

Background

In 2005, the Church of St. Peter in Cobourg, received an urgent appeal for help from St. Mark's - our partner church in the city of Mzuzu in Malawi, Africa. St. Mark's was attempting to feed 250 AIDS orphans once a month, but was in financial distress and unable to maintain their commitment. As a result of this initial request, the parishes of St. Peter's and St. Mark's created the **Mzuzu AIDS Orphan Care Program (MAOCP)** - a unique program to ensure that the children receive nutritious food and medications so that they can continue to grow and thrive in their own rich indigenous culture.

A small group at St. Peter's took on the task of developing a plan to implement a weekly feeding program for the children, which is funded through generous annual donations, on-going monthly sponsorships and creative fund raising activities.

The children do not live in orphanages, but remain in their own communities, living in their family huts, which are often headed by the eldest sibling. If they are fortunate, they are watched over by a grandmother or a neighbour guardian. With the help of MAOCP, the children are able to go to school, receive medical care, and have an opportunity to learn new skills as a means of bringing new hope and reducing poverty in their lives.



Feeding in times of Covid:

Before Covid, St. Peter's provided funding for a weekly feeding program at St. Mark's Church. The food was graciously prepared and served by volunteers from the Mothers' Union. The onset of Covid required changes to the way food was prepared and distributed to protect the health of the children and volunteers. The food ingredients (sufficient for four weekly meals) were packed in plastic bags and collected by the orphans every month. In January 2023 it was possible to re-start the weekly feeding at St. Mark's Church.

Many of these children walk great distances to be fed. Several suffer from HIV AIDS, malaria, and other malnutrition-related illnesses.



Education:

Funding for tuition fees, uniforms and learning materials is provided by St. Peter's MAOCP for children attending secondary school. In addition, some funding is available for a few students to attend post-secondary programs.



Healthcare:

The feeding program and HIV supplements are the main focus of the program, but St. Peter's MAOCP also provides funding for necessary healthcare including nurse and doctor visits, dental care and in-hospital treatment for the children when required. Each family is provided with mosquito netting to help keep Malaria under control. The children are also provided with blankets, shoes and clothing.



Skills Development:

Opportunities for income generation and improved nutrition have been provided through training in tin-smithing and tailoring, and for guardians and older orphans, vegetable and fruit tree production - with microloans for development of small businesses. Seeds and seedlings have been provided by the program and small plots by the City of Mzuzu. Rice, maize and vegetable plantings have helped feed the orphans.



Crisis Relief:

Some of our children have more serious needs that do not fit into the current areas of care provided by MAOCP. Funds are forwarded to St. Mark's, as required, to cover the cost of emergency situations. As an example: two little brothers lost their few meagre possessions when their family hut burned down, leaving them homeless and vulnerable. With our help, they have been rehomed with a caring family in Mzuzu. Sadly, from time to time, funds are required to cover the costs for a funeral when an orphan has passed away. We are extremely grateful for donations which allow us to provide dignified funerals for these little ones.

What Your Gift Can Mean:

Even a small contribution can bring significant changes in the lives of our 250 orphans. For example, a donation of \$100 allows St. Peter's MAOCP to purchase new shoes, blankets and used winter clothing for 5 children; a \$200 donation pays for a sick child's hospital visits for two months; a \$400 donation will cover the cost for uniforms, tuition fees, learning materials and meals to send one child to secondary school for one year. These are just a few examples of how your generosity can make a huge difference in the quality of life for our children in Mzuzu.



Who we are:

MAOCP is a joint project managed by a small community team based at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Cobourg, together with a project officer and women of the Mothers' Union at St. Mark's, Mzuzu. The project is generously funded by St. Peter's parishioners and members of the community. At present, we receive no government funding. We diligently strive to keep our expenses to a minimum allowing us to focus donations where they are meant to be – improving the lives of these 250 children who look to us as their parents. You can find more information online at: www.stpeterscobourg.org/outreach/international/mzuzu-2

*Smiles of relief,
Not tears of grief (even during COVID)*



**St. Peter's and St. Mark's
Mzuzu AIDS Orphan Care Program, MAOCP**

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