

The ZAMBIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

Chishawasha Newsletter



*Most of the children now living in
our house in Lusaka*

September, 2003

History of the Zambian Children's Fund

After reading an article on July 4, 1999, in the *Arizona Daily Star* about the homeless, orphaned children in Zambia, Kathe Padilla, became inspired to try to help as many Zambian orphans as she could. First she did some fund raising in Tucson, and then in October flew to Lusaka, the capital city, to see what she could learn about the situation and how she might help. By the first week of November, she had set up a non-governmental organization (the Zambian equivalent of a non-profit) and had pulled together a group of Zambian professionals to form the first Board of Directors. They decided to name the fledgling organization the Chisawasha Children's Home of Zambia (CCHZ). Chishawasha is a word from the local Bemba language meaning 'that which lives on.'

Kathe returned to Tucson to start educating the public about the terrible situation caused by AIDS in Zambia and to begin fund raising. She gathered a group of interested Tucsonans to sit on a U.S. Board of Directors, incorporated the Zambian Children's Fund (ZCF) and was granted non-profit status by the Internal Revenue Service. In late November, almost \$12,000 was donated after a front page article ran in the *The Arizona Daily Star* on Kathe and her dream of starting an orphanage.

By January, 2001, the two sister organizations were in a position for Kathe to take an extended trip to Lusaka to get things off the ground. In February with the help of Zambian Board members, a home-based support program was started. This program was designed to help orphaned children who had no means of support to stay in school. Many of them were living with grandparents or other family members. Some were living without an adult in the homes their parents left them. In Zambia, the cost of public school must be paid by the students, in spite of a 90% unemployment rate. So an interview process was set up and school fees, uniforms, shoes and school supplies were paid by CCHZ. In some of the most desperate cases, food and other necessities were provided.

In May, a large three-bedroom house was rented in a middle class neighborhood in Lusaka and children who had nowhere else to go started coming to stay. By the second week in July there were sixteen children living with Kathe and a hired live-in housemother. The children arrived dressed in rags, malnourished and with little or no education. The two consistent things they brought with them were parasites and disease; most of the children had intestinal worms or worse. In July, all of the girls had to have their heads shaved because a new girl from out in the bush brought an infestation of lice. In August, one of the new children came to the house with the mumps; within days everyone else had them.

The most rewarding part of living with the children was watching them turn from listless children who neither wanted nor seemed to be able to do anything, into bright, happy, healthy children in just a few months. Once a month Kathe would line them up to check their height and weight. Children were growing one or two inches a month and gaining as much as 20 pounds. Because they were taken in from all over the country, each of them immediately started learning all of the five different languages spoken in the house.

A teacher was hired in September and a small school was started in a three-room building in the backyard behind the house. In early October 2001, Kathe returned to Tucson for a round of speaking engagements and fund raising.

Since her return in 2001, Kathe tries to travel between the U.S. and Zambia every three months. The house has filled to overflowing with 25 children (ages 2 to 16) and three housemothers. The school in the backyard now has 40 students in three classes: a first grade, a second grade and a 3rd/4th grade accelerated class for the older children who have never before attended school.

Five of the children living in the house attend the local public school. Twenty children from the surrounding area walk to our school every morning. The children who do not live in the house are given two meals a day, clothing, shoes and medical care. All of them hope to eventually live in a CCHZ house full time.

In the meantime, the waiting list of children who are desperate to be part of CCHZ continues to grow. Since Kathe first went to Zambia in 1999, the population has dropped from ten million to eight million people and the number of orphans is now almost two million, or one quarter of the population.



Stephen, Sharon & Peggy Ndjlovu

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Space Needed

We need a space for a ZCF office and place to collect donated items. If you own a building which is sitting vacant won't you consider letting ZCF use it? Almost any size or type of building would work whether it is an office, a house, a storefront or a small warehouse.

Meet the Ndjlovu Family

Peggy Ndjlovu, age 12, came to us in July 2001 and was one of the first children to come live in our house. Unbeknownst to me, she came to check us out before allowing her younger siblings to live in a house with a white woman. This is the story of her family.

The first person in her family to get ill was a new baby who died before he reached the age of two. Once they realized how sick the baby was, Mr. & Mrs. Ndjlovu were tested and found out they both had HIV/AIDS. Mr. Ndjlovu died about a year later. Mrs. Ndjlovu never told her children how sick she was and so they were completely surprised when she died in May of 2001. Peggy, the oldest daughter, came to us two months later while she was still very depressed. But she was determined to make sure that we were running a good, safe house before she would allow her younger brothers and sisters to come live at our house. By September she started talking about the other children in the family who needed help and Stephen, then 9 years old, came to stay in October. When I went back to Lusaka in January 2002, Sharon, then 11, moved in. Elija is now age 10 and is hoping to come as soon as we have any space in the boy's room.

The youngest family member is Charity who was placed in an orphanage by her Mother just before she died. This summer when all the Ndjlovu children went home for their oldest brother's wedding, Charity, age 7, convinced them all that she shouldn't have to return to the orphanage she had been living at because she wanted to live with the rest of her family. She is now attending our first grade class and waiting for an opening in the girl's room.

Budget for 2004

Cost of house, school & home-based program	\$ 50,000
Construction of two five bedroom houses	45,000
Executive Director's salary	13,000
Travel costs to Zambia	6,000
Administrative/fundraising costs in U.S.	<u>4,000</u>
The goal we need to reach by January 2004	\$ 118,000

We Have a Web Site

Check out our new web site at: www.zambianchildrensfund.org. Thanks to Michael Logan of Ceresmedia who did all the set up work and donated it to us in August. Our new e-mail address is: zambiancf@yahoo.com