

# A Village-Based Orphan Care Project ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



malawi  
children's  
village

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

**Moni Achimwene (Hello, Friends),**

Around the world the coronavirus pandemic has impacted people's lives, significantly challenging most organizations and businesses, regardless of their location. The virus and efforts to prevent its spread threaten the way of life that we have taken for granted, including how we view / prioritize what is truly important. Malawi Children's Village and the 3,000+ orphans located in the 39 villages it serves along the shore of Lake Malawi are no exception.

Businesses and schools in the developed world shifted to virtual spaces instead of physical proximity for continuity, yet what comprises a business, school or organization at its core? We have been reminded that relationships and interactions between people, even if they are never physically in the same space, are the central theme that matters most.

MCV's origin was built on love, concern, compassion and most importantly – action for those most vulnerable who were impacted by the AIDS epidemic that raced through Africa leaving scores of children without parents and with little hope. Yet, it was the action by MCV's founders that made the difference, from across the globe.

Twenty-three years later, MCV is facing another worldwide challenge that is threatening the lives and way of life for the communities that it serves. Unlike those in the USA, Canada or Europe, in Malawi the lack of access to technology prevents the continuation of things like education, tele-medicine and working from home is unrealistic for most types of jobs. Unemployment is even more prevalent now with no access to governmental support programs.

Yet, MCV continues to provide support to the most vulnerable – orphans and children with special needs, along with the extended families who care for them and the communities in which they live. The articles in this newsletter reflect the accomplishments of the dedicated staff at MCV both prior to and following the pandemic's arrival, as they strive to meet people's continuing and growing needs. At the heart of their success lies the kind and compassionate actions of our donors, who are physically distanced from MCV, yet are close in spirit.

On behalf of MCV, **zikomo (thank you)** for the relationship you have in the MCV community.

James Miller, Board President

## Teacher Housing Update:

By Tom Nighswander

Secondary education in Malawi is not free. The school fees that are required are beyond the resources of most villagers and especially if they are caring for orphans. Education is the ticket to escape from subsistence living.

Gracious Secondary School developed by MCV has been very successful in graduating students who have opportunity for higher education. All students must pay except for MCV orphans. Donors have made this happen!

The key to its success has been excellent teachers. However, as opposed to government secondary schools which provide teacher housing, MCV has not been able to do so. We have been reminded of this every time we meet with the teachers.

Most live in substandard housing some distance from the school, requiring a significant trip on their bicycle. Several years ago we made a commitment to solve the housing problem and with your support, it's been a successful effort. Four of the duplex houses are complete, the fifth one needs a roof, money has been committed for the sixth one, and initial funding has been obtained for the seventh. They are being built on the site by local builders who have been working for MCV.

Zikomo! (Thank you)



One of the new duplexes. Blocks are made on site, one at a time!

## GREEN BELT INITIATIVE

By Elizabeth Usovicz

Food scarcity is an issue for orphans, their caretakers and every village served by MCV. The ability for villagers to grow their own food source greatly reduces food scarcity. This is why MCV Executive Director, Felix Chirombo, and the MCV staff have created a Greenbelt Initiative. The goal of the Greenbelt Initiative is to grow crops in each village along both the hill side and the lake side of Lake Malawi, creating a “green belt” of subsistence farming. The missing piece of the greenbelt puzzle is the equipment to pump water from dug wells in the hills or the lake in the waterside villages.

MCV is exploring ways to expand the green belt through funding for treadle pumps, like the one pictured to the right.



A treadle pump is a human-powered suction pump. They are an easy, sustainable way to increase crop size and growing seasons with increased irrigation.

If you are interested in supporting this initiative, please consider a contribution to MCV.

## Village Banking Program Created by Women

By: Mary Pomeroy

In the villages neighboring MCV there is a group of women who provide support for one another through, what I call, “village banking”. In rural areas, such as those surrounding MCV, there are limited job opportunities for women and yet they are responsible for ensuring food for their families and encouraging their children to go to school with uniforms.

One of the Outreach Workers at MCV, Catherine, invited me to one of her monthly women banking gatherings. She explained to me that the group started by putting rules together, followed by putting in an agreed upon amount of kwacha/ money for their 20 members. There is a chairperson, chosen to lead this group, as well as a treasurer, who receives the kwacha and deposits it to a group bank account. A member discusses her request for a loan, explaining what her idea is for a business. The group collectively talks about it and decides whom to give the loan to, depending on the reason and kwacha availability. Business ideas include setting up a stall at their local market to sell supplies (pots, soap, sugar, tea), cooking corn or potato fries to sell, or even raising chickens to sell.

The group’s aim is to make savings, so that members can borrow money to invest, grow their business and then pay back with interest.

It was impressive watching these women pull out wadded up and saved kwacha from inside their clothes, giving it to the treasurer. The mutual support within this group of women not only helps each one of them, but helps develop the community for their home villages. These women empower each other.



# VILLAGE PROFILE: MAKOKOLA

By Mary Pomeroy

*MCV's mission is to support orphans and vulnerable children in 39 villages in southwest Malawi. This is a profile of one of those villages, Makokola.*

Makokola is located on the southwest tip of Lake Malawi. The village has the total population of 4,528 people. It has 309 households. 46 households care for orphans and vulnerable children. 99 OVC (orphans and vulnerable children) live in these 46 households. MCV village coordinators for this village are Gladys Chidothi and Edwin Jamali.

Gladys was interviewed: She was born on 11th April, 1976. She is a widower with a son and three daughters. She has been an MCV Volunteer since its inception, twenty-three years ago.

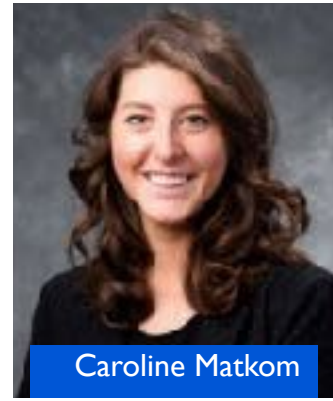
The people of Makokola mainly depend on farming and fishing as their source of income to support their families. Apart from farming and fishing the village is special because it has nice beaches, so some are employed in the tourism industry. The village has Makokola Retreat which has a golf course and Mpwepe boat yard. Makokola Village has one primary school and two nursery schools. There are four students (orphans) from Makokola who are learning at Gracious Private Secondary school.

The COVID 19 pandemic has greatly affected the people of Makokola in so many ways. People in the tourism industry have lost their jobs, because the industry is affected with travel restrictions such that most hotels are closed. People now are coping with the culture of wearing masks and washing hands with soap regularly. Most people are struggling to get food for their families due to loss of jobs and losing businesses.



A typical family dwelling in Makokola.

## NEW BOARD MEMBER



Caroline Matkom

I am thrilled to be the newest member of the Malawi Children's Village board. My connection with Malawi started three years ago, when I was introduced to the wonderful country by my partner. Eric had completed a two week medical trip throughout Malawi,

and was touched by the warmth of the people and the gorgeous scenery. Once he told me about Malawi's medical disparities, we started writing grants for medical supplies and fundraising to send much-needed medical supplies to hospitals in the northern region of Malawi.

I quickly learned the community who supports Malawi in America is very tight knit and has unwavering dedication to the country. My favorite professor, Don Gray, introduced me to Malawi Children's Village right away after learning about my association with the country. Don is a former MCV board member and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi years ago. Don, Eric and I utilized the University of Wisconsin-Madison's resources to raise another \$10,000 for MCV's Women's Empowerment initiative and won a national pitch competition to fund the MCV scholarship program. Shortly after, I gratefully accepted a position on the MCV board. The Malawian people and their stories have completely changed my life. I know I will be connected to this country thousands of miles away forever. The board is welcoming, passionate, and determined to make the country we love a better place. I look forward to stepping into my role on the board!-Caroline

## STUDENT PROFILE: EMMA BWANALI

'My name is Emma Bwanali and I am 22 years of age. I am a third year student at St Lukes College of nursing and midwifery. I am doing Diploma a in Nursing and Midwifery.

I made it all here with the help of Malawi Children's Village (MCV). I attained my Secondary school leaving certificate in 2016. I had no hope then because they was nobody to pay for college education. I saw a hand of God after I attained sponsorship through MCV.

I chose nursing and midwifery because of my grandmother. She was also a nurse and I grew up wishing to be like her. The pleasure of helping sick people also drove me to choose this career. My best moment in life is when I help women in labor to deliver.

As the sky is not the limit, fulfilling my wish of being a nurse will not be the end of my dreams. I wish to proceed with my studies and do PhD in nursing and midwifery and be a lecturer.' -Emma Bwanali



# MCV'S SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM UPDATES

By Mary Pomeroy

Mishi, a boy with Cerebral Palsy (CP), used his feet to hold pens or books. *Now*, he is learning to use his hands to hold a spoon to eat or to turn pages in a book.

Michael's dream was to work in a shop. He lost both arms in a tragic accident. *Now*, following his dream, he has learned to use his prosthetic hands to be a shopkeeper. Born with a leg deformity, Kazembe has always crawled to school; he never missed a day. He was given a leg prosthesis and taught to walk. *Now*, at 10 years of age, he walks to school, wearing shoes for the first time in his life.



Mishi holding a pen!

MCV's program continues to offer physiotherapy training and adapted equipment to help children go to school or for young adults to learn a life skill. Families walk for miles or travel on crowded buses to receive weekly treatment from "physios" (Physical Therapists) from Mangochi Hospital. Physios from the Malawi School of Medicine continue to do rotations at this clinic. These physios stay with families of children with special needs, learning first-hand the challenges within the family and village life of having a child with a disability.

MCV's program added a CP clinic in a very remote, mountainous village. We met the chief to discuss our new proposal. He extended his welcome for this CP Clinic, quickly finding a location. Monthly, a physio and Catherine (the Outreach Program worker), travel together to see at least 12 families.

This past year I provided training about early motor development to the volunteers, 2 from each of the 39 villages within MCV area. Families come to the volunteers with concerns about their baby/child, at which time the child gets referred to the CP Clinic.

Special Needs Program's goals, increasing school attendance for children with special needs or providing life skills to those not in school, is ongoing. Children and young adults with special needs have new opportunities.



A young boy with a life-altering prosthetic. There are almost 200 children with special needs, which is 6% of the 3,000+ orphans within the MCV catchment area.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

By Ruth Nighswander

Covid-19 has changed lives world-wide. Malawi is no exception, with handwashing stations and masks in MCV villages. Schools were closed and staff paid less. More than ever we appreciate your support. You are the reason MCV is starting to reopen with precautions. These vulnerable children/students will thrive despite difficulties.

Thank you for your continued support!

### Financial Report

July 2019-June 2020

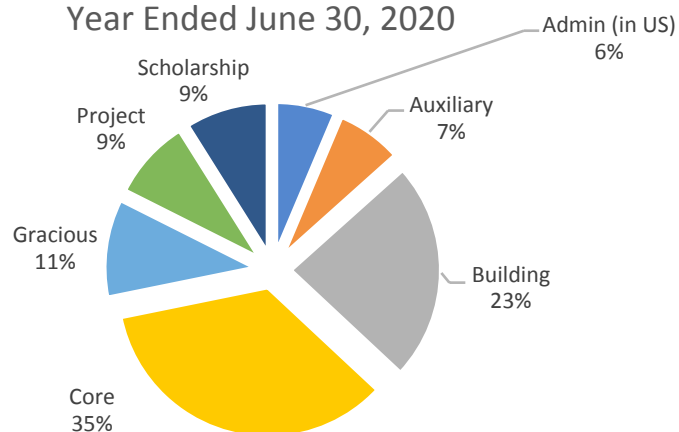
#### Receipts

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| —Foundation Grants:     | \$15,483         |
| —Direct Public Support: | \$252,272        |
| <b>Total Receipts:</b>  | <b>\$267,755</b> |

#### Disbursements

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| —Admin (US)                 | \$21,597         |
| —Auxiliary                  | \$23,793         |
| —Building                   | \$80,000         |
| —Core                       | \$118,222        |
| —Orphan School Tuition      | \$35,984         |
| —Project                    | \$29,372         |
| —Post-Secondary Tuition     | \$30,298         |
| <b>Total Disbursements:</b> | <b>\$339,267</b> |

#### Year Ended June 30, 2020



**Reminder:** "Donating stock saves on taxes". Email [info@malawichildrensivillage.org](mailto:info@malawichildrensivillage.org) for more information.

MCV Foundation board members pay all of their own expenses.

## Donor Profile: The Kam-Magruder Family

‘As a family, we want to regularly support both local and distant work that cares for those with less. Although it is easy to find local non-profits you can trust, it will always remain more difficult when deciding upon overseas organizations. However, we have found an organization in which we believe. We know the board members well, we have traveled to Malawi to work, and we have spent time at Malawi Children's Village (MCV). It is locally run, works to educate those who most want help and cares for the most vulnerable. Therefore we give monthly to support the work that is ongoing at MCV.’ -The Kam-Magruder Family



### Donors and Friends:

Thanks to generous donations, this year alone we were able to support:

- 3307 orphans
- 1554 households that cared for orphans
- 201 special needs children and their families
- 2977 students with school scholarships
- 4 teaching duplexes built and read for Gracious Teachers
- 17 treadle pumps in operation, allowing for increased irrigation
- 720 masks made for COVID

MCV's success has been thanks to donors like you. You sustain the projects at MCV. Please donate today and help us continue to serve the orphans and vulnerable children of Mangochi.

Thank you. Zikomo

Donations may be made at [www.malawichildrensillage.org](http://www.malawichildrensillage.org) OR by filling out and submitting the form below.

*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!*



PO Box 240547

Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0547

[www.malawichildrensivillage.org](http://www.malawichildrensivillage.org)

Please send changes in your address to [info@malawichildrensivillage.org](mailto:info@malawichildrensivillage.org)

### What does your investment in MCV really mean?

Here are a few examples of what can be accomplished with your support...

- \$18 can buy a blanket to keep as many as three children warm
- \$32 can pay for enough maize to feed a family for an entire month
- \$100 can purchase anti-malarial medicine for 100 orphans
- \$280 can send an orphan to secondary school for a year
- \$300 can pay for a new roof for a family housing one or more orphans
- \$1000 can build a home for a family caring for orphans

## 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS Malawi Children's Village Foundation, Inc.

**James Miller** **Elizabeth Usovicz** **Ruth Nighswander**  
*President* *Vice President* *Treasurer*  
Kansas City, MO Kansas City, MO Anchorage, AK

**Mary Pomeroy** **Madeline Turner**  
*Secretary* *Vice President of Communications*  
Anchorage, AK Helena, MT

**Wezzie Munnthali**, Anchorage, AK  
**Tom Nighswander**, Anchorage, AK  
**Caroline Matkorn**, Madison, WI  
**Linda Kalilani**, Apex, NC

### THE MISSION OF MALAWI CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

MCV is a village-based orphan care project that provides health, social, and educational resources in 39 villages along the southwest shore of Lake Malawi.

#### Supportive Services

- MCV contracts with Mehboob Clinic to provide free healthcare to orphans and their caregivers
- Irrigation projects help provide food security in the villages
- The MCV Malaria Prevention Project distributes insecticide treated bed-nets to households with young children
- The MCV Fieldwork team visits villages regularly to monitor orphans and provide assistance to their caregivers
- Two village volunteers in each village keep MCV aware of orphans' needs and encourage caretakers to take proper care of orphans

#### Educational Services

- MCV's Gracious Secondary School educates paying students and sponsored orphans in grades 9 - 12
  - The MCV Vocational School trains paying students and sponsored orphans in trades such as brick laying, carpentry, mechanics, and sewing
  - MCV's School-to-School program supports government run primary schools
- #### Partner Organization Services
- Open Arms Mangochi cares for sick or malnourished infants
  - Together! ACT Now uses theater to spread the message about HIV/AIDS