



Our Children Your Children In Zimbabwe

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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 1999

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~ Heading into Ancient Ways' 30th Anniversary! ~



Ancient Ways began as a non-profit 30 years ago!

In 1993 we started with a Lacombe School-wide OMSI science day in my son's kindergarten, and grew along with the children and their parents. We evolved through many marimba classrooms from our living room, to the remodeled barn, to Albany Parks and Rec, and eventually both Corvallis and Albany's

First United Methodist churches simultaneously, even touching down in Silverton. It's been a 30-year *nhemamusasa* (temporary shelter).

As of June we have settled into Corvallis' First Christian Church (FCC), holding four classes weekly. We also occupy two donated rehearsal studios, one in North Albany and the other in Lacombe headquarters (population 546), where we are off-grid for the average music consumer, but a stronghold that carried us through Covid times. These classes

offer a penetrating heart-space where we learn and share the sweet magic of music on marimba! Plus, these unique folks who have been touched by a yearning to study the music are also a key fundraising arm, through their classes and performing.

Both opportunities raise much-needed funding for the Nhimbe for Progress programs and services, as well as help us tell the story. The music certainly raises awareness and gets the ear of many a passerby at a variety of venues.

Our current student population has a phenomenal 200 years of combined experience, and along with the hundreds more of retired players, have been a huge contribution to our overall success.

Thank you for your part in our vision - whether through the music or humanitarian outreach in Zimbabwe!



You don't have to go all the way to Zimbabwe to play marimba!



“ Updated paint plus preschool kitchen rethatching and new toilet construction made for a very industrious year of building, pleasantly fostering freshened self-esteem amongst the volunteers. “

Nhimbe for Progress Preschool

~ UNPRECEDENTED GRADUATION OF 34 PRESCHOOLERS ~

What are two of the greatest gifts we can give young children?

How about early childhood education and a great meal? I love to think that with the ever-changing tech landscape and political climates around the world, knowing that your child can continue with the tradition of school and have a full belly to boot is a heart-warming daily cup of joy. It doesn't remove

life's suffering and hardship, but it does create an avenue for their future potential, and reminds the parents to hold hope.

Not much has changed in rural Zimbabwe over the last 25 years since my first trip except that Nhimbe for Progress has grown from an idea into a reality, which is actually an amazing progression. The rural area remains inherently challenged with minimal in-

frastructure, poor or impassable roads, and little network, all overshadowed by tough parameters to negotiate for making any headway. But - our preschool graduates get a better start than most children everywhere in Zimbabwe!

We remain a model preschool, thanks to your continued help...[click here to support our Nhimbe preschool!](#)

We continue to serve an average of 75 children a year, all divided into three classrooms, and this year are graduating 34.

In 2023 we built and remodeled so that each group has its own class space with-



out counting on the library and play area for rotation. Updated paint, plus preschool kitchen rethatching and new toilet construction made for a very industrious year of building, pleasantly fostering freshened self-esteem amongst the volunteers.

Mini-Blackboards donated by Sundborn in 2002



We also just received a box of donated books here, many perfect for our Nhimbe preschool, heading soon to the Nhimbe Library. **Check out these preschool graduation videos [\(#1\)](#) and [\(#2\)](#)!**



~ CONTINUING THE NHIMBE PRESCHOOL LEGACY IN 2024 ~

PRESCHOOL KITCHEN RETHATCH IN PROGRESS JUNE '23



to speak highly of the positive ways one's life has been impacted, which carries a promise that tomorrow will be better than today.

Thank you for helping us to make tomorrow an improvement over today in our little corner of rural Mhondoro Zimbabwe, albeit a very gradual process. [Click here to make a recurring donation!](#) Thank you!

Many thanks for all the ways you support us in this endeavor to uplift the people in Zimbabwe, the Nhimbe residents, and most particularly their children. Sometimes touching another's life isn't always a direct hand. Sometimes it is the optimism that arises from seeing one's neighbor being assisted or being able

[Your donations do make the difference...we so appreciate that you are part of the solution!](#)

The "right to play" is often recognized as benefitting refugee children in war-torn countries, but then is overlooked for those living in constant economic hardship and political instability. Tatenda Chaizvo!



"The obvious recipients are the girls, but in reality, the long-term impact of them staying in school is enormous and no amount of record keeping will document how future generations will benefit from this simple program."



"Besties" - MMC brings maturing girls together.

~ MHANDARA MONTHLY CARE MMC SOARS AGAIN ~

In 2023 we reached more girls than ever with MMC. Topping out at 435, we managed to provide our MMC start-up kits to all of these girls, with only about 10% of them being from Nhimbe villages. The remaining 90% of the girls are called Hombe, meaning from the other schools. We are collaborating with the teachers, who are partnering us all with the Girl Child Network. We are very happy to see our MMC start-up kits and soap in the hands of the maturing girls.



Preparing for the Girls to Come to Distribution

These pictures show the distribution process at the local Gavaza primary and secondary schools.

This count of 435 does not include the many girls still using start-up kits from previous years, as its only the new kits given out this year. The actual number attending the regular meetings is beyond our

capacity to track. Record keeping in this regard, being a manual operation, is not within our grasp to share, although we are grateful it's all written down.

[Check out Nhimbe girls singing on distribution day, here!](#)

What we do know is that 2023 is the first year that a girl or two from 2018 asked for a new kit...so rather than a 3-year life-span, they last 5-6 years. Just guessing, but I imagine they were shy to ask for more, and the kits could have been replaced sooner.

Each year we improve our record-keeping, but as we expand outside of Nhimbe to reach the Hombe girls, each satellite school feels a little like a daddy long-legs.

[More to read and listen here in this 2023 blog.](#)

In April we had a couple from Eugene visit Zimbabwe on their way to S. Africa, and they were able to be part of the distribution process in an intimate way. [Check it out!](#)

[Here too, Gabriella is enjoying the dance with Fortunate and the girls.](#)

THE MMC MUSIC PROGRAM

Additionally, we continue with music lessons, which includes marimba, song and dance. [Here is a little video](#) that shares how all the ages are learning dance and song together.

[And, this dancer looks so happy!](#)

[This classroom recording really shows how much the girls are benefiting from the new marimba space.](#)



~ MMC MUSIC PROGRAM GROWS ON INTO 2024 ~

We are so grateful for all the ways you have supported our work with the MMC program.

The obvious recipients are the girls, but in reality, the long-term impact of them staying in school is enormous and no amount of record keeping will document how future generations will benefit from this simple program.

Additionally, the local officials, politically and within the educational system, are so very appreciative of your small gift of support that has

far-reaching consequences.

MMC is empowerment at its best...education in so many aspects of life joined with physical supplies.

Our Nhimbe MMC girls continue to make puppets for the Nhimbe preschool children as one of their sewing and service projects, plus attend weekly meetings to study about their

Puppet Making on the Porch



bodies, peer pressure, and a myriad of topics related to blossoming.

Fortunate Takendesa, Music Lead



Thank you for helping with MMC.

Consider contributing here – you make a difference!

You can make a donation to regularly work with the MMC program by going to this page on the website to find recurring donations!

Yes, everyone deserves the basics!

~ HEART WORKS ELDER CARE ~



There are many ways to reach the elderly. We began several years ago to provide them free greens. We also began digging their wells for them, whereas the family normally digs the new well. 2023 saw us make a leap towards a rich donation herit-

age through comforters and quilts being sewn and sent specifically for the elders. **Each year a few of the ambuyas (grandmothers) will be recognized with a lovely hand-made heart-**

inspired quilt or comforter.

You might wonder why an ambuya quilt...I mean, with all the suffering why focus on the elders? Zimbabwe gets cold in the winter. Many people sleep on the bone-chilling floor - sometimes concrete, sometimes dirt. This recognition gift brings comfort. **Do join us with whatever you can offer!** Materials are all donated except batting, which by buying in bulk we have the price down to \$9/quilt. Shipping is \$45. Comforter tying is being donated. We expect the quilting will be donated for \$20. **Please see the recent blog here.** Thank you for your help!

~ W.A.T.E.R! SIX MORE WELLS IN 2023 BRINGS 160 ~



We love to build wells. Easy access to water is a rare commodity if all you have is a shovel. With the shovel you can hit water, but then you need 1,000 bricks to line the walls so it won't collapse, plus some cement for the top to create a lid, which keeps debris out.

Then too, you must hire a builder. All these things cost money, and so many residents don't have a real well, but instead just a hole in the ground. It doesn't seem possible that clean fresh water is

so difficult to obtain when it is, after all, just underground. It's not like a dry desert without any water at all!

We were able to build 6 more wells, bringing the total of useable wells to 160. I think you recall that we had over 20 wells collapse a few years back and we have rebuilt them, and so realistically, we have built more than the 160.

This photo shows how a team of donors has built this well. Any amount towards the cost is helpful! Thank you!

~ 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



~ LISTEN IN ~

Our Online Shop helps you listen to the clips on the incredible MWOYUCHENAkuZimbabwe.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 up monthly, quarterly, or annually for any amount! Thanks for considering!

~ HOW CAN YOU HELP? ~

Several ideas here: Become an Ancient Ways member! Share our story! Donate your time...any gesture of time you offer is greatly appreciated! We are always so grateful for administrative skills. Just reach out and let's talk! We thank you very much! *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 and put food on their table, while bringing their art into the world. [Please check it out online!](#)

~ EXPANDED LIBRARY UPDATE ~

As you see from reading the background on the website here, the library began in 2001 and started with just a few books coming in suitcases. Eventually, we began to ship books. The original library was very small. Not only have there not been enough shelves for the books, but also there is only enough room for a couple of people to sit inside. Two years ago we began by building a larger space to accommodate growth. At year end, we learned that the preschool needed two more rooms to follow government regulations, so we

gave them that new hut. We also gave them the old library hut. What was then available was the "guest house" that we used for the preschool and the MMC campouts. This building has a solar system installed - Pluto included :*) - and is a great building with separate rooms. But, it had a roof that was leaking.

The re-thatching is quite a process and takes days, just like re-roofing a house. Please check out this very short video giving you the flavor. Below,

the pictures give a quick overview of the repairs. Now complete, we are able to move into the library space, but will need to build shelves. Things take time!

We continue to collect books to send, with shipping running over \$100 per box. Before sending any books to us, please check here to see if we have your favorite title.

We hear that the local schools, although extremely poor, have installed computers.

Even though electricity is not consistent, it's fantastic that things are moving that direction, since we know that the children of today everywhere in the world will be using comput-

ers. We are very interested in what computers might look like in our new library. Is there computer-assisted instruction that might be available without internet, since that seems like folly at this point? But who knows? Maybe internet too is a possibility. Covid made changes in our world that may benefit.

Electricity has been discussed before and may be making its rounds again. If you have interest in helping us take this next step in progress, please reach out!



~ NHIMBE COMES FULL CIRCLE IN 2024 AS A 25 YEAR-OLD! ~

Beginning in 1999, Nhimbe for Progress was just an outline on paper, with a bit-too-broad list, seeking to identify the reasonable in the unreasonable. No one should live with such uncertainty day to day, nor with the enormous difficulties that come with lack of clean water, nutritional poverty and lack of educational opportunities. These were on our list, plus another dozen major points, yearning for some magic auto-pilot that would self-correct and get everything back on track.

Going on 25 years later, we have done a great deal towards uplifting the residents, reaching the families directly as well as a majority of their relatives. In Zimbabwe tradition, one is not isolated nor separate from one's relatives.

Adoption is rare except within the family, since one absorbs "their own" after any kind of tragic loss.

Cosmas and I began Nhimbe without any thoughts that either of us would leave the planet...it wasn't until later in his life, that Cosmas realized his health was failing and he began to bring in Mudavanhu, "Muda" his son, and explain some of the nuances, procedures and decisions he was managing and juggling for Nhimbe.

In March 2000, Muda was 17 years old when we began Nhimbe, and he was faced with his mother's passing, just 3 days into my first trip. **Muda now is the co-director of Nhimbe, with Febby Shava, who is preschool head and teacher, plus leader of Mhandara Monthly Care.**

July 2023, Muda left Zimbabwe for his first U.S. music tour and meetings with the Ancient Ways Board of directors. Having grown up in a family that cherished the music, with his father Cosmas, deeply involved in sharing the musical traditions, as well as his grandfather being a nanga, Muda was rooted in all things mbira.



Photo of Muda at 4 years

Hopefully you are one of the people that met Muda - his name meaning, "he who loves people", explaining his friendly and loveable personality. And maybe too, you heard his mbira playing during his stay?

Muda recounts a wonderful visit here:

"Unbelievable hospitality and special thanks to my dad for creating good relationships, which not only benefit his im-

mediate family but the community in Mhondoro.

Quite a big difference in culture, where Americans are not afraid to hit the nail on the head, whereas in Zimbabwe we indirectly relay certain messages. Enjoyed every moment of my visit."

Muda is back in the swing of things there with many guests from here visiting soon, and everyone there of course expecting big things from this young man who went to America!