

My Father's House Family Homes

Zambia



IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

November | 2023



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

My Father's House Family Homes was founded by Gary Schneider in 2002 when he responded to God's call to help children that were orphaned in Zambia. The homes exist to glorify God and see orphans raised to life in Christ in a home, in a family, and in a community where they are known and loved.

Between 2004 to 2006, the first four Christ-centered homes headed by widows were formed in Lusaka. The homes provided Christ's love through meeting the children's physical, social, emotional, educational and spiritual needs. In 2008, a property was secured in a small town called Chongwe and more homes were built to create room to serve more children. In 2022, a major construction project which included four more homes, a sports field, a library and a worship center was completed. The current total capacity is now 12 families and 96 children.



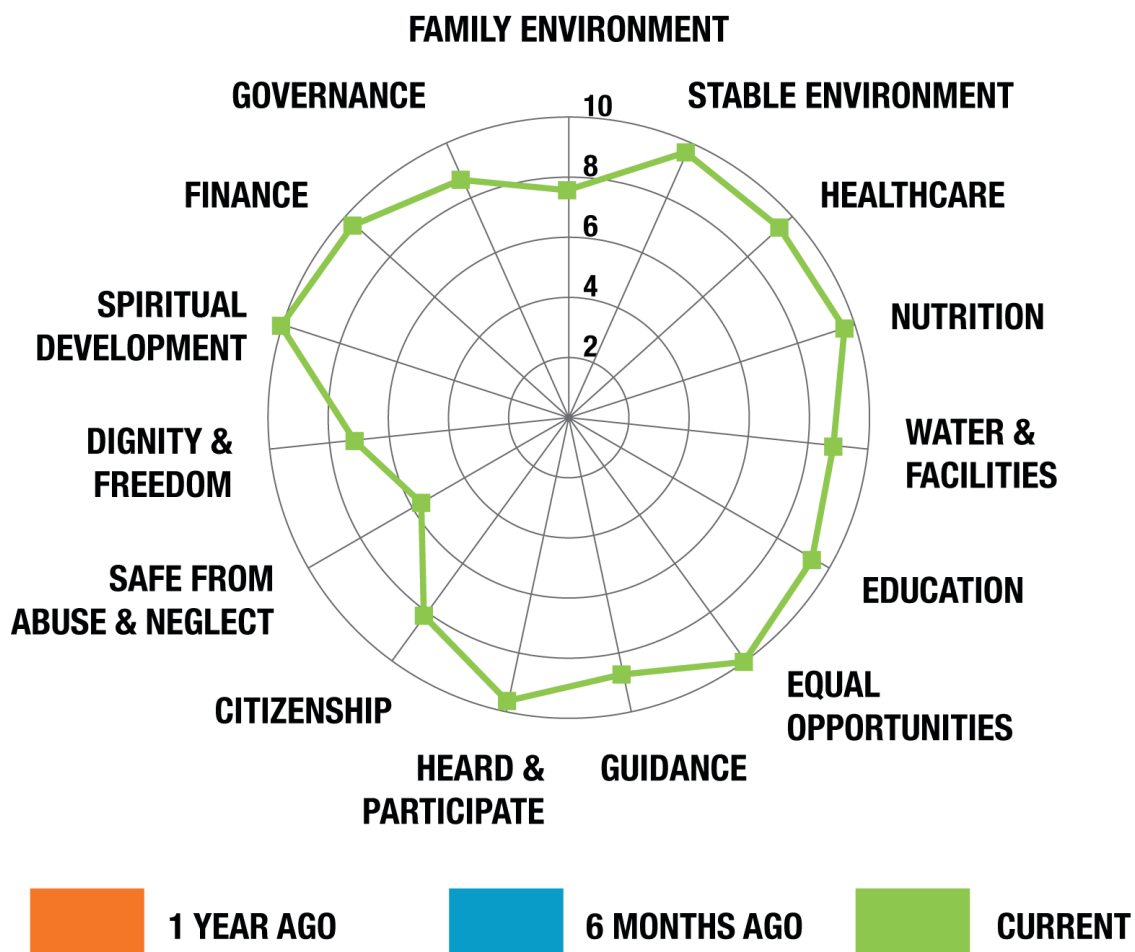
The Thrive Assessment

What is the Thrive Assessment?

In 1959, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, shelter, nutrition and more. We have codified all 13 Rights, as well as a Finance Standard and a Governance and Human Resource Standard, resulting in a total of 15 standards. These standards ensure that children receive care that truly helps them to thrive, now and in the future.

The Thrive Assessment will be administered every 6 months with each partner home to chart the progress of each standard. Our team works with caregivers to outline next steps which and compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

Current Thrive Scale



Strategic Initiatives

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE TRAINING

PROJECT SUMMARY	The director of these family homes would like to engage a trauma-informed care professional to set up training sessions for all caregivers twice a year. The goal is to equip the caregivers and ensure that the children have compassionate and informed caregivers.
INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST	ZMW 15000 \$652 USD

MATHEMATICS SKILLS ASSESSMENT & TUITION

PROJECT SUMMARY	The director would like to put a plan in place to engage a skilled mathematics teacher to tutor all children 9 and above that need to develop their mathematics skills. The plan is set for the first quarter of 2024.
INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST	ZMW 4000 \$167 USD

COMMUNITY SERVICE

PROJECT SUMMARY	The director of My Father's House partners with places in the community for children to offer free community services. The director will set up community service work at least twice a year.
INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST	ZMW 0 \$0 USD



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

My Father's House cares for school-aged children until they graduate high school or transition into a skill to help sustain their lives. Each home is assigned one caregiver and 8 children. Caregivers stay in the homes and only go home when they would like to take leave. During this time the Matron takes care of the children in the home until the caregiver returns. All onboarding caregivers go through a process of shadowing an experienced caregiver for 2 months before they are given their own home and children. Chores in the home are done by the caregivers and children are also assigned age appropriate chores. When siblings live in separate homes, they are encouraged to visit each other to encourage bonding. The home also keeps records of traceable family connections. However, for children with no traceable relatives, their records have very little to no information. The social worker on site also works towards reunification for children whose families have been traced.

The caregivers have received Trauma-informed care training, but only on occasion. The home director does performance evaluations to help evaluate the caregiver, but it is not done consistently. The home director also has not had any professional therapist evaluate the caregivers to measure their compatibility.

- ☐ Implement trauma informed care training for caregivers to be done bi annually
- ☐ Implement therapist evaluation for caregivers bi annually



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There are set rules that are read to all the children and placed on the notice boards in the homes. When there are infractions, age appropriate disciplinary measures are given to the children. The social worker and caregivers discuss ways to discipline the children positively. This can be difficult because they have had no specialist help guide with disciplinary measures. In the homes, family groups do activities like homework, chores, devotion, and going to church together to help foster unity in the home.

All caregivers are entitled to 30 days of leave annually which they take at some point during the year. They also have 1 day every month for personal activities. The home director has discussions with the caregivers to discuss issues and ways to create a positive environment. This has helped ensure a low caregiver turnover.

- ☐ Develop positive disciplinary guidelines



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

My Fathers house has partnered with a local healthcare facility in their community for monthly health checks on the children. Each child also has a medical record that is kept at the local clinic, and all vaccinations are given to the children through this clinic. Although the local clinic provides the home with annual vision services as well as all emergency services, dental services are only provided as the need arises. Additionally, the clinic does not have a pediatric physician to provide specialized services to the children at the home. The caregivers at the home are sufficiently equipped to care for special medical needs. To ensure that children maintain good hygiene, all adolescent girls are given sufficient sanitary towels and they are both educated and provided with appropriate disposal methods. In addition to this, all children wash their hair weekly and it is also braided thus preventing lice. Brushing of teeth is also encouraged and the children are provided with both toothbrushes and toothpaste, however, a few children are not consistent with brushing their teeth.

- ☐ Implement annual dental exams for all children



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a menu they follow which was approved by a government nutritionist. The children's diet includes local foods that are both appetizing and tasty. The servings of food include a protein, and vegetable daily, and fruits most days of the week.

All food preparation is done in a clean environment that is free from pests as fumigation is done 3 times annually. The kitchen areas are also always kept clean and they are well ventilated.

- ☐ Increase the fruit intake for children



Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

My Fathers House goes through an annual certification process to ensure minimum standards of care are satisfied. All the homes have sufficient lighting, clean drinking water, and safe disposal methods of sewer. The home director is looking forward to procuring fire extinguishers and training of members of staff for emergencies as well as fire drills in order to satisfy the minimum standards required by the government. The home already has an emergency assembly point. The home director is also confident that the homes are mostly safe from the elements because they are well constructed. The only concern is the roofs of the older homes that need to be replaced. Additionally, the home does not have an alternative source of power in case of power outages.

- ☐ Provide fire extinguishers for the homes
- ☐ Investigate alternative power sources of electricity



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There is a government run primary school very close to My Father's house. The home director has maintained a good relationship with the school, and this allows for all the children at the home to be enrolled in the school. Unfortunately, the school is typically overcrowded hence affecting the quality of education. Fortunately, the home has an after-school program to develop the children's literacy and phonic skills. There is also a need for a mathematics after school program to develop the children's mathematics skills. The home also has a library and computer lab that is available and accessible to all the children at the home. The Library needs more shelves to accommodate the books they have, as well as books in local languages. A tutor is also needed to provide basic lessons on how to use a computer.

- ☐ Arrange for basic math skills assessments for all children 9 years old and above
- ☐ Arrange for more age appropriate books in the library

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home is planned to ensure that each child has personal bed space and a place to keep their personal items such as clothing and shoes. In addition to this, all children with special needs are accommodated to safeguard their specific needs. Male and female support staff provide mentorship and basic counsel for the children at the home. The home director has also built relationships with community members such as pastors that also offer mentorship and counseling.

☐ Continue current practices



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has clearly stated expectations for all caregivers that guide the recruitment process. Caregivers are also evaluated using a performance evaluation tool, however, no professional evaluation has been done. The home director and social workers at the home provide basic counseling for children in need. Other community members also provide mentorship and counsel on occasion. The home however, does not have professional counsel that can sufficiently meet the children's psychological healing needs.

Even though the caregivers do not receive formal life-skills training, the home director ensures that they pass on practical knowledge to the children in the home to include, cleaning, hygiene, respectful interaction, etc. There are times when children are encouraged to take part in programs within the facility such as fixing bikes, taking inventory, and selling bicycles. Other projects like farming, and participating in praise and worship at the churches are also encouraged. However, these programs are not documented and only occur on occasion.

The home has a preparation plan for children beginning at age 15 to prepare them for launching after they complete high school. Children understand that once they complete high school, they are either given a scholarship to higher education or skills training depending on academic performance.

- ☐ Provide therapeutic resources for children for psychological healing monthly
- ☐ Facilitate caregiver evaluations to determine quality mentors for children
- ☐ Provide caregivers with training on how to manage sexual behavior and educate children on their bodies



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has created an environment that ensures that caregivers encourage children to have free time to foster personal interests. When children do not want to be a part of non-essential activities, they are free to stay away. Children also participate in things like planning their food menu which is changed annually, and they purchase their own clothing with guidance. All children also have an individual development plan that is updated as often as needed.

☐ Continue current practices



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The social services team ensures that all children that have traced family connections have all necessary documentation, these documents are kept in the custody of the family members and not at the home. The home director also sees to it that children are kept informed regarding any changes in the ministry and the ethics and governing standards of the homes. The homes also have televisions to ensure children have access to current events through news channels. Caregivers are encouraged to give children age appropriate chores and they are also taught to keep their environment clean and tidy. The home also facilitates outings on occasions like Christmas where the children go out to have a day of fun. The children also go out for their annual shopping where they are guided to make a budget for responsible spending. The home director would like to have more outing opportunities for the children but it is difficult because of the financial implications. The children have on occasion done some community work serving the community or other facilities. After the covid pandemic, the children have not done any community work, and the home director is enthusiastic to begin the program again.

☐ Plan for more activities outside the home at least once a month

☐ Plan for children to perform community services at least twice a year



Right to Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The homes have 24/7 security services available to them, however the windows in the homes have no burglar bars. The home director is concerned about this as it still poses a security risk. Her hope is that they can be installed. In order to further safeguard the children, the home director has talks with the children quarterly on reporting any inappropriate or abusive acts from anyone. All caregivers that the home recruits must have a recommendation letter from their church. Moreover, boys and girls sleep in separate quarters and no one-on-one time with anyone of the opposite gender allowed. This however does not extend to the caregivers. Furthermore, frequent visitors are always welcome at the home but caregivers and the home director are always alert to ensure that children are never alone with them. The home also has a child protection policy in place that all employees on site have signed.

None of the children have gone through an intake therapeutic evaluation to help them work through their trauma. The home director recognizes that this is a need and would like to establish partnerships to help facilitate assessments. When it comes to discipline, the social workers on site guide and encourage the caregivers to discipline through withholding privileges, however, they have not received any formal training from experts.

- ☐ Provide staff with training on positive discipline techniques
- ☐ Provide intake assessments by therapists to evaluate children upon admission into care
- ☐ Build an intentional strategy to enforce no one on one time between individuals



Right to Dignity and Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home strives to create an environment where children's rights and freedoms are upheld. Caregivers work towards teaching children to care for themselves independently. Grooming items and clothing are always provided for each child. In addition, all children have personal space where they are able to store personal items. To further encourage independence, children have opportunities to complete extra chores like gardening in order to gain privileges. This practice however is not consistent and is not used as a tool effectively to encourage children to work hard. The children are also not allowed to work to earn money.

- ☐ Plan for opportunities for children to do extra chores to earn extra allowances or privileges
- ☐ Plan for teenagers to have opportunities to work in the community safely to earn money



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home holds deep Christian values and all the children are encouraged to be a part of a local church in the community. The children actively participate in church activities like the choir, youth ministry, Sunday school, and bible study.

At home, the caregivers and children have daily devotion and prayer. The home has also made bibles and other Christian reading material available to the children for personal growth. Quiet places are available to the caregivers and children for quiet time and personal devotion.

☐ Continue with current practices



Financial Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has an administrative process that helps track income and expenses for accountability. Money is only withdrawn with the authorization of two people and all expenses are audited by an external accounting firm. The accountant prepares a monthly report that is submitted to senior management for monitoring and evaluation.

Annual budgets are also prepared to help determine the needs in each financial year, and are done to the best of the team's ability. However unbudgeted expenses do occur during the course of the year. Additionally, sometimes not all budgeted for expenses are fulfilled because the home may not have raised enough money to fulfill the need for the home. In cases like this, the home prioritizes expenses based on urgency and need.

☐ Continue with current practices



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has secured the property to ensure that it cannot be sold for personal gain. The home is currently working on updating licensing. All child documentation is stored at a different location; nevertheless, the home director would like to create space for documents to be stored at the site. When it comes to training on child participation, social workers at the home have received government training however this has not been extended to other members of staff. The home director does have monthly meetings with the caregivers to discuss issues and ways to improve processes. The home has an effective system in selecting suitable caregivers for the children. All caregivers are required to shadow an experienced caregiver for a period of two months before they are allowed to care for children in their own home. The caregivers however have not received any formal training on attachment and child development. In addition to this, even though the home has only had one training on caring for sick children and hygiene, caregivers are seasoned mothers and have gained personal experience in these areas. The home has been inspected by health inspectors and they have met all the minimum standards.

- ☐ Provide staff with annual training on attachment and child development
- ☐ Provide annual training on caring for sick children
- ☐ Provide staff with training on importance of facilitating child participation



Current Improvement Partners



Every Orphan's Hope

Every Orphan's Hope is actively creating opportunities for vulnerable children to be placed in families. For kids that do not have the opportunity to be reunified, adopted, or fostered, EOH provides a family home. Partnership with EOH consists of ACHF training members of their staff in the Thrive Certification Program to deploy in the residential care facilities they have and partner with. Learn more at www.everyorphan.org.

For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on go to
www.ACHF.org/Projects



Every Orphan's

HOPE

+

**A CHILD'S
HOPE**
FOUNDATION