

### **Mothers feeding students, nourishing the future:**

Thanks to you, supporters at Global Giving, the efforts of Mothers Support Groups in Zimbabwe are ever expanding to help keep more children in school and prepared to learn. There are over 150 Mother Support Groups in Zimbabwe, made up of 10-30 women from rural communities. They band together to help children in their communities gain greater access to an education, and to remove the obstacles that keep them from achieving their dreams.

For many of these mothers and grandmothers, going to school is an experience that they themselves did not have, and they have come together to ensure that children not only can pay their fees for school, but also have everything they need to succeed, including supplies, books, uniforms, and meals. We're excited to share the accomplishments of the Thuthuka Mother's Support group as they find new ways to reach this goal.

### **Thuthuka Mother Support group, Zwehamba:**

Marita, a member of the Thuthuka Mother's Support Group in Zwehamba, Zimbabwe exemplifies the drive that the women of the Mothers Support Group have for caring for children in their community. Having raised five children of her own, she recognizes the some orphans in this district are lacking a supportive community of adults. Together with her fellow mothers and grandmothers, Marita gives kindly advice and guidance as well as and resources they need to complete school.

Since forming, the Thuthuka Mother Support Group has raised money from poultry and gardening projects to buy pens and exercise books for orphaned students at Zwehamba Primary School. The women then decided to use their motivation and success to take on a new challenge: providing meals to children in schools.

This school feeding project provides meals for children at the primary school 3 days a week to help improve the comfort, attendance, and concentration of children, particularly those who walk a long way to school on empty bellies. With this meal cooked and distributed by the mothers, the students are able to stay alert in class and ready to learn.

### **A new approach to feeding hungry students:**

The mothers running this program are pioneering a new approach to school feeding. In many of these meal programs, the mothers tend to only work in the background to help cook. But Camfed Mother Support Groups take leadership roles in all aspects of the school meal projects – from planning and cooking to monitoring and evaluating to ensure that they are successful. With years of experience helping out at the school already, Marita says the Thuthuka Mother Support Group is highly motivated and proactive.

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"Before the head teacher and the committee would even call for a meeting, we would have already sent our mealie meal<sup>1</sup> as women to the school. We won't wait for the meeting, they will find us already done," she says.

But it's not just the children that have benefitted from this new approach. Marita has said that her involvement with Camfed – working together with head teachers, education officials and school management – has given her the kind of confidence and voice that a lot of rural women lack. "I have become self-driven," she said. "I am now able to talk and voice out my opinions even though I am a woman."

### **A continued commitment to education:**

Through the generosity of the Global Giving community, Mothers Support Groups are helping to nourish growing minds and reinforce the importance of the involvement of women in improving their communities. The Mothers Support Group members of Zimbabwe have told us that supporting children in education and volunteerism to them is a life-long commitment, and we invite you as supporters to join them on their journey to expand their services to additional children across the region.



**MSG members gathering maize for school meals**

<sup>1</sup> Mealie meal refers to the ground maize used to make the children's meals.

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