeavors. My desire is to join all Zimbabweans in a new era where corruption, incompetency, dereliction of Duty and laziness, social and cultural decadence is not tolerated. In that new Zimbabwe it is important for everyone to join hands so that we rebuild this nation to its full Glory, this is not a job for Zanu-pf alone but for all people of Zimbabwe."*

*The last sentence, is the crux of the whole matter. If he stands by this, and is wise, creating a cabinet comprising the very best we have, notwithstanding party affiliations, Zimbabwe could well turn around and get back to where we were; international aid and investment could pour in and revive our economy. Many of the millions of Zimbabweans in the diaspora could well return. Maybe we will even be able to draw our own cash from the bank again. ... You might see a completely rejuvenated country when you come. "*

## ~ SPONSOR A PRESCHOOLER! ~

**Please consider giving** these particular young children a bit more of an edge as they grow. This benefit will stay with them for the remainder of their lives. **There is nothing like opportunity to unlock the doors of one's mind.**

Sponsorship for one year is \$195. We expect to take a photo of each preschooler. Would you like a picture for your refrigerator? This is 2018's goal!

With technology allowing us communications from the village huts to the kitchen table in Oregon, we are empowered to take care of the nitty gritty details, so we solve problems and share the latest issues at will.

We hope with this advantage that we can get you a photo with ease. **Thank you for helping to give one of these children a hopeful future!**

**So, yes, keep us on your radar** as we have a trip planned for March/April 2018.

The people in Zimbabwe are resilient...I appreciate their hope! It buoys the spirit. Maybe that is the prime way to get through hardship! Be positive!

**Well construction eluded us in 2017**, but we expect to be back to it, in 2018.



**Water = Prosperity and Independence!**

**Building a well means** far more than clean water:

- ◆ Pure water helps everyone stay healthy by preventing water borne illnesses.
- ◆ It means being able to wash your body, clothes and dishes.
- ◆ It means having a decent flow to irrigate the garden, providing prosperity for all.
- ◆ It's not just more food for one extended family, but the entire local community, as well as many folks further up the road, benefit from an

abundant harvest.

- ◆ Traditional wells normally last an extended family for generations!

Also, some wells have been damaged by inclement weather. Earthquakes and storms can shift the earth, leaving the well damaged. We would like to assist them in these repairs.

Please let us know if you would like to get involved with building or repairing wells. **Thank you!**

*"Its not just more food for one extended family, but the entire local community, as well as many folks further up the road, benefit from an abundant harvest."*

**MBIRA!**

**PRESCHOOL RENOVATIONS**

**Children living in the Dewedzo Mountains** have an incredible opportunity to learn mbira music (mbira, hosho, dance) after school from Gift Jemwa, who teaches twice per week for two hours a lesson. His mbira students perform at graduation ceremonies, so they are really progressing! Please consider helping us raise the funds to provide mbira lessons to these children. **TATENDA!**

**We regularly face governmental regulations** which require that we repair, refurbish, or buy supplies deemed necessary, and do so immediately upon notice. One example is a broken swing set. Rather than placing it out of commission, until we can raise the extra money to repair it, the Health Inspector threatens closure of the school unless it is

fixed immediately. So we do repair the swings! Obviously in my American mind, this is absurd and the priorities seem askew.

**On a very positive note**, because of your incredible support we have been able to repair the hut roofs for the 2 primary preschool buildings. Thank you so much! **Check out the pictures!**

~ **LIBRARY BOOKS TO ZIMBABWE!** ~

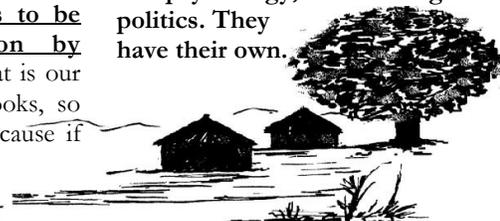
**We are again blessed with an opportunity to ship books right away to Zimbabwe with the help of a grant - YAY! If you would like to donate books to our Nhimbe for Progress library, here are the things to think about:**

1. Is the book worth it? i.e. Is this a quality book you or your children would be excited to read?

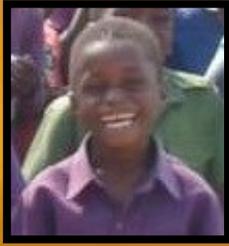
2. What kind of characters are depicted? i.e. Shona children are already imprinted with desire for Western wants, without us adding to it with images. Barbie and Ken, or Goldilocks? Or does it offer a broader multicultural character representation?

3. Can you send the books to be received in Scio, Oregon by February 15th, 2018? i.e. That is our final date for shipping the books, so **Please** don't send too late because if we can not ship we will discard.

4. The preschool always needs good story books. Youth always need reading material to develop all skills and their imagination. Young adults and adults need good interesting material to further their education about life, including most all topics. We do welcome spirituality and psychology, but not religion or politics. They have their own.



~ NHIMBE PRESCHOOL UPDATE! ~



“...the daily impediments to opportunity for people in Zimbabwe appear to be ceaseless.”

**Nhimbe for Progress Preschool began in 2002, and has a long and outstanding record.**

Through this preschool we are improving the lives of the youngest villagers with a continual nurturing of heart, mind and body.

Eating a healthy meal each day is paramount to maximizing those firing neurons in the young developing mind. It's reported that this may be the best meal of their day, and in some cases the

main meal. We provide a variety of foods including beans, rice, *kapenta* (dried fish), peanut butter (*dovi*), and our own garden fresh vegetables and fruits. Also the maize staple is served, which is prepared much like a stiff corn meal porridge called *sadza*, or as a beverage, called *mahewu*.

**Children and families there are so grateful for your generosity! We do hold their lives in our hands, in a manner of speaking,**

since the daily impediments to opportunity for people in Zimbabwe appear to be ceaseless.

Our preschool staff is living in a survival mode, where working in their gardens to grow and harvest food must be their top priority, but we ask them to teach our children. We all are dedicated to doing our very best with what is available, and yet, at the end of the day, **the reality is that they only receive minimal financial recognition.**

~ 2018 PRESCHOOL GOALS ~

**Our goal for 2018** is

to be able to increase compensation to a slightly better standard. We have seen no increases for several years. We need to be able to promise this in the future, but all of this requires more than the current incoming donations allow. This 2018 increase is reflected by \$10 per child per year (costing us from \$185 to now, \$195).

We have an average of 92 children for 3-4 years. Enrollment is unpredictable, from a low of 57 in 2014, to a high of 134 in 2008, with 69 children in 2017, graduating 40 to 1st grade.

The staff includes our bookkeeper Alan, and Cosmas and his wife Patricia, as well as:

- ◆ Febby and Fortunate - the 2 teachers (Febby as lead)
- ◆ Yeukai - the librarian and also a part-time teacher
- ◆ Molin and Mercy - the 2 cooks (Molin as lead)
- ◆ Mandishona and Musafara - the 2 night shift guards
- ◆ Efilda - inventory control
- ◆ Merinciana - the housekeeper and groundskeeper

Many of these people have been with us for most of our history, and have gratefully remained loyal and steadfast even during the most tumultuous times. There are equally as many people that have left for greener pastures. Recently we lost 2 people who headed to Harare to try to eke out something better in the big city, where unemployment is in the high 90's. Maybe they

can earn a small income from selling goods on the streets, as jobs remain scarce. But, the peddling opportunities are diminishing, since there was a crackdown on street traders last year. The current economy there remains desperate.

Many pieces of this puzzle keep us on our toes to see that the Nhimbe preschool is a success. To continue to operate and cover all of these bases, \$195 gives 1 child an education and meals for 1 year - please note, \$195 does not cover US costs.

**Can you help? We do count on your interest and ability to reach out. Again for 2018 - we ask for your support!**



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## ~ MMC: MHANDARA MONTHLY CARE ~

**Our Mhandara Monthly Care (MMC)** program proved to be an exciting part of 2017! Finally last year we were able to assemble a 4-person team to produce our own re-usable, washable pads out of flannel! It's been a long time coming!

We distributed MMC start-up kits, which include pads that our team made, a bucket for soaking, 3 pairs of underwear, and a purse sewing kit, to 85 girls in 2017, as well as a monthly bar of soap to half of the girls. Once they graduate high school they will have options now for their future, as they have been provided a practical example. **Having these supplies means less school days missed and more education for all of our girls!**

The word *Mhandara* was a great suggestion by one of the seamstresses and is Shona, meaning "women's days". It took some incredible organization starting in December 2016, and front-end planning from the team, to evaluate the options and train everyone involved without all of us actually being on the ground there. We overcame many obstacles and the MMC team is working extremely well together, very committed, with each person taking personal joy from the goal.

The unique product touches the core of women and girls alike, so all are enthused! They all appreciate this small thing with such a big impact. **Thank you for your support!**

## ~ MMC 2018 GOALS ~

**Our goal for 2018** sees us reaching 100 girls with the MMC start-up kits. We hope to improve soap distribution this next year for everyone. Soap costs \$1.80 a year for 1 girl, and \$14.50 to put together this start-up kit which lasts 3 years.



The most important piece of this program is not the MMC product, but the services provided. The girls come for the "free stuff" but then find much mentoring, friendship, and wholesome activities. We are able to

reach into their lives because of these key ingredients – the MMC kits and soap, and 3 campouts for \$10/year per child – these open the doors for many discussions, for example about boys and men, sexuality, child marriage, teen pregnancy, reproduction, HIV and predators.

There is a taboo about parents discussing these topics and it is the auntie's required role. Originally, this was based in great traditional logic of close living and tightly knitted families, but so many things have changed in modern day. So, if the aunt has passed away, which is common, or moved, also common due to land redistribution, then these young girls have no personally special adult to fulfill that function. MMC provides a friendly group of women and girls who are supportive, helping to mend a hole in the cultural fabric.



**We look forward to this work in 2018!**

**Thank you for whatever you are able to do!**

# Zimbabwe



Thanks to a special donation we were able to purchase the chairs required by the Ministry of Education!



**SING!  
DANCE!  
PLAY!**



Happy Healthy Smiling Faces Say *TATENDA CHAIZVO!*





Two preschool buildings were repaired in 2017, *THANKS TO YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!* This traditional technique had created the original roof, which had lasted for 15 years!

Locate and haul gum poles and thatch to the Center.

