



# Our Children Your Children In Zimbabwe

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Executive Director

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## Special Points of Interest

- 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”.
- SIX VILLAGES create the Nhimbe for Progress core since 2000.

## INSIDE

Nhimbe Graduating 26 Pupils!	2
COVID-19 Impact Now!	2
Volunteers Recognized with Bonuses	3
Nhimbe Library is a Happening Concern!	4
Well Building Continues!	5
Oregon Bottle Drop	5
Listen In! Mwoyochena CDs	5
Recurring Donations!	5
How Else Can You Help?	5
Employer Matching	5
The Market Place	5
MMC is Magnificent!	6

## ~ Nhimbe Preschool 20th Anniversary! ~



**It's with deep pleasure that I'm reaching out to you with Nhimbe News. What is going on in our neck of the woods in Mhondoro, Zimbabwe?**

Nhimbe for Progress has just finished its 20<sup>th</sup> year operating the preschool and we are so very grateful and excited to celebrate! On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December we had a gathering of parents, staff, and local leaders in honor of our head teacher, Febbie Shava, who is also our current co-director. She has been doing an outstanding job for the entire 20 years. Quite an amazing feat!

We celebrated the day with a ceremony of gifts. She received a lovely US-made walnut and metal plaque engraved with the board's sentiment of appreciation, and wrapped in a silk scarf. She was incredibly surprised and overcome with emotion. This was something that no one has ever seen before. She was also given a monetary bonus for the year, above and beyond the normal bonus that all the volunteer staff receive each December. Muda Magaya, her co-director shares,

*“Febbie could not believe that the Board was counting the years. She sends her gratitude to you all for the continued support, in appreciation to the whole community in the USA who go beyond their means of survival and make sure they donate something towards assisting the community here.*

*Febbie is re-building a small place consisting of one bedroom and a dining room, which was swept away by heavy winds last year. She has managed all this because of the compensation she received from Nhimbe. Febbie has also been able to look after her relative's children who have been left orphaned and she has taken the responsibility to take them to school and give them a better life.”*

Coming to Nhimbe originally because of this fantastic large love of children, which has fueled Febbie's every move, she innocently walked into a life transforming path. From being a lead preschool teacher, to becoming the head of the preschool, and then head of the Girl Guides becoming the Mhandara Monthly Care (MMC) leader, she now also co-directs the entire project with Muda. She stretches herself from reporting to the district council and keeping all of our Nhimbe affairs with the school on track, to preschool meal planning and delivery, as well as weekly serving

the MMC girls' program, both at Nhimbe, and Hombe (the nearby satellite schools MMC programs).

As the most experienced of the teachers, Febbie works with the class of children who are graduating to attend the grade schools in the nearby area. We send children off to the main six Nhimbe schools, but also there are other schools for those little ones who walk very long distances from other villages.

We always get great commendations from all of these schools about how our precious children are doing, recognizing their unique preparation. Besides getting enough and varied food for their neural pathways to develop properly, they are also getting great stimulation with languages, both Shona and English, as well as with music, counting, colors, home keeping, and all of those special early childhood development learning areas.

**Please follow this link**, to support our preschool. Its only because of your continued dedication to assist, that we are able to operate this incredible program.



**Thank you so much for getting involved. It means so much, to so many people...Tatenda Chaizvo!**

This little girl Simead Matongo's parents are both alive and together. They have a toilet and a well at their home.



This little girl Sharleen Ziriwo's parents are both alive and together. They do not have a toilet or a well, either one, at their home.



## ~ NHIMBE GRADUATING 26 PUPILS! ~

Graduating the preschool children, giving them diplomas, and watching their parents swing them high in the air, ululating in joy, is always a fun community day. Everything was put together in one event on 12/20/22, and now Nhimbe has graduated 26 new first graders out of the 78 in attendance in 2022.

Sharing their songs (click here) and solo acts of counting or identifying colors in English, always marks the day with hope for the community.

Check out the race with traditional baby carrying here (dolls made by MMC)! All of these parents know the importance of education, and some know its value as well, and will continue to emphasize the child's studies at home as they go through the Zimbabwean system.

Many parents graduated, if at all, with rather low marks. Many also don't speak fluent English, which in a bi-lingual country is then difficult to gain

ground. The academic track was not where they were headed, but instead sustenance farming. Some basics of reading and writing are certainly helpful, but not always possible. Education is something that has been interrupted repeatedly for many, particularly since the war in the 70's and then the ensuing years of hyperinflation and resulting economic pressures that have not abated.



## ~ COVID-19 IMPACT NOW! ~

**The latest school requirements in Zimbabwe are specifying that all children have plenty of space in their classrooms and are not to be overcrowded. What a clearly great idea!** We have been using other buildings on the premises to give the children space, but the officials are saying that is not workable now. They "should be" designated preschool huts.

Unfortunately, we were just now told of this regulation and so are in a push to build two more classrooms for the

preschool to operate effectively, and to have them ready "yesterday".

**This is an unexpected \$2,800 to build the two huts—we were caught quite unaware. If you are able to assist with this building effort, any amount will help. Please click here to contribute to greatest need and type "preschool building" in the message. Thank you so very much for whatever you can do! Tatenda Chaizvo!**



## ~ VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED WITH BONUSES ~

It's often been said that the heart of Nhimbe is the preschool, and this December 20th celebration was where that was greatly felt. To top it off, the board also chose to give each staff volunteer a goat, hoping for many more opportunities to spring from that (and their bellies). Please see the response from Muda Magaya, the project's co-director,

*"Season's greetings from Mhondoro! We are all in the festive mood here and what better way to celebrate Christmas than getting livestock (goats) as a thank you for all the work all year round. On my behalf and on behalf of the Nhimbe staff allow me to extend our gratitude to you and the Nhimbe board for the unexpected gift. Times are tough here in rural Zimbabwe but when we get a gift like that from family oceans away it eases the pressure on life here. The gift of livestock can be compared to the gift of life, it is a gift that keeps on giving. The female goats went to the female staff and the hope and belief is more goats will come of it and one can always say 'I got the goat from Nhimbe!'. You have planted a seed we all pray will germinate and be a gift also for generations to come for the staff members. Once again Thank You and the board for the thought."*

Muda shared also that there was much dancing, ululating and feelings of being deeply appreciated.

Would you purchase a goat for one of these families? **Please click here, donate to "greatest need", and write "goat" in the special message. Your donation would be an enormous help!**

With a goat, the funds are put to something everyone can benefit from, and all the challenging tasks of shopping around, negotiating, and transport have been completed, so it's a win-win. We hope to see many happy returns from these potential nannies. We bought 12 in all, at around \$55 each, so are looking to raise \$660 to cover this special gift.

We've had a very rough full year in Mhondoro regarding weather challenges, and therefore a lack of food to eat. With your help we were able to assist them for over an entire year with nearly \$4,000 worth of their maize staple. That was such a gift to everyone involved. It definitely is a great way to keep morale up during such depressed economic times, and encourage hope for the future.

**Thank you for every way that you are extending your funds to make the difference! Every amount counts! Tatenda Chaizvo!**



**Thank you for being part of the solution!  
We all deserve the basics!**

*We began the library expansion in June 2021! Oh my! Things do take a long time.*

*We are only half way there with the building part of the program, but do remain steadfast.*

*Now, our focus is to paint and build shelves. And this coming time of year is great for dry activities. The next phase is to understand better what*

*we can do besides ship books, although that is a huge key! The cost of books in Zimbabwe is great and the availability low.*

*We need to know from a Zimbabwean cultural perspective what the logical steps are to share this resource. Recall that the written word is a recent invention to the Shona. The interest in using the written word as a resource is not the first go-to. The music itself comes in dreams and that creative right brain door is wide open!*

*If you are interested in helping in any way, please feel free to reach out!*



**~ NHIMBE LIBRARY IS A HAPPENING CONCERN! ~**

**If you have a favorite book you would like to share, please feel free! First, check out this google doc that shows just what we have on hand.**

**If we have no copies of your favorite title available, please do kindly send to the PO Box in Scio. Any books that we send must be in great condition since they will see a great deal of use! Check out a slide show of the latest shipment here! (Also, check the building of the library on this same link) Purity Zaranyika is our librarian. She was in love with the beautiful shipment!**

**We are expanding the actual size of the library as we work on a plan for more learning opportunities!**

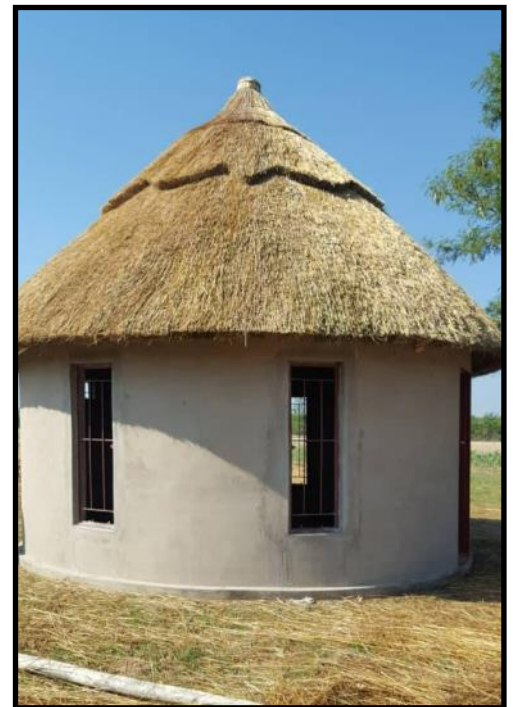
Of course, growing up in the US and attending the library reading circle every Saturday morning, and having my mom's influence of being an avid reader, has imprinted me with this torch to keep developing the Nhimbe library.

There is nothing like expanding one's horizons through other's insights and creativity. It's a type of mind-building that is a requirement to change up one's life. Its also a way to bring hope, resilience, and freedom from oppression to every corner of the earth!

Here, now, we have podcasts and all kinds of materials at our fingertips, but there, although many have cell phones, the internet isn't an option in the rural area, even if you miraculously have the money to buy a data package. The network itself is a broken system. And, with the only real libraries at far away universities, Nhimbe really does fill that void.

The average is still five students to one book at the local school, and these are strictly the curriculum texts. So, any reading for pleasure or exploration and discovery is only done at our Nhimbe library.

**Thank you for all the ways you have contributed over the years to get us on the book path! Let's follow that torch! Scroll down this link to the Education section and find the library, donate now, and know that you do make the difference!**



# ~ WELL BUILDING CONTINUES! W.A.T.E.R! ~

**Wells And Toilets Everyone's Right! W.A.T.E.R! is for everyone. 2022 has brought us another successful year of well building, thanks to your enormous generosity!** Abundant water makes all the difference in gardening and increasing prosperity in the entire area. Since unemployment is so high, the residents growing their own food is of paramount importance. Without a varied diet (not just the maize staple of the very poor), the body can't get the nutrients needed. Growing their own is a key!

**With 13 wells in all, four were built for the elderly this year.** These widows all have no one helping them and so we paid for the digging, which normally we ask the family to help with part of it. This supports Nhimbe in being founded from a business principle, rather than total charity. We continue to do our best, to educate along these lines, but when the unemployment is so high and one is surrounded by such poverty, it's a hard one to ask for anything in return. Now that

the water level has plummeted, they realistically can't dig the entire well, but they still pitch in.

Everyone is always so grateful that the elderly can be assisted. Imagine no social security, or no job that you retired from since you haven't been working, or no assisted living retirement condo...you've got whatever you've got in front of you, and just do your best to survive. A good well can help change survive to thrive!

Sometimes the widows are living alone and other times they are responsible for grandchildren. These kids also need to get off to a decent start with their health and well-being. Thank you for your support of this program...we have 154 wells now.

We also continue to work on the repainting of the lids, due to the massive repairs and changes over the last 18 months. Have faith—your pictures are forthcoming!

If you have never watched the videos about how the wells are built, **check**

**out this page we created** previously...if you missed it, it's worth the watch! We appreciate all of how you have helped to change the substandard living conditions in Mhondoro. Your contributions to a well make a difference! **Please click this link to build a well, or be part of a team-built well. Thank you so much!**



## ~ OREGON BOTTLE DROP ~

Can BottleDrop be an easy way for you to **HELP WITH OUR PROGRAMS**? One bag of returnables buys Three, (yes, three) girls monthly soap for 1 year! **CHOOSE Ancient Ways** as your charity...thank you! [BOTTLEDROPCENTER.com](http://BOTTLEDROPCENTER.com)

## ~ LISTEN IN! ~



Our Online Shop helps you listen to the clips on the incredible **MWOYOCHENA kuZimbabwe CDs**, all donated by the best musicians. If you don't have a copy, you should! The song selections are exquisite.

## ~ RECURRING DONATIONS ~

Please consider a recurring donation with a bank draft or credit card! We have a new link on the website. You can set it up without our assistance. **CHECK THIS OUT!** Set for monthly, quarterly, or annually for any amount! Thanks for considering!

## ~ HOW CAN YOU HELP? ~

Several ideas here: Go to [SMILE.AMAZON.com](http://SMILE.AMAZON.com) to let Amazon donate a % of your purchases to Ancient Ways! Become an Ancient Ways member! Share our story! Donate your time... any gesture of time you offer is greatly appreciated! *Tatenda Chaizvo!*

## ~ EMPLOYER MATCHING! ~

If your employer offers donation matching (**click for example**), your \$10 becomes \$20, your \$50 becomes \$100! Ask your employer if that is a program they support. Some employers also donate based upon your volunteer hours as well. **Thanks for checking it out!**

## ~ THE MARKET PLACE! ~

Ancient Ways now has much of its inventory online! These items have been hand-made by villagers who are excellent artists. They work to pay school fees, put food on their table, while bringing their art into the world. **Please check it out online!**

**Nhimbe's MMC, Mhandara Monthly Care, has grown stronger and more efficient as we have honed how we deliver the program and serve the girls.** We began a step at a time, starting in 2010 with Underwear for Overthere! And then, evolving organically with many US volunteers' assistance in helping with designs. 2022 saw 393 new girls receiving start-up kits!

Everyone there, the families, teachers and girls themselves, are all so grateful! The families know that we are helping to share the traditional values, and support what the extended family used to be able to provide, when the aunties, the *tetes*, were living, and/or close by. Not only has disease and malnutrition, wiped out one or more generations of the population, but also because of the land redistribution, families are no longer living centrally.

Families instead are spread all over Zimbabwe. This is much like what happened in the US mid-1900's, decentralizing everything, and so similarly, extended families are no longer close together.

MMC fills that traditional niche, bringing the girls together with *tetes* to provide private conversations and guidance.



The school system is also very happy that we are offering a hybrid of teen counseling, talking about hygiene, sexuality, boys, and STDs, for example. Many girls have been told to attend MMC as part of their school curriculum! We have the best, and maybe, only program around.

Educationally they are also acquiring skill sets learning sewing, playing marimba and dance, as well as sports. They experience hands-on community service too. The girls support our preschoolers by making them stuffed sewn or knitted toys, as well as help older residents by volunteering with yard care. Even without our weekend camps, we offer a high impact opportunity and carefully designed program.

The actual recipients, the girls, love MMC. They attend on Friday afternoons learning music, sewing and ball play. They completely appreciate someone talking "straight". Traditionally, sex and boys are taboo to discuss with parents, and saved for the *tete*.

**"Thank you for however you can assist our MMC girls in building their self-esteem and 'enoughness' during these tender years."**

But, what if you have no one around? What do you do then? What about if your parents are very poor and can't provide you with basic monthly supplies? Even panties are sometimes not affordable, so we buy "underwear for over there" as part of the start-up kit.

Thank you for however you can assist our MMC girls in building their self-esteem and 'enoughness' during these tender years. Together we can have an effect on teen pregnancy, childhood marriage, and reproductive diseases!

**Your contributions do make a difference...more than you can imagine!**

**Please click here to help support the unfolding beauty of maturing girls in Zimbabwe! Thank you so much!**

