

# Shelley is in Zimbabwe! Nov 2011



## Early Childhood Development Centre

My main role is in supporting work within the ECD, which is in the process of being completed. Changes we have made so far:-

- Some new staff and re-established roles
- 2 classrooms fully functional, a therapeutic room still to be refurbished along with dining room, kitchen and outdoor play space.
- Resources have been organised and audited, we now know what we need so please ask in case you can provide it for us!
- Staff are now using small group teaching methods with the children
- Planning has changed and systems are being established
- Children now sit at tables to eat and serve one another, we now provide chicken for lunch once a week
- We have sent out our ECD information pack to nurseries, schools and churches in the UK- if you would like one please let me know!

Plans for ECD.....we have so many, but here are just a few!

- Ensuring that the curriculum is challenging and appropriate for all children
- Developing staff confidence in new teaching styles
- Using our new volunteer support staff effectively to ensure that our teachers are fully empowered to teach
- Purchasing a sign that advertises the ECD- we are currently known through word of mouth only
- Establishing small fundraising projects to ensure sustainability for the ECD, this will particularly focus on improving the diet for the children in ECD, this includes selling art work created by children from MRCH- maybe you would like one?



We hope that all of these will increase our numbers in ECD, as it is the end of school year in November and this means that 26 of our children Graduate and go to Primary school.

We also want to keep our fees low to ensure that the community children can still attend.

**We are so very excited about this project!**

So maybe you should meet some of our children? Currently we have 21 from the children's home, 5 staff children and 29 from the community.....

### The power of a pot!



.....here are some of our boys investigating the things we can do with tins or 'gaba'.....as you can see they poured, filled, cooked, made birthday cakes, collected, lined up, carried, washed, used sticks and hands to tap rhythms on them.

The power of a pot!!



### The power of a play mate!

Baboon is growing and has become a real character. He is still unsure if he is African or English, and takes the best bits of both! He is a firm favourite with the boys at MRCH, but some of the girls are a little unsure!! He is currently in the puppy stage of Chikudo - aptly meaning 'Baboon games' which includes biting feet, chewing my sofa and eating any little animals he can! Hmmm, I'm assured he will grow out of it!! He is a great companion for me and some of the children who call to play with him after school.



### The power of a pudding!

I have found that at the weekends and after school my house is often busy with children who are resident at MRCH. We are often baking and the boys in particular are becoming very capable bakers...and tasters! It has reminded me how powerful it can be to prepare and share food together; it gives the children time to chat; to learn new skills; to practice skills they learn in school such as measuring; sharing; waiting; clearing away ; practicing English; and most importantly to just be children and to lick the bowl! Any simple recipes would be well received; however ingredients can be expensive and limited.



### Other news...

I was able to visit some of the other projects that I will be supporting in Gweru and Masvingo. As you can see they are just beginning, but plans for community outreach projects, market gardening and a residential unit are all underway. MRCH is a national project which means that my role eventually will involve spending time supporting staff and volunteers across the country.

I was lucky enough to be able to see some of this beautiful country.....by Elephant at Antelope Park, where 'Lion Country' is filmed and to visit Great Zimbabwe a place of great historical importance in Zimbabwe.

I have also been accompanying our choir to various Methodist churches; this has given me the opportunity to experience a whole range of worship styles.



### PRAYER REQUESTS

OUR GRADUATION AND NATIVITY IS ON NOVEMBER 25TH, PLEASE PRAY THAT IT WILL BE A TIME OF GREAT CELEBRATION FOR THE CHILDREN AND PARENTS .FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF AS WE CONTINUE TO LEARN TOGETHER AND DISCOVER WHAT TYPE OF EDUCATION IS APPROPRIATE

FOR CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE. FOR STAMINA FOR ALL STAFF TO BE ABLE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AHEAD.. FINALLY, FOR OUR BUILDING PROJECT TO CONTINUE TO PROGRESS, DESPITE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS.

If you would like to visit, know more or keep up to date with daily life in MRCH please add me on Facebook (Shelley Cooling) or email me on waif\_uk@yahoo.ie. Our postal system is slow but is working well, any letters or parcels should be sent to Shelley Cooling, Matthew Rusike Children's Home, Epworth Mission, Epworth, Hatfield,, Harare, Zimbabwe , PO BOX H99. Thanks.