

Homes of Joy

WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER



November, 2023

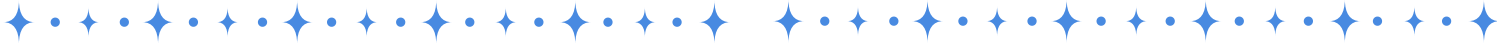
Dear Friends of Homes of Joy,

We are reaching out to all of our supporters at the beginning of the winter holiday and festive season with updates and a request for your continued support. Our Board is currently very busy preparing for the coming year. That's because 2024 has a very special significance to us. It marks the 15th anniversary of the year when Homes of Joy first began our relationship with the Sisters and girls at the Nyumba Yanga orphanage. Since then, we have continued to grow and develop as an organization and now even offer support to exceptional girls at the post-secondary level!

One thing that has not changed over the years is our commitment to supporting orphaned girl children and prioritizing the provision of a high-quality education for each one. In Zambia, if a child attends school through Grade 7, it is considered to be a huge success. That's because the dropout rate is approximately 33% between Grades 7-8. This dropout rate is even higher for girls. That's why at Homes of Joy, we have always believed that a strong foundational education starting at the elementary level is extremely important to assist the girls as they grow into young women.



HOMES OF JOY



NYUMBA YANGA (ELEMENTARY):

At Nyumba Yanga, the girls have been doing very well in both their studies and their life at the orphanage.



Recently, the girls in Grade 7 had their graduation. It was a wonderful Celebration and we are very proud of the girls for achieving this significant milestone in their lives. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

Also, plans are moving forward in the construction of the new orphanage and school. (You may remember from our last newsletter that Nyumba Yanga is in the process of moving to a new site that will now be owned directly by the Sisters.). This new site is called “**Ndeke.**” The word Ndeke is a Bemba word which means “aeroplane” which is appropriate given that the new site is near the airport. However, there is an alternative meaning which we feel is more appropriate to our girls –

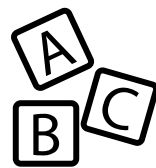


- N** is for nurturing, the care you provide to all
- D** is for delight, a surprise from within
- E** is for expressive, not one to hold within
- K** is for kid, the child within
- E** is for early, promptness is a virtue

It is wonderful to see the new build progress as the perimeter fence and gates are currently in place and the buildings are starting to take shape. Also, the plan is for a vocational institute to be built on-site which is being funded by the Japanese embassy. The Nyumba Yanga girls will still attend a local private school which is located off-site similar to the situation at the current orphanage.

The new orphanage at Ndeke will be expanded to house 60 girls in comparison to the current maximum of 40 at the current site. As you can see, many changes are happening! We are all very excited for the completion of the new site in 2024 with the hope of moving the girls over before the end of next year.

In addition, we also have a couple of very generous donors who have contributed legacy donations in memory of loved ones and as special gifts. We are now working to explore new potential special projects at the new site with these funds! A special shoutout and thank you to these donors from all of us!



Stay tuned for more info on this in the months ahead.





FUTURE IN MY HANDS (SECONDARY):

A month ago, FIMH celebrated Independence Day with a special celebration and invited all the present and former Nyumba Yanga girls to attend, alongside those currently at FIMH.

It was wonderful to see many of the past and present girls sharing time together!



Both Memory and Idah (our previous graduates) attended and we heard that they gave beautiful moving speeches.



GROWING PAINS:

A key part of our mandate for Homes of Joy has always been supporting a high quality of education and high quality of care for the girls. This mandate includes enrolling the girls in the best possible private institutions with qualified teachers, seeking-out tutors for additional support when needed, and ensuring small class sizes to provide tailored instruction.

Unfortunately, throughout 2023 we have experienced ongoing challenges and concerns with the quality of education and care being offered at FIMH, and it is important to us to be upfront and transparent with all of you about this.

When FIMH was first started, the intention was for it to be a small private school for secondary students and a vocational institution intended mainly to help guide the Nyumba Yanga girls through their secondary years and into a career (whether that be vocational training or post-secondary education). However, over the past couple of years, that focus has shifted substantially.



After numerous recent inquiries, we have found that FIMH is now a public school that is partially government funded. It currently is supporting over 350 male and female day-students, including the local children of military personnel. This is on top of the Nyumba Yanga girls (the girls who are specifically supported by Homes of Joy, and who have gone through the Nyumba Yanga program), who currently attend the school as boarding students.

This large increase in students has led to serious over-enrollment and a high teacher-to-student ratio. This unfortunately has impacted the quality of the education being offered at the school as we saw reflected in recent report cards.



While it is wonderful that more children within the local Lusaka West community now have access to education, we have noticed some concerning trends around increased behavioural challenges and significant substandard academic performance with the Nyumba Yanga girls at FIMH.

Unfortunately, after months of looking at options and seeking advice from a local neutral authority who understands the issues, **we have made the very difficult decision to pause funding for FIMH for 2024** as the current services provided are not meeting the standards we have always stood by as an organization.



We are working closely with Sister Anne and the other CIC Sisters to address these concerns and have currently proposed some alternative options for the secondary girls who are funded by Homes of Joy for 2024. One solution that we have offered, is to enroll the girls at a private school outside of FIMH in hopes that their studies are not impacted by this decision. These options are currently under review by the Sisters.



We are truly hoping these challenges are simply a result of growing pains and a project that perhaps grew too quickly, where the growth outpaced the supports and curricular standards in place. We are also working with the Sisters to establish clear benchmarks for what changes we would need to see to re-establish funding for FIMH in 2025 and beyond.

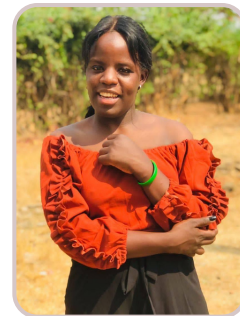
Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns around this, as your trust and belief in the work we do and decisions we make is extremely important to us!



POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY FUND RECIPIENTS:

Our current post-secondary students and graduates all continue to excel and we are so proud of all of them!

Both **Victoria** and **Rabecca** are currently completing their second year of their Office Administration program and writing their final exams. Depending on the success of their exams, both girls may decide to take an extra year of schooling to receive a more advanced and specialized secretarial diploma. We wish them much success and we are crossing our fingers because the girls have certainly worked hard over the past year.



Chisanga is continuing to work through her medical recovery and remains incredibly grateful to everyone who supported our emergency fundraiser earlier this year to cover the cost of the surgery on her arm. She has regained motion from her shoulder to elbow and is starting to see some very limited movement in her hand. She is continuing to work through physiotherapy in hopes of regaining full motion in her lower arm and hand as her nerves slowly heal. She has been continuing her studies and surmounting new challenges such as learning to write with her other hand. She is also working closely with the Disability office at the University and, as she tackles her exams this week, will have an assistant to capture her answers through verbal dictation so she doesn't have to write or type.

Memory continues to apply for full-time nursing roles but is gaining wonderful part-time experience administering mobile vaccination campaigns in her local community.

And **Idah** is continuing to do well at the local medical clinic where she is employed full-time. Finding full-time employment in the medical field in Zambia can be very challenging due to changes in the government hiring system but both Memory and Idah are working very hard and are well positioned to grow in their roles.

As their experience grows so will the job opportunities!



We also heard recently from another blast from the past! A former Nyumba Yanga girl named **Grace K.** recently sent us a message. She wanted us to know that she is now married, has a two-year-old child and is currently employed full-time in the administration area of the military. We always enjoy hearing from our girls as they journey through life!

Finally, we are also currently waiting to hear how our grade 12 students at FIMH did on their final exams to see if we will have any new post-secondary students to report on for 2024.



HOLIDAY GIVING SEASON:

Two special dates are on our calendars right now, as we kickstart the holiday giving season:

Giving Tuesday is on November 28th

World AIDS Day is on December 1st



Both of these dates have very special meaning to us.

Giving Tuesday jumpstarts our Holiday Fundraising drive as we continue to raise funds to support our girls with their educational needs in the new school year beginning in January 2024

World AIDS Day is also important to us as it serves as a reminder of the reason that the girls are in an orphanage and need our support. All the girls are classed as double-orphans meaning that both their parents have died from AIDS or AIDS-related diseases, and this is why the Nyumba Yanga Orphanage, and its success, is so important to us at Homes of Joy.

A CALL FOR SUPPORT:

This holiday season we are hoping to raise.... **\$35,000.00**

This number is based on the needs identified by the Sisters in their recent proposals for 2024. This would fund both primary and post-secondary education for 40-55 in the coming year (depending on next steps with FIMH). As mentioned earlier, the current plan is to pause funding for Secondary education at FIMH in 2024.

That being said, we are also aware of the possibility of additional costs, if we move forward with our offer to fund private education for our Secondary girls in the coming year. Homes of Joy is gaining a strong reputation in Zambia, as more of our girls graduate into adults with careers, and start to give back to their communities. Locals are seeing the impact we've had in the lives of Zambian girls and women. And that means more girls than ever before are reaching out for our help.

We are thrilled to be experiencing rapid growth within our organization, but we are dedicated to growing sustainably, and ethically. We want to do this right, and so we humbly ask for your support!

You can donate through the following ways:

- On our website: www.homesofjoy.org/donate
- On Facebook (with no fees!): www.facebook.com/HomesOfJoyOrg
- By cheque (mailed to: **45 Ballantine St. Cobourg ON, Canada, K9A5G8**)

We wish to extend our deepest thanks for your kind support over the last 14 years! We wish you and your families the happiest holiday season, and many wishes for the coming year.

With Gratitude and JOY,
The Homes of Joy Board of Directors

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