



**malawi
children's
village**

A VILLAGE-BASED
ORPHAN CARE PROJECT

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2016



Dear Donors and Friends,

Twenty years ago, some Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Malawians came together to consider the plight of Malawi. Already one of the poorest countries in the world, the AIDS epidemic was overwhelming the country. Among other problems, there were an estimated 800,000 orphans in the country, and that number was certain to grow. With the social fabric in great stress, the future for these vulnerable children was bleak.

While the size of the problem seemed to preclude successful resolution, the group felt compelled to at least try to do what it could. That decision led to the creation of Malawi Children's Village, a village-based orphan care project that focuses on 38 villages along the southwestern shore of Lake Malawi.

Twenty years later, the dream continues, with more than 2000

orphans currently being served, and more than 12,000 orphan "graduates" making a difference in villages, towns and government. Though there was no way to respond nationally, MCV has achieved success in its catchment area, and that is portrayed in the articles in this newsletter.

This success is not happenstance. It would not be possible without the hundreds of loyal donors whose contributions cover annual village-based orphan care (\$30) and secondary school tuition (\$255). Though small by American standards, these costs are well beyond the reach of Malawian households that have taken in children.

MCV also benefits from a growing number of partners: Open Arms provides rehabilitative care for infant/toddlers; Engineers without Borders (Anchorage) has installed a safe water system; THREEafrica provides tuition support for girls to attend secondary

school; a number of American primary school-to-school initiatives support Malawian government primary schools. From its inception, MCV has benefited from the generosity of Rotary Clubs, including: Seneca Falls and Clifton Springs (NY) support for 25 village-based irrigation systems; Kansas City support for malaria bed-nets and a new initiative you can read about in this newsletter; Palmer (AK) support of housing repair; and of course continuous support from the "home" club in Limbe, Malawi.

And finally, the innate resilience of Malawians, in the villages, on the staff, and on the local governing board is the underlying reason for MCV's success.

We remain ever grateful to the hundreds of you who support them as they continue this noble work. Zikomo!

Tsalani Bwino,

Tom Vitaglione, Board President

Njala Update: Hunger strikes almost every year in Malawi. When it comes it is known as the njala season. (Njala means hunger in Chichewa.)

As reported last year, the devastating floods of 2015 wiped out the maize crop. As predicted there was famine starting as early as August a year ago. There was great hope and anticipation of good rains this last rainy season. It did not happen. The price of imported maize skyrocketed and was well beyond the reach of the villagers who



Orphan care givers lined up to receive food support when a similar famine struck in 2005.

live in a largely subsistence society.

You made a difference!

The focus was orphans and other vulnerable children. Last summer (2015) in anticipation of what was coming, you bought 10,000 pounds of maize. In addition after the first of this year you purchased an additional 20,000 pounds of maize for the most vulnerable families in the MCV villages. From the villagers in the 38 MVC villages, zikomo kwambiri!! (Thank you very much.)

GRACIOUS CELEBRATES TEN YEARS

By Jesse Kwiek and Vincent Sisya

The idea for Gracious Secondary School began in 2000, when 15 orphan students, each of whom was sponsored by MCV to learn in government schools, were unhappy with their learning conditions. They wanted a school with qualified teachers and enough learning materials to obtain a good education. The students expressed their concerns to the Village Volunteers and MCV staff. They bought the concept. Fundraising for the construction of a classroom block started immediately.

In January 2006, Gracious opened its doors with five teachers, and one class of fifty students. Today, ten years later, Gracious has fifteen teachers, six supporting staff, and it offers instruction in Form one (grade 9) through Form four (grade 12). Each Form has two streams, each with an average of sixty students per class.

Gracious is a member of the Independent Schools Association of



Gracious students at work

Malawi (ISAMA) and is registered with the Ministry of Education of Malawi.

Aligning with its mission to serve orphans and other vulnerable children, MCV currently provides school tuition, lunch fees, and school materials for 110 orphan students.

The results from the school have been nothing short of outstanding. In 2015, 86% of Gracious students passed the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), far exceeding the 55% national pass rate. This success

has not gone unnoticed. Mr. Stanford Mangani, the Chipoka Village Volunteer and the chairperson for all Village Volunteers, shares the following:

"The school brought hope to all villagers because orphans and their children are able to get a good education which shapes their future. We are grateful for the school, and as a community, we will continue to take care of it."

Although Gracious has excelled, it can still be better. The school currently lacks a dining hall, there is insufficient housing available to the teachers, and with a new curriculum, Gracious needs to buy new books. Mr. Raymond E. Kapito, the Head Teacher observes:

"The academic performance of students is improving every year. However, for the school to achieve its vision, we need your continued support. We strive to make Gracious Private Secondary School one of the best schools in Malawi and to send many of our students to universities and college."

THE VILLAGES OF MCV'S VILLAGE-BASED CARE: SAMAMA

By Mary Pomeroy and Frances Vitaglione

MCV supports orphans and vulnerable children from 38 villages in Mangochi, Malawi. Samama is our fourth village to be profiled in this series. Read the others at www.malawichildrensvillage.org

Samama Village is laid out flat between the road to Mangochi and Lake Malawi. Being close to the road has advantages. It is easy to get there (except in the rainy season when being low and flat means ankle deep mud.)

Samama boasts a full primary school including a two classroom block with Headmaster's office and two latrines, all built by MCV.

When last year's solar light project installed a light in one of the classrooms, the workers came back at night after the first day's installation to see if the light was working. They found the classroom already full of



Samama houses can be seen in the distance from the main road.

students studying!

Of the 42 orphans in Samama Village, 36 are school age. MCV supplies school uniforms and five are on scholarship at Gracious Secondary School at MCV.

The village economic base is fishing and subsistence farming, with two

irrigation schemes supported by MCV with 25 farmers participating.

This past year MCV also provided 24 bed-nets to mothers with infants to help prevent malaria.

The Samama Village headman is Stefano Mwaliwa. His two Village Volunteers are Mike Msosa and Moses Jere. (Note: There are two Village Volunteers in each of the villages supported by MCV.)

Since the beginning of MCV, 18 years ago, Mike has been an MCV Village Volunteer. He particularly notes the assistance provided in the areas of education, health and food security.

Mike says he has benefited personally through increased knowledge (MCV has a monthly training for volunteers) and incentives such as bicycles, tires, and monthly stipend.

Samama is just one of the 38 nearby villages that continue to benefit from the association with MCV and from your generous donations.

MCV AND PARTNERS PROVIDE LIGHT AND EMPOWERMENT

By Elizabeth Uscovicz



Teachers pose with their certificates after completion of the SEE Program Training. Teams of two will implement a new after-school program in MCV area primary schools during the next year.

“You treated us as equals, and you did it with love.”

This comment from Gladwell, a primary school teacher in Mangochi district is perhaps the greatest gift I received in working on the Student Empowerment and Education (SEE) Program at MCV in April, 2016.

I led a three-person Vocational Training Team to MCV, as part of a grant from the Rotary Foundation. The SEE Program project was sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Limbe (Malawi) and Kansas City Plaza (Missouri, USA). Working in cooperation with MCV and the Light Foundation, the project installed solar lighting and study resources in schools and trained primary school teachers in an after-school program designed to empower children, especially girls, to stay in school.



Gladwell shows off a new Solar powered light.

We worked with ten primary school teachers. Together, the teachers and trainers collaboratively reviewed the curriculum for the program and the teachers refined it so that it was culturally and age appropriate for their students. The teacher training took place over five days.

While the training was taking place, The Light Foundation installed solar panels at eight primary schools with assistance from MCV staff members Vincent and Austin. Study materials and desks constructed by the MCV Carpentry and Joinery program were also installed at the schools.

The participating teachers received certificates of completion in their SEE program training, and officially took ownership of the program in a ceremony officiated by MCV Executive Director Felix Chirombo. Over the next school year, teams of two teachers will implement the after-school program in five of the primary schools serving villages in the MCV catchment area.

Malawian children, especially girls, face several challenges along their path to an education, including early marriage, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. In a country where the World Bank reports average annual income of about \$255 per capita, tenacity is more than an admirable trait. It's a survival skill.

Multitasking: Village girls learn how to multitask from their mothers, walking barefoot several times a day from the village water pump with 70-pound buckets of potable water on their heads, babies on their backs, and another child or two by the hand. I saw village girls supervising younger siblings while pounding maize, herding goats, and trying to get homework done. These girls exhibited a tenacity that humbled me.

Tradition: According to a United Nations Development Program background paper on Malawi, 47 percent of girls finish standard 8 - the equivalent of the 8th grade. Family influences, the tradition of early marriage and teen pregnancy can easily discourage a girl's plans for the future.

Role Models: I met dozens of girls who told me they aspired to become businesswomen, doctors, nurses or accountants. Most had never had an opportunity to meet women working in those professions. The village girls who succeed in getting an education are the future role models for other village girls.



The SEE Program focuses on empowering girls to stay in school.

My experience this past year has given me a global perspective on the value of girls' education. With tenacity, encouragement and the support of MCV and its donors, it's my hope that the girls of Malawi will reach their aspirations.

Zikomo to: The Rotary clubs of Limbe and Kansas City Plaza, Steve Huff of the Light Foundation, fellow trainers Bill and Cindy Schmidt, Felix Chirombo and the MCV staff - and especially to the extraordinary teachers who now guide the SEE program.

VILLAGE OUTREACH: THE HEART OF MCV

By Mary Pomeroy



Catherine Shabani (left) who joined in 2005 and Florence Kondwani (right) who joined in 2002 have both been providing care and support in the villages served by MCV for more than a decade.

The heart of MCV is with our Village Outreach Coordinators, Catherine Shabani and Florence Kondwani.

Florence learned resilience at an early age when she became an orphan herself at the age of three, losing both parents on the same day in her home of Dedza. She and her seven siblings were raised by varied aunts and uncles, mostly separated from each other.

Following completion of secondary school, she took a Community Development course and began her life long work in social services. She has coordinated and developed many HIV/AIDS education programs for individuals, groups and organizations.

She lost her husband when her daughter was two years of age. Florence kept her spirit going by giving to others, continuing her efforts in community awareness programs. MCV paid for Florence to further her education in a one year social welfare training course. She learned specific skills for child protection and family reconciliation, as well as increasing her knowledge in early childhood development, gender equality and women empowerment.

Catherine's early childhood with her seven siblings was in Zomba and Mulanje. Following secondary school, she became trained as a Health Surveillance Assistant. In her first job with Save the Children she supported pregnant women, encouraging pre-natal care and distributing condoms. She assisted on home deliveries and supported newborns to ensure they

received vaccinations and proper nutrition. She also provided education about HIV/AIDS. She then worked with a project distributing bed-nets and encouraging their daily use, followed by a number of years with a Community Health Partnership project, funded by USAID. Here her duties continued with the support for the health of pregnant women and child nutrition, now encouraging mothers to go to hospitals for their deliveries. She would also take chlorine to people for safe water and disease prevention. Further work with Safe Motherhood and Hands in Hands continued her ongoing education in the villages for safe and healthy life styles. In the course of all this work, Catherine raised her seven children, mostly as a single mother. Her resilience matches Florence's.

The combined skills of Catherine and Florence allow the Village Outreach program for MCV to be strong and focused, providing education and support to orphaned and vulnerable children and their families. Their skills are used daily in visits to the 38 villages in the catchment area for MCV. The bars of soap they may provide are like bars of gold. The people in the villages await their visits. They are dedicated to help the people in this small area of Malawi live a better life. They are empowered women, sharing their lives and opening their hearts to those who appreciate their care, support and resilience. Catherine and Florence are truly the heart of MCV.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Ruth Nighswander

Although our official thank you to donors is written in the receipt by our bookkeeper, we thank our supporters throughout the year! You all have helped with the many needs of our orphans and other vulnerable children: education, housing, health, clothes, food and clean water.

We receive student appreciation and watch growth as they graduate, get jobs, give back to the community and send thank you notes to donors and board members.

You can be proud of your contributions. You are truly helping many children in the 38 villages served.

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

Revenue

Direct Public Grants	\$28,204
Direct Public Support	\$152,240
Endowment	\$758

Total Revenue \$181,202

Expenses

Supporting Services

Business License	\$50
Bookkeeper	\$5,200
Tax Preparation	\$600
Bank Fees and Wire Costs	\$1,120
Insurance	\$1,408
Newsletter & Thank You's	\$3,489
PayPal Fees	\$559
Website Fees	\$25
PO Box Rental	\$342
Total Supporting Services	\$12,793

Program Services

Grants	\$51,500
Designated Funds	\$78,421
Orphan School Tuition	\$21,350
Total Program Services	\$151,271

Total Expenses \$164,064

MCV Foundation has no paid staff and our board members pay all of their own expenses. As the activity statement above indicate, 92% of last years expenses were invested directly in programs and support in Malawi.

CONGRATULATIONS FELIX CHIROMBO!

MCV's Felix Chirombo Receives The Rotary Foundation's Paul Harris Fellow Recognition

In Felix Chirombo's office at MCV, one wall is covered with banners from Rotary clubs that have collaborated with MCV for more than 15 years. Among them is longtime partner, the Rotary Club of Palmer Alaska. Recently, Palmer Rotarians recognized Felix's contributions to MCV by naming him a Paul Harris Fellow of The Rotary

Foundation. Paul Harris Fellows are recognized for their service in making a difference in the world. As Executive Director of MCV, Felix has been an example of the Rotary motto, "Service Above Self." Congratulations to Felix for this well-deserved recognition, and for his ongoing efforts for the children of Malawi.



Felix Semu a Gracious graduate, is now a graduate of Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources.

Donors and Friends: MCV's accomplishments in the past year are not limited to the stories in this newsletter. This was simply all that we could fit! New students have graduated Gracious and entered university with donor sponsorship while others have earned university degrees and entered the workforce. Felix Semu, left, now works with the MCV Irrigation Project which continues to expand and reduce local farmers' reliance on seasonal rains. The Sewing Project continues to turn a profit while teaching students valuable skills. New houses were built and school uniforms and supplies were delivered. The list goes on and on. None of this would be possible without your support. Please make a contribution today so that the work can continue.

Thank you, Zikomo.
MCV Board of Directors

Donations may be made at www.malawichildrensivillage.org/donate OR by filling out and submitting the form below with your check.

Malawi Children's Village provides a continuum of services for the immediate needs and the future opportunities of orphans and other vulnerable children, their families and villages of Mangochi, MW, focusing on current and emerging concerns including but not limited to: HIV/AIDS and malaria care and prevention, food security and educational attainment.

YES! I want to make a real difference in the life of an orphaned child.

Enclosed please find my gift of:

\$500 \$100 \$50 Other: _____

Please make checks payable to:

Malawi Children's Village Foundation, Inc.

Designation Preference:

Wherever funds are most needed.

Other: _____

Mail this form and donations to:

Malawi Children's Village Foundation

PO Box 240547

Anchorage, AK 99524-0547

Please provide us with the following information: Dr. / Mr. / Ms. / Mrs. / Mx. (please circle)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Suffix: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Malawi Children's Village Foundation, Inc. is a designated 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of New York. As such, your donation is tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. MCV's Tax ID Number is 16-1526805. Thank you for your support. Zikomo!