

St. Marcellin Children's Village, Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe



ZimArt-in-Trust has supported St. Marcellin since 2006 and we have been very impressed by the nurturing and positive environment. The staff, led by Norman and Sybil Macdonald, is extremely resourceful and forward thinking. The Village relies solely on income generating projects and donations from well wishers. They get no government funding, even though children are sometimes referred to the Village by government agencies.

St. Marcellin Children's Village in Zimbabwe's capitol, Harare, provides a home for 70 + orphans who literally have no place to go. Some arrive as infants, abandoned in public places and brought to the Village by strangers. Most of the children have been orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and some are themselves HIV positive.

The original seven-acre property and house was purchased with donated funds in 2002. Through the tireless fundraising efforts of a board of trustees, three other "houses" have since been built to provide living space for 20 children each. A Gogo (grandmother) lives in each home with two other staff.

In 2005 a nursery school was built on the property with enough space to accommodate a clinic, so that children can receive their medical care in the Village.

St. Marcellin is registered as an Institution under the Children's Protection and Adoption Act and is also registered as a Charitable Organization. The Village is overseen by a volunteer board of trustees and managed by a dedicated team of professionals.

To date we have purchased and installed one drip irrigation system and secured funding from the Harbinger Foundation for a second system. ZimArt oversaw its installation, and has also provided seed, fertilizer, garden tools and paid for gardening staff when needed. Our goal is to ensure that the Village is able to grow all its own food.

With the generous support of donors we have built rabbit hutches and constructed fish breeding ponds. The children's diet is now supplemented with fish and rabbit meat.

In 2008, when inflation and shortages were at their peak, ZimArt-in-Trust responded to urgent requests from St. Marcellin to provide basics such as diaper cream, formula and soap – all of which had to be bought in South Africa. We also purchased and delivered food supplies on an emergency response basis.

In 2009, through the generosity of a donor, we initiated a vermicomposting project which is now well underway. The goal is to both increase production in the garden and minimize the use of chemical fertilizer. All garden staff

have been trained, a composting shed built and worm breeding is established.

In 2011 ZimArt-in-Trust hired an agricultural specialist to work with the garden staff on an ongoing basis in order to assist with troubleshooting, crop planning and animal husbandry.

A soccer pitch was completed in 2010 thanks to the generosity of a donor, but other landscaping plans were put on hold while St. Marcellin installed a grey water recycling system. Our goal is to complete the landscaping in 2012.

In 2012 St. Marcellin received quality used clothes and toys, and brand new Lee Valley tools, donated and shipped by Canadian well wishers.

(top) Delivering new tools to the garden staff at St. Marcellin.

(bottom) Aisha, Biggie Chikodzi's daughter, visits with the children, while we check out the garden!

