



**malawi
children's
village**

A Village-Based Orphan Care Project

2023 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



Moni Achimwene (Hello, Friends),

President's Address

Resiliency is something that people aspire to describe the way they approach life, although the hope is that it is in relation to relatively minor challenges. Malawians are generally subsistence farmers with meager means and have endured recurring hardships that would break most people's spirit. Yet, when you visit Malawi, you will find kindhearted, welcoming, and hospitable people whose mentality is to appreciate the joys of life that are present as you look for them. They are resilient.

Over the past year, the 39 villages that Malawi Children's Village serves have faced more extreme hardships than usual, including a cholera outbreak and Cyclone Freddy. The cyclone devastated traditional mud brick houses and washed away household materials, crops and roads. MCV was able to quickly provide emergency support to the families it supports who are raising orphans and the most vulnerable children. While the immediate needs were met, housing and food security needs remain.

MCV was founded on the belief that when kind people contribute their knowledge and invest their financial resources, through culturally accepted structures, the impact will be transformative. This has proven to remain true, 25 years later, thanks to the devotion of you, our donors, and to the strength of the MCV leadership, which is entirely comprised of Malawians.

Under the direction of Felix Chirombo, MCV's Executive Director, the dedicated staff remain focused on programs that provide help with basic needs, and opportunities to build skills to create a better life. Education is at the heart of most of MCV's programs, both for those parenting the children in their lives, as well as for students all the way through high school and technical training programs.

The aggregate support from our donors makes the programs covered by the articles in this annual newsletter possible. While the impact is often hard to quantify, imagine the opportunities and hope made possible for someone whose life circumstances are incredibly challenging and require resiliency. **Zikomo**, James Miller, MCV Board President

Highlights of MCV's Accomplishments from MCV's Director: Felix Chirombo

- Currently MCV supports 2,296 orphans and vulnerable children. 2,046 of these children are school age.
- Currently 158 students are sponsored to attend Gracious Secondary School. (More than 3,000 sponsored since MCV started!)
- With the new technical training program, 120 students have acquired skills quickly to allow them to earn a living. 105 of these students are currently employed.
- There are 37 irrigation project sites with about 15 families each. These enhanced farming skills allow more than 500 families to benefit from irrigation farming and better sustain their families.
- MCV gave out almost 200 bed nets to vulnerable children.
- 1,175 bags of maize were distributed to families experiencing food insecurity.

A GRACIOUS STUDENT: BRIAN'S STORY

By Vincent Sisya, MCV Deputy Director

Brian Achitenji was born on 2nd May, 2002, in the small village of Chikundo. From the very beginning, life was not easy for him. He was orphaned at a young age, and the responsibility of raising him fell upon the shoulders of his aunt, who welcomed him into her modest home.

Brian is a determined and optimistic young man. He knew that education was the key to a better life, and he pursued it with unwavering dedication. He attends Gracious Secondary School (high school), where he diligently works his way through the ranks.

As the school holiday is coming to an end, Brian is prepared to enter Form four with a heart brimmed with hope. He knew that this year would be challenging, but he is ready to face it head-on. His dreams of becoming a soldier seemed closer than ever, and he is determined to make them a reality.

One crucial source of support for Brian comes from MCV (Malawi Children's Village). MCV's assistance not only provided Brian with the necessary school supplies and uniforms but also offered him emotional support and encouragement. He is not just a young man with dreams, but also he is a symbol of resilience, hope, and unwavering spirit of those who dared to dream big, no matter the odds stacked against them.

MCV has helped Brian and many other orphans and vulnerable children reach their dreams and succeed in being able to provide for their families. To read more stories, please subscribe to our blog on our website: malawichildrensivillage.org.



Brian (green hat) standing next to his aunt and the rest of his family.

MCV STAFF BIO: MR. MATIMBE

By Vincent Sisya, MCV Deputy Director

Mr. Lazarus Matimbe is a science teacher at Gracious Secondary School. He joined the school in February 2020. He is married and has three children. He and his family live in the staff house provided MCV.

This house is not only a place to call home, but it also plays a crucial role in his professional life. Living in the staff house allows him to dedicate more time and energy preparing his lessons thoroughly, ensuring that he provides the best education possible to his students.



Mr. Matimbe and his family outside his staff house.

One of the most significant benefits of residing in the staff house is the cost savings it offers. With his accommodation covered by MCV, he and his family can redirect their finances toward other essential needs and investments. This financial relief has made a significant difference in their lives, allowing them to live more comfortably and secure a brighter future for their children.

He is immensely grateful for the staff house provided by Gracious Secondary School. It not only eases the burden of renting costs but also fosters a sense of community and belonging within the school. As he continues to inspire his students to explore the world of science, he cherishes the support and opportunities that the staff house has provided for his family, making his journey as a teacher all the more rewarding.

MCV SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM UPDATE

By Mary Pomeroy and Vincent Sisya

Every day, in the 39 villages within the MCV catchment area, the Special Needs Program is making a difference for babies and children. Malnutrition, malaria, snake bites, burns, dehydration, acute respiratory infections, genetic disorders, and premature births contribute to their developmental challenges. The Special Needs program continues to have three primary focus areas: Cerebral Palsy (CP) Clinics in two villages, Village-Based home visits, and the Equipment Workshop at MCV.

A big step forward in the Special Needs Program is the Integrated Multidisciplinary Team approach, guided by Dr. Bente, a pediatrician at Mangochi District Hospital. She initiated the partnership between the hospital and MCV. The Team includes a pediatrician, two physiotherapists, four rehabilitation technicians, several nutritionists and a social worker. When a child visits the CP clinic, they are seen by each of these professionals. In addition, each week MCV's dedicated outreach staff, Catherine and Florence, travel into the villages to identify children in need and meet with families. They engage parents in group sessions offering guidance, support, and providing skills to help care for their child. Change begins with educating families.

Special Needs by the Numbers in 2023

- **450** Special Needs Children Served in CP clinic since Jan 2023
- **130** assistive devices made by the MCV Equipment Workshop



Zenith with her assistive device and her mom, Mercy

One Child's Story:

Four year old Zenith's journey through life started just like any other child's, full of hope and promise. However, when she was six months old, signs emerged that something was amiss. Zenith began to have seizures and developed weak limbs. Alarmed and concerned, her mother, Mercy, turned to MCV Special Needs Clinic for answers.

Mercy takes Zenith to physiotherapy sessions at MCV, determined to help her daughter achieve the best quality of life possible. Mercy has met other parents of children with special needs and appreciates the comradery she has developed with them.

Over the past two years, the hard work of the medical team (Physio, physician, nutritionist) at the MCV Clinic has paid off, and Zenith has shown remarkable progress. Her physical abilities have improved, and her seizures are being medically monitored. The smiles and laughter that once seemed so elusive have become a part of Zenith and her mother's life. **Thanks for your ongoing support for MCV.**

TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAM UPDATE

By Vincent Sisya

Technical Training Successful Graduates

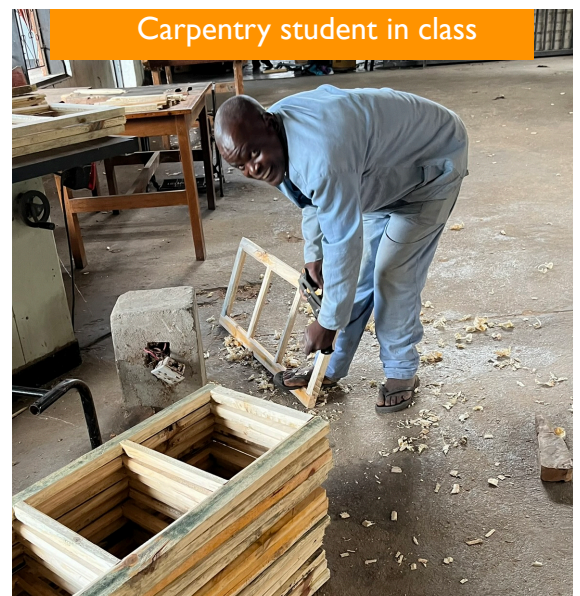
- Tailoring: 45
- Carpentry: 30
- Tourism: 45

In January 2022, the technical training program at MCV held a special pilot to expand technical training skills to the vulnerable in the MCV area. The goal of the program has been to help undereducated from poor families who are motivated to find a reliable source of income. These are expedited series, helping students get on their feet and earn an income faster. Upon graduation, graduates are paired with mentors

in their field and even provided with the equipment needed for success.

This program has been hugely successful as you can tell from the numbers. The newest group of students just graduated in July 2023 and gained skills in tourism which is a much needed skill in Malawi. Many service gaps exist in the service industry and training for these skills are rare.

Carpentry student in class



VILLAGE PROFILE: MATUWI

By Felix Chirombo

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

Matuwi is one of the largest villages within the catchment of MCV with a population of 2,764 and 1,430 households. The village depends mostly on fishing as a means of livelihood. It has one of the popular fishing harbors in Malawi.

The village has different sources of water. Some of them are very safe for drinking while others are unsafe. Those close to the lake use tap water and boreholes which are very safe to drink. As for those who are close to the lake and drink untreated water from the lake which at some point causes problems.



Fisherman drying fish in the sun.

The fishing industry is a nomadic industry. Fishermen move from one place to another in search of good fishing sites. The village has different lifestyles and culture, because it harbors different tribes of people who co-exist because of the fishing. This has caused early marriages, high HIV prevalence and orphanhood for most households. It is one of the reasons why Matuwi is one of the villages with the highest number of households (70) keeping orphans with a total of 113 orphans.

The village has a pre-school and a private primary school. It has a total of 15 sponsored students at Gracious Secondary School. The village has low literacy level. Most of the young men are involved in fishing activities.

It is one of the villages which were greatly affected by Cyclone Freddy. A total of 10 houses were completely collapsed while some of the houses were partially destroyed. Most of the households lost their crops and animals. MCV immediately distributed food and needed supplies and is still slowly working on rebuilding.



A villager in front of her collapsed home from Cyclone Freddy

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Ruth Nighswander and Teresa Curran, MCV bookkeeper

Resilience seems to be the word for this year. With crops decimated, houses demolished, and loss of food/clothing by Cyclone Freddy in March, the MCV community continues to rebuild and help one another!

As always your donations are appreciated, perhaps even more this year.

Thank you from the Warm Heart of Africa: Malawi.

Financial Report

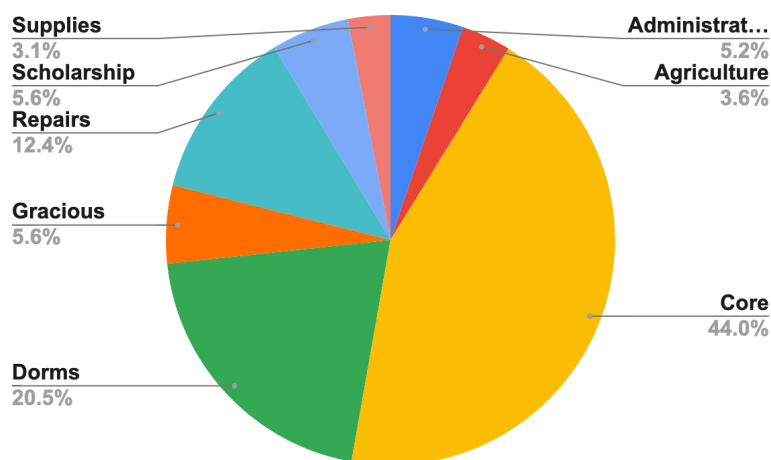
July 2022-June 2023

Total Donations: \$399,569

Expenditures:

—Core Programs	\$175,890
—Repairs	\$49,670
—Gracious	\$22,425
—Dorms	\$82,100
—Scholarships	\$22,440
—Admin-USA	\$20,955
—Supplies	\$12,210
—Agriculture	\$14,300

Total Expenses: \$399,990



Reminder: "Donating stock saves on taxes". Email info@malawichildrensivillage.org for more information.

MCV Foundation board members pay all of their own expenses.

Hope in Malawi: MCV's New Girls Dormitory

By Ruth and Tom Nighswander

After a three-year Covid absence from Malawi, the Nighswanders returned in mid-March, 10 days after Cyclone Freddy devastated the southern part of the country.

Even in the midst of cyclone recovery, MCV staff continued to advance on programs and projects. The construction of the girls dorm at MCV is long overdue. The current dormitory is crowded, under-ventilated space without storage or adequate bathroom facilities.

The new dormitory will allow 132 girls to have a roomy and well-designed space with an attached Matron house. It includes a central study area, kitchen, washing area, indoor plumbing, and electricity. The dorm rooms are designed for four girls with wardrobes and study desks, while several will have eight girls using bunk beds.



The dormitory will be made out of weather-resistant cement blocks. MCV has made 22,000 cement blocks so far—pressed out three at a time!

Donors and Friends:

Thanks to everyone who has made MCV programs successful for another year.

Malawians have faced hunger, epidemic disease, and natural disasters past and present. Despite these challenges, they remain warm, friendly, industrious and ready to move forward. They are resilient with a capital “R”.

When Cyclone Freddy hit, MCV had a quick and well-coordinated response. Before the winds had died down, MCV had already surveyed and prioritized the needs in the 39 villages and purchased disaster supplies, including food.

MCV is still working on these relief efforts and so far MCV has provided:

Cyclone Freddy Response:

- 20 houses constructed
- 85 houses repaired
- 485 bags of maize distributed

Disaster or not, MCV and Malawians continue to move on. 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.malawichildrensivillage.org, using the QR code, 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, Malawi, 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: _____

Designation Preference:

☐ Wherever funds are most needed.

☐ Other: _____

Please make checks payable to:

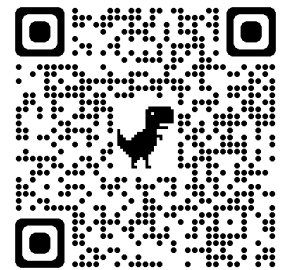
Malawi Children's Village Foundation, Inc.

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: _____

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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!



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www.malawichildrensivillage.org

Please send changes in your address to info@malawichildrensivillage.org

What does your investment in MCV really mean?

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

- \$30 can buy a blanket to keep as many as three children warm
- \$47 can pay for enough maize to feed a family for an entire month
- \$200 can purchase anti-malarial medicine for 100 orphans
- \$350 can pay for a new roof for a family housing one or more orphans
- \$410 can send an orphan to secondary school for a year
- \$1200 can build a home for a family caring for orphans

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS Malawi Children's Village Foundation, Inc.

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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
- Open Arms Mangochi cares for sick or malnourished infants
- Together! ACT Now uses theater to spread the message about HIV/AIDS

Partner Organization Services