

Mhandara Monthly Care Program

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Ancient Ways, a 501(c)(3) Organization
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Mhandara Monthly Care Annual Budget: \$6,566

The MMC Story

Background

Ancient Ways, a 501(c)(3) educational organization based in Scio, Oregon, is actively seeking donations to assist with our *Mhandara* Monthly Care Program for 2019. *Mhandara* is an old-fashioned Shona word meaning women's days. Ancient Ways works in collaboration with Nhimbe for Progress (Nhimbe), established with Cosmas Magaya in 2000 as an under-the-radar club in Zimbabwe, now having evolved into a trust. It was through this partnership and providing youth with well-being camps that Ancient Ways first learned of the critical, unmet needs in this region: those of the girl-child.

In response to this void in 2010, and joining together with Nhimbe, Ancient Ways began addressing these basics, which are seriously missing from some girls lives, such as underwear and monthly care supplies. This gave birth to a program that would prioritize the needs of maturing girls in rural Zimbabwe.

Leadership and Expansion

Patricia Magaya, Cosmas' wife, has spear-headed overseeing the delivery of these services and has done so with great business savvy and a large compassionate heart. For her to be the administrator of this international collaboration in Zimbabwe is 'a big deal' and we are enormously grateful for all of her efforts, kindness and extra work on behalf of MMC.

MMC currently provides services and supplies to girls and young women in six villages in the Mhondoro region, originally covering six schools, with participation expanding to 12 schools in 2018. Our Nhimbe partners anticipate 2019 will be no different with the number of new girls who come of age, and would also like to add 3 more schools. With this increase, the

MMC budget has also grown, and thus the need to reach out to donors that share our vision to continue providing this very personal and humane support. The following overview of MMC and the needs it meets, along with the itemized project budget, demonstrate the tremendous value of any financial contributions towards meeting our fundraising goals for 2019. Thank you for your consideration!

Ancient Ways' Mhandara Monthly Care Vision

1. To reach maturing girls in Zimbabwe,
2. Intercede in their lives with sustainable resources,
3. Provide improved health and well-being opportunities through collective women's wisdom.

Program Overview

Mhandara Monthly Care (MMC) Project roots go back to 2010 with a mission to reach maturing, and often orphaned, girls from rural villages in the Mhondoro region of Zimbabwe, easing their burdens during a vulnerable time. MMC accomplishes this by taking a multifaceted approach, providing girls with physical supplies, weekly mentoring and recreation activities, and overnight camps for teens three times a year.

Supplies

The need for physical supplies was easily recognized when Ancient Ways learned through Nhimbe that many girls in the region did not own underwear, or sometimes just one pair, let alone monthly supplies. Without access to adequate hygiene necessities, including soap, their health suffered and their access to education was diminished, since they could not attend school during their cycle. They also were restricted from sporting activities sometimes simply for fear of their underwear being 3 sizes too large (belonging to their mother).

Upon joining MMC each girl receives a start-up kit of essential supplies including three pairs of underwear, reusable washable pads (which we manufacture within our Nhimbe team), and a soaking bucket. Each MMC package also includes a sewing kit to create a purse to store the supplies, as well as sewing instructions and lessons, preparing them for a life-long solution for monthly care. All girls continually receive a monthly bar of soap. Since most girls live in villages without electricity, indoor plumbing, or trash pickup, washable pads and soap are an extremely practical solution to meeting monthly hygiene needs.

Weekly Mentoring and Recreation Activities

MMC has always recognized that to provide the most beneficial impact, it needs to offer more than just physical supplies. The challenges of coming into womanhood are vast for Zimbabwe girls, many of whom have lost one parent or both. Girls often feel extremely isolated during this vulnerable time, because there is no one with whom to talk. There is a cultural taboo regarding mothers discussing matters related to sexuality and reproduction with their daughters. Traditionally a girl's "auntie" was needed to discuss these matters and provide

guidance. Sadly, many girls do not have aunts nearby to talk to anymore; many are deceased, or have moved away due to land redistribution or to seek economic opportunities in the cities.

MMC creates the opportunity for mentoring during such tender years by providing weekly meetings at a community center in a location central to many villages. At these meetings women from Nhimbe take on the role of “auntie,” leading discussions on a variety of important topics such as reproduction, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, early marriages, and more. Girls are free to ask questions, share stories, and gain insight from women leaders in a supportive environment.

Recreational activities are also part of the weekly meetings and camps, and are a critical part of MMC. Most girls’ daily lives do not include much, if any, leisure activities. MMC meetings include opportunities to learn and play music, dance, play sports, and engage in other peer-to-peer relating. Last year a new set of marimbas was donated to a sister organization that uses the Nhimbe Center, and in 2019 a marimba teacher will offer weekly lessons based on available funding.

Recreational activity boosts self-esteem, and offers respite, even brief, for those living under extremely stressful circumstances. It eases burdens and lifts girls up through the joy of play. We are inspired by the organization Right To Play USA (www.righttoplayusa.org), and its recognition of the immense value of recreation for youth, particularly those living with continual hardship.

Teen Care Camps

These camps were how we first learned the intimate details of the girls’ lives – that of limited underwear, monthly care supplies and soap. The girls opened up to the adults in unprecedented ways. It was obvious the need was great, like a water balloon that had met capacity - they came forth with so much openness and trust we were truly touched.

We continue to hold these camps, feeding them multiple meals (which they help prepare) and organizing an incredible opportunity, without electricity (solar lighting has been added) or running water (the Center actually has a hand-pump on the well). Our 2018 camps had 235 girls attending. We welcome younger girls to attend as they too are very interested in the workings of their bodies, as well as feel the nurturing and protection of this collective.

2019 Forecast and Budget

Forecast

For 2019 Nhimbe will visit three new schools in the Mhondoro region with presentations on the MMC program, allowing more girls these incredible opportunities. We estimate an increase of 105 new girls joining MMC, along with 248 continuing in the program. Our goals include providing start-up kits for new girls, and continuing monthly soap distribution, weekly *hurukuro natete* (discussions with aunts) and recreational activities, and holding three overnight Teen Care Camps. We will also offer weekly marimba song and dance

lessons for the oldest interested teens. Every year the challenge of inflation in Zimbabwe continues, and financial support from our donors is critical to our continued success.

2019 Budget

\$2,611 Supplies

- \$1,890 Start-up Kits for 105 new girls (underwear, pads, bucket, purse sewing kit)
105 kits x \$18/kit = \$1,890
- \$721 Soap for 353 girls (new and returning) for 2019
\$0.17 per bar x 353 girls x 12 months = \$721

\$2,295 Mentoring and Distribution (this includes weekly meetings, and three 3-day camps)

- \$6.50 per girl x 353 girls = \$2,295

\$1,660 Social Growth Activities

- \$1,560 Marimba/Music lessons (bus fare and wages for marimba teacher from Harare)
- \$100 Sporting Equipment (We hope to acquire donated soccer balls and Frisbees so these funds ship decent quality long-lasting items in a USPS box)

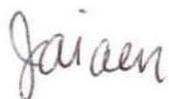
\$6,566 Total

Conclusion

MMC has received a tremendously positive response from local village residents, inspiring us to continue growing and improving the program. While most girls initially join the MMC program for the physical supplies, once engaged they find a supportive environment, where the challenges of coming into womanhood can be openly discussed with other girls and women. Recreational and social activities provide joy and stress relief in challenging times. The physical supplies MMC provides are the key to the door that brings collective women's wisdom into their lives, creating a cross-cultural partnership that will uplift and empower them for generations to come.

We welcome all ideas and assistance towards these goals. Please join us in supporting the health, dignity, and solidarity of women and girls in 2019!

Tatenda Chaizvo (Thank you very much!)



Jaiaen Beck, founder and Executive Director Ancient Ways