



**malawi  
children's  
village**

A VILLAGE-BASED  
ORPHAN CARE PROJECT

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2015



**Dear Donors and Friends,**

A physician, five nurses, two nutritionists, more than a dozen teachers, six agricultural specialists, two community activists, and numerous accountants and finance officers. These are young people from the Mangochi District of Malawi with one thing in common: all are orphan “graduates” of MCV!

One of the joys of an orphan care/community development program entering its twentieth year is to see so many little ones, whose very survival was in question, become productive members of a slowly growing middle-class. They are now making important contributions in one of the world’s poorest countries. There are now more than 12,000 MCV “graduates”, and they are beginning to make a difference in the villages, towns and government.

The longevity and vibrancy of MCV,

is not happenstance. It would not be possible without the loyal donors whose contributions cover annual basic orphan care costs (\$25) and school tuition (\$255). These costs are small by our standards but are well beyond the reach of Malawian households that have taken in orphans.

MCV also benefits from its partners: Open Arms (UK) provides rehabilitative care for infant/toddlers; Engineers without Borders (Anchorage) has installed a safe water system; Rotary Clubs in Seneca Falls and Clifton Springs (NY) support 25 village-based irrigation systems; THREEafrica has begun providing tuition support for additional girls to attend secondary school; and a number of American primary schools provide both fiscal and moral support.

An underlying reason for MCV’s success is the innate resilience of Malawians. Twenty years ago, the

country was overwhelmed by the AIDS epidemic, and only recently has that challenge been ameliorated by community health education and the introduction of critical drugs. Along the way there have been continued economic problems (currency devaluation and fuel shortages) as well as natural disasters (massive flooding earlier this year that will create food shortages in the coming months). Through all this, Malawian families with help from MCV - have remained willing to take in orphans and to do the best they can to assure their growth and development.

We are grateful to the hundreds of you who continue to help MCV to meet this challenge, and ask that you encourage others to join us in bringing hope to Malawi’s orphans.

**Tsalani Bwino,**

**Tom Vitaglione, Board President**



An MCV study indicates that orphans under five are growing at the same rate as non-orphans.

**MCV BY THE NUMBERS**

- 38** villages served
- 12,000+** program “graduates” since 1996
- 2,363** orphans currently registered
- 6+** orphans per household on average in 1996\*
- 2** orphans per household on average in 2015\*
- 91%** of school-age orphans attend school
- 80%** reduction in malaria cases and deaths in young children since 2005
- 96%** of MCV’s Gracious graduates passed the national exam

\*Among households caring for orphans

# THE QUICK AND THE SLOW

By Tom Nighswander



The people of Malawi never seem to catch a break. This year's floods displaced 300,000 Malawians. The floods also destroyed homes and crops in the villages surrounding MCV.

For Malawians, catastrophes are often just around the corner. They come quickly, a child that dies overnight from Malaria, or they develop slowly to affecting large segments of the population. Both happened this year!

What started as a normal rainy season, increased in intensity accompanied by a relentless wind from the south that lasted for 18 days and nights. Catastrophic flooding struck the country. The estimates now are over 300,000 Malawians displaced.

Around the villages of MCV there was major flooding in the low areas, but it was the constant wind driven rain that devastated the village homes. Sun dried brick or mud smeared on both sides of bamboo frames work as walls if you have a decent thatched roof with long eaves to protect them. The eaves do not protect the mud walls when the rain is horizontal. As we drove south, along the highway there were scores of walls collapsed and houses destroyed. Further down the Shire River in the lowlands of southern Malawi, villages became lakes and homes simply

dissolved. This was the overnight catastrophe.

But the most profound effect is slower to develop: the loss of the maize crop. The United Nations predicts that a majority of village households will be in food shortage crisis between October and December this year.

Most Malawians live in a rain dependent subsistence culture. You must grow food, catch it, or you don't eat. Small maize fields are attended to just after sunrise by village women throughout the growing season. In most places there is no irrigation. Maize can be raised once a year if the rains come at the right time, are the right amount and last a sufficient length of time. This does not happen very often! In fact the period from December through mid-March is known as the Njala (hunger) season. Almost every year at this time there are greater or lesser amounts of hunger. This year's Njala will be great.

The story has a human face. When we were in Malawi this May our neighbors were already short of food.

Felix Chirombo, MCV's director is a good farmer with a large farm. It is usual for him to harvest forty to fifty 50 kg (110 lb) bags of maize. This year he harvested five. Most of our neighbors harvested two bags or less. Dry maize, ground into a flour and cooked, is the staple in Malawi, eaten every day of the year. A family of eight will use two bags a month.

Like the catastrophes that strike, MCV responds both quickly and with slow developing solutions. In the long-term, irrigation programs help farmers be less dependent upon unpredictable rains. Educational programs such as School-to-School, Gracious, and university scholarships help orphan graduates and others find employment outside of subsistence farming.

In the immediate term we're preparing for this year's food shortage. In response to skyrocketing prices (an approximate 50% increase by November) - an impossible price hike for any villager, MCV has stockpiled more than 10,000 lbs of maize.

Villages houses are also being built. In May, volunteers donated money for materials and got their hands dirty. A week's worth of hauling bricks, digging foundations, and building walls and a house was built. Others from the US have simply contributed the dollars and the Malawian crews have done the job. Six houses have been built to date.

Do a few houses and a few thousand pounds of maize make a difference? It does not solve Malawi's national disaster, but for the 37 villages that make up MCV, the difference is real. It is one village house, and one family at a time.

**Celebrating the legacy of Jerry Turner:** In late September we received the sad news that Jerry Turner had passed away. Jerry is still known in Malawi for the seminal work he did more than 30 years ago on the conservation of Lake Malawi and its fish populations. In his retirement he dedicated himself to helping with the irrigation and food sustainability



Jerry Turner (right) at MCV

component of MCV. The current 25 irrigation schemes in the MCV catchment area were built on his shoulders and are testimony to his hard work and perseverance.

His generosity and affability made being with Jerry good for one's soul. His last gift to MCV is his mtsikulu (granddaughter) Madeline, who is joining the MCV Board.

## THE VILLAGES OF MCV'S VILLAGE-BASED CARE: MATAWERE

By Mary Pomeroy

*MCV supports orphans and vulnerable children from 38 villages in Mangochi, Malawi. Matawere is our third village to be profiled in this series. Read the others at [www.malawichildrensvillage.org](http://www.malawichildrensvillage.org)*

After bumping down a “road” for several kilometers, avoiding the dips that might suck up your car, one arrives at the bustling village of Matawere. Walk down the path that winds through maize fields and baobab trees, past goats, cows and chickens, and you’ll come to Lake Malawi, where the villagers make their livelihood from subsistence fishing. Children are running around; maize and fish nets are being dried on the dry, dusty ground. Women with pumpkins stacked on their heads are walking down to the main road where they’ll sell them. People are friendly



Children pose for the camera in Matawere

and welcoming. There are over 1,200 people living in 331 homes.

Like most local villages in the area, Matawere was devastated by this year’s floods. Despite this fact, life in the village goes on. The local village store is full of basic goods: small bags of

**Women’s Empowerment:** The WE Club (Women’s Empowerment) was started June 13, 2013 at MCV’s Gracious Secondary School as one of the authorized clubs. Founders were Fransisca Chirombo, student, and Ruth Banda, a former teacher. The aim of the club is to empower young girls in school to succeed in their education and open them to other possibilities. Mangochi has been one of the districts in Malawi that encouraged early marriages; although the government is now trying to

educate people so girls attain higher education before they marry, many still marry at a young age.

The club uses role models through singing, poems, quiz and travel to other schools to inspire girls. This year money was raised (per request of WE Club) for the club to provide extra support to the top 30 girls in the school, as they prepare for the MSCE Exams. The club is providing after school tutors and additional books. One teacher is assigned to follow their academic progress. It is hoped that

sugar portioned out, laundry soap, buckets, and packages of biscuits. Bicyclists bump by with other goods for sale on the back of their bikes.

There are 37 households that provide care for 68 orphans in Matawere. Twenty of these children have lost their mothers, 41 their fathers and seven have lost both parents. It is not easy, yet the households that care for the orphans provide them a family.

As in all MCV supported villages, two village volunteers provide a link between these households and MCV staff. They help coordinate care for the children when they are sick, let staff know which households are in need of school uniforms, blankets, and other resources, and encourage children to attend Semama Primary School down the road. There is a rhythm in this village that is always steady, and thanks to MCV, the care of orphans and vulnerable children have joined this steady rhythm.



Female students at Gracious

these efforts will result in more girls qualifying for university.

**Meet our new Deputy Director:** My name is Vincent Sisya. I joined the organization as Deputy Director in June. I am a holder of Bachelors of Science degree in Environmental Health from University of Malawi – Polytechnic.

I am glad, and honored to join the highly dedicated team of MCV in mitigating the plight and sufferings of orphans and vulnerable children. Together with the MCV team, the village volunteers, and the caregivers, we hope to alleviate their plight and



Deputy Director Vincent Sisya

sufferings, and make them to be self

reliant, and also turn them into productive citizens, who will help in the development of this beautiful country Malawi.

I would like to thank the Director Felix Chirombo, the entire staff, and Gracious Secondary School for the warm welcome accorded to me.

Lastly but not least, I would also like to thank the Director, and both Boards of Directors (Malawi and USA) for entrusting me with this post, and I promise to work to my full capacity, and with dedication.

# TREASURER'S REPORT: FISCAL YEAR 2015

By Ruth Nighswander

A sincere thank you to our many supporters! You are keeping hope and resiliency alive at Malawi Children's Village with the 2,363 orphans served. This Malawian run organization could not survive without your support. As we used to say at Wittenberg University: "Having Light We Pass it on to Others". You are giving light by volunteering, sending encouraging letters and donating.

By your generous donations and continued support orphan houses have been built as have teacher houses. Volunteers have traveled to teach for a term at MCV Gracious Secondary School, desks were built, money for needed curriculum books was donated along with science supplies. We are now also able to provide education to more orphans and continue to keep malaria numbers in check with bed nets for children under five. The School-to-School program has assisted more primary schools in the villages. As mentioned, the heavy floods this spring ruined houses and devastated the maize crop. Your donations this year are helping MCV meet the immediate needs for food in the MCV catchment area.

If you are a new donor welcome! If sustaining, thank you again. Whatever and whenever you give is helpful to the orphans and other vulnerable children.



Village Volunteers at a monthly meeting this April. Many have been with the program for several years. They are essential in carrying out MCV's work.

October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015

Revenue	
Direct Public Grants	\$28,204
Direct Public Support	\$152,240
Endowment	\$758
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$181,202</b>

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
<b>Total Supporting Services</b>	<b>\$12,793</b>

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

**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 indicates, 92% of last year's expenses were invested directly in programs and support in Malawi.



Gift works with a young patient

**Special Needs at MCV:** Board Member Mary Pomeroy, a Physical Therapist, has been working to support those with special needs in the MCV villages. Below is a brief update from her trip to Malawi this past April: My training with Gift, the physiotherapist from Mangochi Hospital, is ongoing. I spent a day at the hospital's Cerebral Palsy Clinic, training and educating both Gift and the parents of over 40 children. When I began working with Gift three years ago, his training in pediatrics was limited; his experience was more with adults, although he provided services to all ages. He is a quick and energetic learner and now is engaged in coming to the villages within the MCV area every month to help Catherine, the MCV Outreach provider, who follows these children throughout the year.

Many of the children need adaptive equipment for support in sitting or standing, or require wheelchairs for mobility. The prison in Zomba (three hours away) makes the wheelchairs; the carpentry section of the vocational program at MCV makes adapted chairs, standing frames, and metal walkers with wooden wheels. There are now over 50 children with special needs that are being followed by Catherine. Children get the equipment or services they need to enjoy being mobile or positioned well to play or eat. Many are now going to school since they are independently moving.

## GOOD NEWS UPDATE

### Solar Panels, Education Empowerment Program and Study Areas for Village Schools

Malawi Children's Village and the Light Foundation, in cooperation with The Rotary Foundation, will participate in a one year grant to encourage village children, especially girls, to stay in school. The grant will be implemented in five village schools in MCV's catchment area to provide for teacher training, installation of solar panels in the schools, distribution of individual solar lights for home study, and

the creation of study areas in each school. The study areas include desks made by the MCV Carpentry program, as well as books and school supplies. Your donations can help to fund MCV's orphan support services, as well as continuation of this program in additional village schools. For more information on the project visit our blog at [www.malawichildrens-village.org/blog](http://www.malawichildrens-village.org/blog).



MCV has stockpiled more than 10,000 lbs of maize in anticipation of food shortages in the villages, but we expect even greater need. We need your support!

**Donors and Friends:** MCV has grown significantly since its founding in 1997. Over the years, new programs and services have been added, and as you've seen in this year's newsletter, MCV continues to innovate and expand its impact today. Despite this growth, MCV continues to operate with minimal overhead costs and no paid staff in the USA; 92% of your donations go directly to Malawi. We are able to operate in this way because your direct financial support in response to this annual newsletter continues to account for the vast majority of our funding. Our staff in Malawi are ready to continue their important work supporting Mangochi's orphans and vulnerable children, and to help villages rebuild after this year's flood. They can only do so with your support. Please make a contribution today.

**Thank you. Zikomo.**  
MCV Board of Directors

Donations may be made at [www.malawichildrens-village.org/donate](http://www.malawichildrens-village.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. (please circle)

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*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!*