

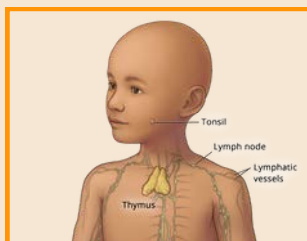


KIDZCAN ZIMBABWE NEWSLETTER



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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- The herbs did not seem to work
- I did not take the child's complaints seriously
- KidzCan at the UN General Assembly



Types of Childhood Cancers

1. WILM'S TUMOUR

- Physically, the child may appear to be well and playful
- Swollen stomach usually painless
- Hard mass in stomach
- Sometimes blood in urine
- Sometimes elevated blood pressure

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Daniel Mckenzie standing with Michelle Mayiseni (Cancer Survivor) at the UN General Assembly Conference on Childhood Cancer held in New York

Warm regards folks, and welcome to yet another edition as Spring fully settles in. This has been an exciting period where we have ramped up our awareness campaigns as we seek to raise the childhood cancer survival rate.

The recently held United Nations General Assembly was our portal for sharing the childhood cancer message where one of our survivors, Wadzanai Mayiseni spoke, underscoring the need for equity, closing the gap between the Low-medium-income countries and the developed world. No child should die of cancer because of where they are born.

During September Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, we managed to carry out various programmes in the media, without whom the message would have been very difficult to propagate. We want to especially thank the National AIDS Council (NAC) and many of you for your continued support. You are the lifeblood of our operations. Each one of us can make a difference, regardless of our age, background, or circumstances.

Imagine, recently, a 12-year-old donated his birthday proceeds to our kids and a vendor in Chiredzi who donated pants from her wares on hearing our story. Once again, I want to thank my staff and our supportive board for the close focus on our work. We continue to embrace the transformative power of service and commit to serving our communities with unwavering dedication and an open heart, knowing that no one child deserves to be suffering from cancer.

As we do this, let us keep in mind the words of Martin Luther King Jr.

“Life’s most persistent and most urgent question is, What are you doing for others?”

May this question guide our actions and inspire us to create a legacy of service that will endure for generations to come. Let us remember that service is not a burden, but a privilege. It is a unique opportunity to contribute to our children’s lives. In this case, children who have cancer!

We count ourselves blessed and continue to be grateful.

From the Executive Director’s Desk

“Life’s most persistent and most urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?” Martin Luther King (jr)



Daniel and Michelle at the UN General Assembly in New York



Nikki (StarFM) interviewing Dr Loice Hlatshwayo



KidzCan and StarFM partnered to reach out to motorists



A team from the KidzCan Bulawayo Golf Fundraiser

03. Chemotherapy pays off for Charmaine



Charmaine and her mother at the KidzCan stand during the Harare Agricultural Show

Shuttling between Victoria Falls and Harare for treatment, little Charmaine found it daunting explaining to strangers that she had cancer.

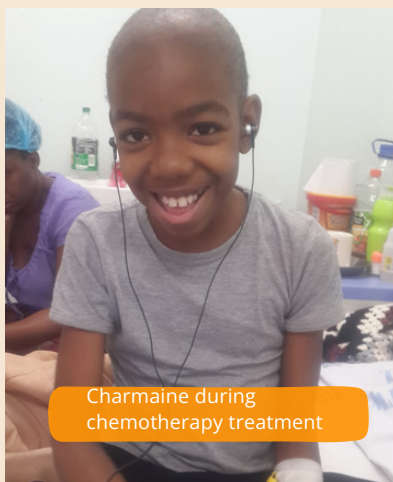
“It was tough explaining to the bus drivers and fellow travellers, who had no idea of my cancer condition,” said an ecstatic Charmaine.

At the age of ten, while doing grade seven, beautiful Charmaine was diagnosed with Leukaemia (cancer of the blood). The journey was long and tiring as she had to make trips from Victoria Falls, 874.7 km to Harare, Parirenyatwa Hospital, the centre of excellence in childhood cancer treatment. Hurtling between the two cities became her new routine, a demanding task as she would catch a late afternoon bus to Harare and arrive early in Harare in time for her chemo cycle which normally takes up to 6 hours. She would be done by sunset, early enough to catch the same bus and travel back home overnight.

This cannot be easy when you look at chemotherapy side effects such as nausea, fatigue, vomiting or diarrhoea, that sometimes come with it, especially to an unconcerned public.



Charmaine during treatment



Charmaine during chemotherapy treatment



Charmaine on her way to full recovery



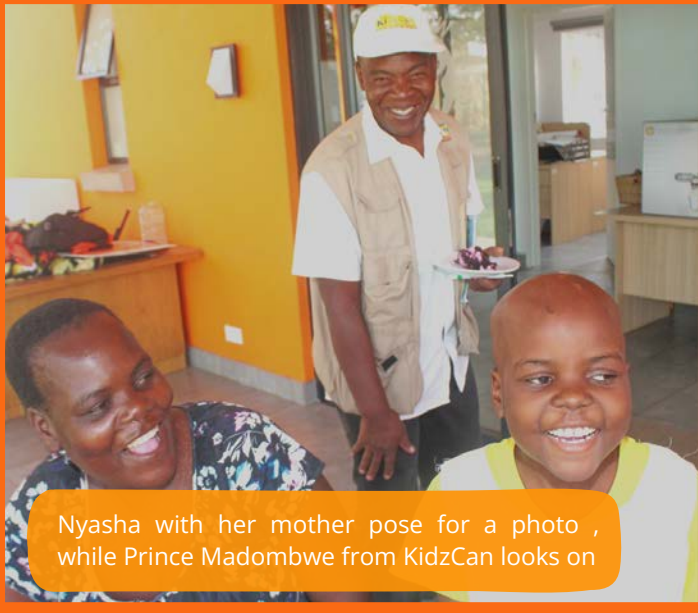
Now: Charmaine fully recovered

Thanks to KidzCan Zimbabwe who held her hands along the way, she has, after five arduous years gone into remission and only comes for check-ups a couple of times a year in case of relapse. On June 24, 2023, Charmaine attended her first Survivors’ celebration at a ceremony with 24 others whose lives were saved in an environment that has a predominantly high mortality rate due to lack of awareness, few resources, and cheaper unproven alternative remedies.

“I want to thank KidzCan for helping with medication and blood products. I owe my life to them as my family would not have afforded the expenses that come with cancer,” said a jovial Charmaine.

Cancer-free Charmaine is now doing her O’ levels and looks forward to scoring big as the disruptive years of treatment are now in the past.

She has grown into a big girl with a bright future whose beaming face restores hope, indicating it is possible to beat cancer and live a normal life again.



Nyasha with her mother pose for a photo , while Prince Madombwe from KidzCan looks on

I Did Not Take the Child's Complaints Seriously

It never rains but pours for the afflicted souls seeking remedy from the prophets all vested with 'healing and deliverance powers.'

Of late, our fellow men have fallen prey to seeking spiritual solutions to their various afflictions. It is saddening to note that this has given rise to fraudsters who are duping those on the deathbed. However, for that one little girl whose mother chose not to follow today's generation for seeking spiritual remedies to a medical condition, her life has begun to improve thanks to KidzCan Zimbabwe.

"Last year (2022) Nyasha (9) would always complain about painful legs, and I never took it seriously until one fateful morning when she collapsed," said Maggie (Nyasha's mother). A visit to the nearest clinic in Murambinda was the beginning of many such trips as one thing led to another.

It became clear to the family that they were facing quite a mountain when the situation degenerated into chest pains, pale skin, and a lump in the right armpit. Tests revealed that the little girl had Leukaemia. Nyasha's mother recalls, "When I called back home to tell them of the cancer diagnosis, they all said I should immediately come back with the child to consult with traditional healers as there was no history of cancer in the family.

"I did not listen to that because on admission I also saw many other parents in the same situation. This somewhat gave me courage," said Maggie. There is safety in numbers, so they say.

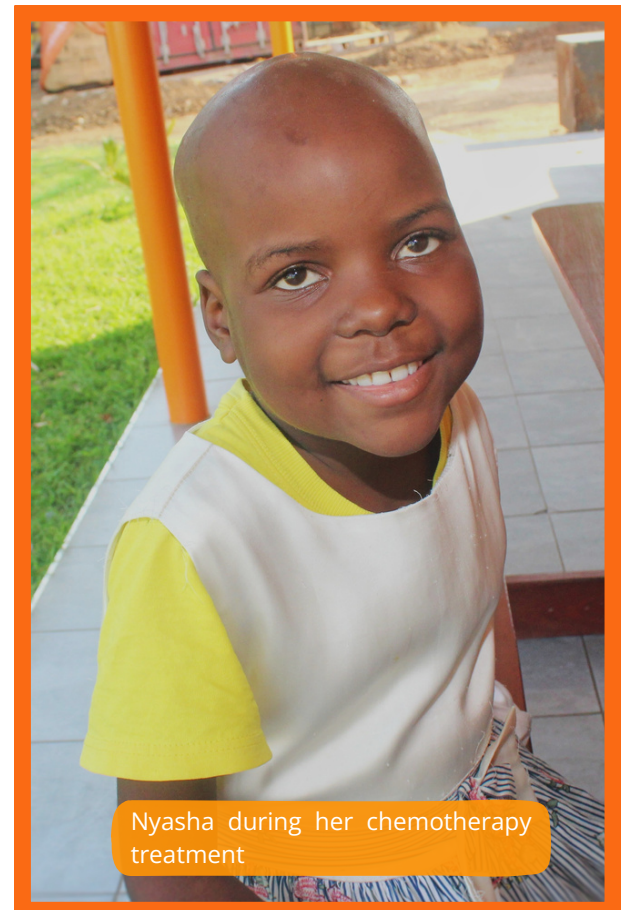
The husband, aunts, and the family elders were not happy with Maggie, for not heeding the family's call. Maggie was not deterred.

She and her little girl did what locally is called 'pay forward' when they came to Harare, a situation whereby an aunt, a resident in Harare paid bus fare upon arrival because Maggie could not afford it. September marks Nyasha's second month in hospital and there is remarkable improvement with reports indicating she is doing well.

She is in grade 3 and has hardly been in school owing to the disruptive nature of cancer treatment.

The mother is happy with the improvement which will soon culminate in the journey back home in Buhera, Mashonaland East Province.

This time around they are now happy because KidzCan is taking care of all their expenses.



Nyasha during her chemotherapy treatment

05. The Herbs Did Not Seem to Work

After a week of giving the little one a concoction made from bush leaves and roots gathered from a nearby stream, the swelling did not relent.

According to the traditional healer, an elderly woman, this was meant to make the little one vomit the frog inside that was causing the swelling in his genitals. Stabile Moyo, the mother, explains.

“It was the longest 7 days of my life,” said Stabile.

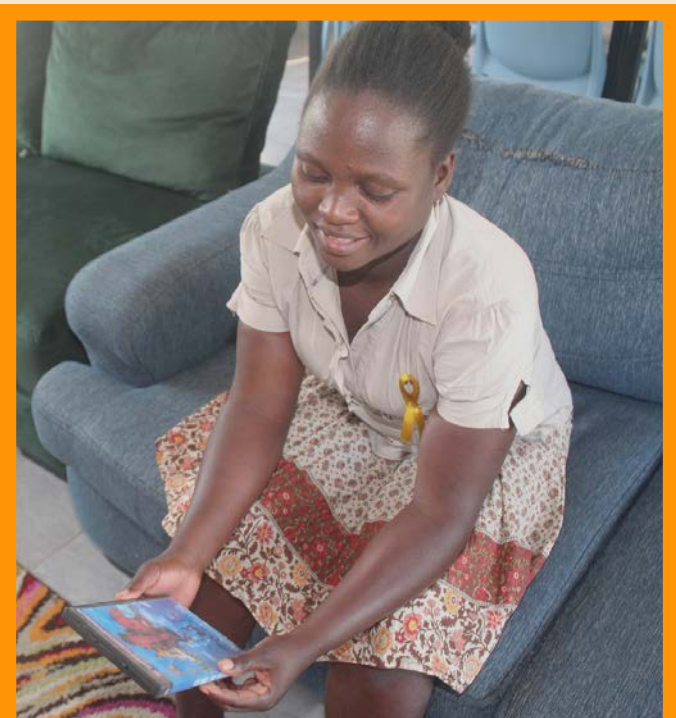
The swelling drifted towards the right ball. The hardness came with waist pains which affected his mobility. This meant the boy had to stop going to school.

“I took him to Sivalo Clinic where I was given paracetamol and amoxicillin. This did not seem to help so we were referred to Mbumba Mission Hospital where Dr. Snock discovered a tumour and immediately arranged transport that took us to the biggest Hospital in the Province, Mpilo, where we were in turn transferred to Harare,” she said.

“It was an angelic call when KidzCan stepped in. I am so sure I would not have managed the bills.”

Further investigations were done at Parirenyatwa Hospital, and the diagnosis was said to be testicular rhabdomyosarcoma. It took 12 weeks for the swelling to subside to allow the operation to be done.

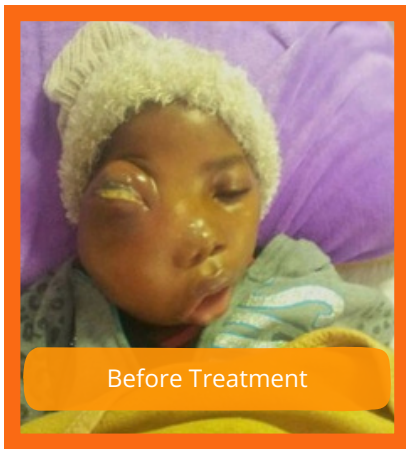
Effort has responded well to treatment and continues with chemo. Coming from Nkayi, in Matabeleland North, that is 155 Kilometres from Bulawayo which again is a further 440 km from Parirenyatwa Hospital Harare where the boy (9) is now being treated was not easy.



“When they admitted us at Mpilo I only had \$40 on me, and the tests done at a private clinic were calling for \$80. I therefore called a church member and borrowed \$10. I made another distress call to an aunt in South Africa, and it produced \$30 making it \$40 in total and half of what was being demanded. It’s all I had”, she said.

“My husband is unemployed, we survive on subsistence gardening. When you are desperate and in the middle of nowhere, God has a way of intervening. I went and cried by the door at the private clinic and the Doctor was kind to do the tests with the \$40 I had”, she added. “It was an angelic call when KidzCan stepped in. I am so sure I would not have managed the bills”

The boy can now run, climb the bed on his own, and is like any other normal kid of his age.



Before Treatment



After treatment



After treatment with her mom

The Story of Tanaka

August 13 marked a five-year celebration of surviving Burkitt's Lymphoma for Tanaka, as she also celebrated her 19th birthday.

Her mother took us down memory lane, explaining her child's ordeal and how she survived it at the end.

"It all started at 13 when she was in form 1 in March 2018 as a normal toothache, causing her face to drift to the right due to swelling. A visit to the dentist revealed everything to be normal forcing us to dig deep on the reason," she said.

The local clinic referred them to Parirenyatwa Hospital. Two kind doctors, Machigere and Marime upon seeing the dire situation had to contribute their own money to augment the little Trish (40), the mother, had, to get the biopsy done.

Unfortunately, the visit coincided with a protracted health professionals' job action, and they were asked to return 5 months later for interpretation of biopsy results. This forced the mother to seek alternative treatment.

She spent the whole of that April at a shrine trying all sorts of alternative treatments.

A local church that specialises in herbs, in Chitungwiza where she stays, gave them a new diet with special instructions to avoid certain foods.

"We were asked to avoid cooking oil, peanut butter, sugar, meat, fish, dairy products, and to eat only soya chunks if we felt like needing meat," said Trish. When you look closely at the picture during that time the girl was emaciated, getting so small to the size of a toddler yet she was 13."

Life became unbearable for everyone as other family members could not stand the new menu. It was a time of confusion and desperate measures. The journey saw them crisscrossing the country in search of solutions.

"I remember in Mrewa, Mashonaland East, the herbalist gave us some brown powder which we had to mix with porridge. Any leftovers were to be applied to the affected area, however, the swelling worsened with the left eye tearing persistently. Two months into the prescribed five, she could not bear it anymore, so she decided to return to the hospital.

Moving around with the girl was tough because people would cast their eyes on her and pass unsavoury comments. 'Hey, what did you do to her?'

"This would send me into tears, and Tanaka would ask, mama, why are you crying? A question very difficult to answer.

"At the age of 13, though sick, she was conscious of everything and could reason well," said Trish.

She ended up covering the head with a scarf to avoid the embarrassment.

In A4 Special Ward for Childhood Cancer, at Parirenyatwa Hospital two miracles happened: "I was introduced to KidzCan Zimbabwe who immediately took care of our expenses. As nature would have it, I met Professor Miguel, a specialist oncologist from St. Jude Children's Hospital in America, who happened to be on a visit to the country for 3 weeks.

He took special interest in their case.

During commencement of treatment, Trish was surprised that all the foods that the church herbalist had forbidden, were permissible to eat.

Upon learning of the cancer diagnosis, the major challenge was to explain to the girl about chemotherapy and radiotherapy. In the vernacular radiotherapy literally translates to 'burning' kupisa, a term that is scary.

"However, in no time we started noticing change and soon the tears in my eyes disappeared and Tanaka was healed."

Five years on, Tanaka is cured and has a normal life.

07. Types of Childhood Cancers

2. LEUKEMIA

- Fatigue or pale skin
- Infections and fever
- Easy bleeding or bruising, gum problems
- Extreme fatigue or weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Bone or joint pain
- Swelling in the abdomen, face, arms, underarms, neck, or groin
- Swelling above the collarbone
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Headaches, seizures, balance problems, or abnormal vision
- Vomiting
- Rashes

3. NEUROBLASTOMA

- A lump in the abdomen, neck or chest
- Dark circles around the eye
- Swollen stomach and breathing difficulties
- Weakness or paralysis
- Swelling of the legs, ankles or feet
- Jerky muscle movements

4. LYMPHOMAS

- Can be a painless swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck, armpits or groin It can be associated with:
 - Persistent fatigue
 - Fever and chills
 - Night sweats
 - Unexplained weight loss

5. RETINOBLASTOMA

Retinoblastoma is an eye cancer in children that can kill if not detected early. Take a flash photo of your child. Retinoblastoma may show up as a white spot or reflection.

- Coughing and chest pains
- Loss of appetite

6. BONE CANCER

- Pain on the affected bone
- Swelling or tenderness near affected area
- Brittle bone that easily fractures
- An abscess on affected area
- Fatigue
- Unintended weight loss
- A mass or lump may be felt in affected area

7. BRAIN TUMOUR

- Headaches
- Swelling of the neck
- Changes in head size and shape
- Drowsiness
- Changes in level of consciousness, ie sensation
- Seizures
- Loss of control of body functions



Fadzai Manana poses for a photo

Not TB, it's cancer!

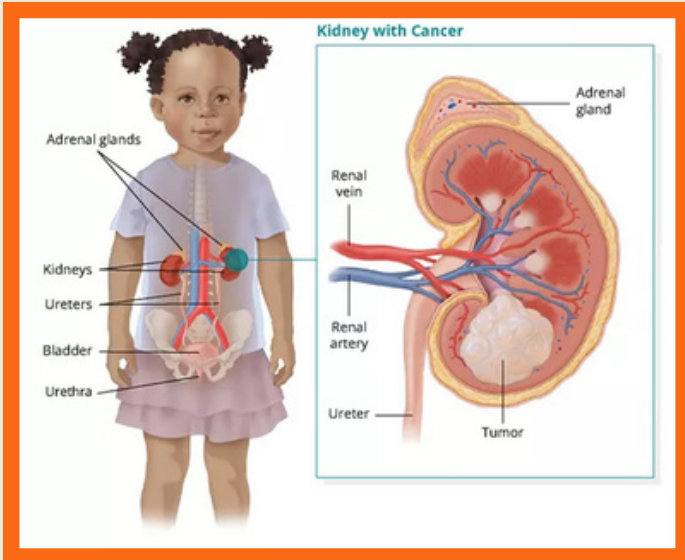
Imagine at 15 you are mistakenly diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) and 3 months into treatment adverse reactions start to show.

This is exactly what happened to Fadzai Manana who upon developing a growth on the neck was rushed to the local clinic.

Unfortunately, the local clinic mistook the lump for a sign of TB. The reactions manifested as rash, cough prompting the doctor to stop treatment. Upon realising the mistake, further tests, which included a biopsy revealed Fadzai had Hodgkins Lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system. She was immediately initiated on chemotherapy, and after a dozen cycles, the cancer was still there, forcing the doctors to give her a further 6 cycles. A subsequent scan showed the cancer was gone. With the help of KidzCan, the eventful three years ended in joy at the age of 18.

This year, during the Survivors' Day commemorations Fadzai, now (23) joined us. She did not only conquer cancer, but she went on to graduate with a Social Work degree from the University of Zimbabwe.

08. Early Diagnosis and Treatment Saves Life



Vanessa's stomach before treatment

Know something about cancer.



Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is the use of drugs to destroy cancer cells. This type of cancer treatment works by keeping cancer cells from growing, dividing, and making more cells. Chemotherapy is most often used to treat cancer, since cancer cells grow and multiply much more quickly than most cells in the body.



Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy, also called radiotherapy, is a type of cancer treatment. This treatment uses beams of intense energy to kill cancer cells. Radiation therapy most often uses X-rays.



Remission

Remission means that the symptoms of cancer have reduced or disappeared after treatment. It can be a partial or complete remission. Complete remission means that all the **signs and symptoms of cancer have disappeared**.

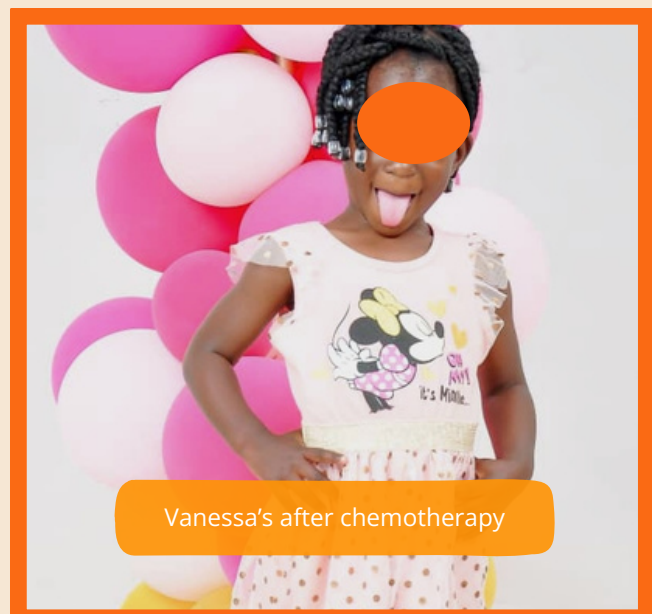
NED: No evidence of disease

NERD: No evidence of residual disease

<https://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/chemotherapy/what-chemotherapy>

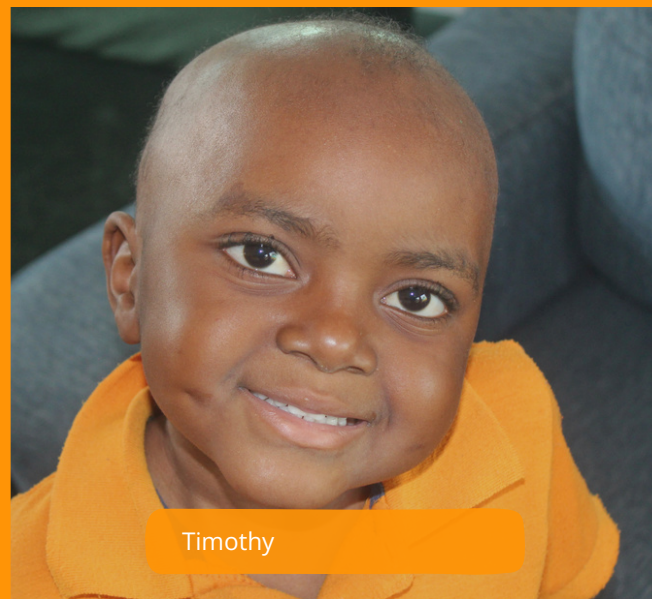
Today we celebrate one of our survivors, who refused to bow down to childhood cancer. Vanessa Moyo, (4) from rural Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North Province, was diagnosed with Wilms Tumour (kidney cancer) at the age of one, a cancer that took 8 cycles of chemotherapy until an operation at 1 year 4 months was needed to remove one kidney.

After the procedure, she had to undergo another 6 processes that cleared the cancer. It is now 2 years into remission and she is doing very well with regular check-ups. Vanessa's story is one inspiration that keeps us pushing and fighting against childhood cancer and with your support, we know we are blessed. She recently turned four. Happy birthday beautiful.

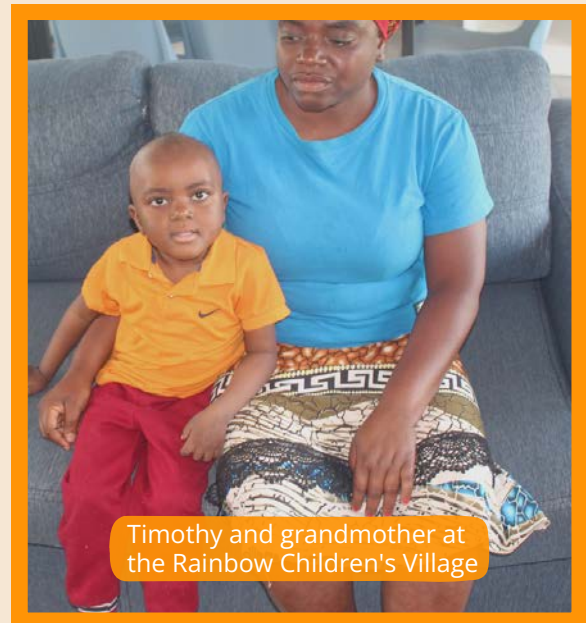


Vanessa's after chemotherapy

9. Grandmother at 41



Timothy



Timothy and grandmother at the Rainbow Children's Village

While the world believes life starts at 40, for Jane it seems at 41, hers began a long time ago. She is the grandmother to Timothy (5) who has Leukemia. But how did Jane become a grandmother so early in life? It was a nightmarish experience when the boy's mother, then (19) and in lower six was raped during a wedding preparation party when her drink was spiked.

She did not report the incident either to the police or to her parents until 5 months later for fear of further worsening her hypertensive father's condition. He died a week after the boy's birth upon learning of the horrible experience of his daughter. The grandfather's issue is a story for another day.

His 24-year-old mother, now married, cannot stay with him because he is a product of a sad incident and therefore, cannot be admitted into the mother's new matrimonial home. Five years on, Tim does not know his father who disappeared into thin air and has not shown up to take responsibility, leaving him with his loving, widowed young grandmother. Add to that the new additional burden that comes with the boy's sickness.

Early this year, Tim started showing signs of sickness which investigations in the fall of Winter revealed to be blood cancer. Coming from rural Mutare, the duo was transferred from the local hospital to Parirenyatwa in Harare. They found themselves in the warm hands of KidzCan's care as they had no idea of what to do when faced with hospital bills.

It has been a comforting 3 months since Tim started treatment and the remarkable change in his condition is encouraging.



Going to the hospital for chemotherapy

10.



Daniel and Michelle at the UN General Assembly in New York

United Nations General Assembly Trip

The Executive Director attended the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with one of our survivors Wadzanai Mayiseni who addressed the meeting themed Cure All Implementation advancing toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC) realisation and bridging the survival gap in childhood cancer.

It aimed at commemorating the main milestones achieved in five years since the launching of the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC) and to strengthen global commitments to advance the childhood cancer agenda by tackling inequalities in service coverage affecting specific subgroups and vulnerable populations that are a persistent threat to the attainment of UHC and relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) health-related target. This was a huge platform in the fight to give children from our country and beyond, the right to fight for survival.



11. Donations

As an organization, we count ourselves blessed. We appreciate the corporates, schools, and individuals who take time to donate in cash and in kind. Nothing is too small because the needs are many. Our kids not only require good nutrition to heal fast but more love in various other areas. You too can also make a difference by donating. [Click Here](#)



Mashonaland Holdings donates food stuffs

In a game-changing move that will help children suffering from cancer, Mashonaland Holdings has donated a large consignment of groceries ranging from dried foods, dried karpenta fish, beans, soya chunks, rice, flour, cooking oil, Vaseline, and soap to KidzCan Zimbabwe.

Speaking at the event KidzCan Executive Director Daniel Mckenzie thanked Mash Holdings for the kind gesture.

“Good nutrition is a big part of the treatment of cancer as patients must recover fast so they can take on the next cycle. What you have done today will help our children and caregivers. Back home they do not just give the food to the patient alone but the whole family also partakes. There may be not enough anyway because most of them are financially disadvantaged,” said Mckenzie.

Making the presentation, Mashonaland Holdings Chief Finance Officer Kudakwashe Musundire said it was necessary for them to help and KidzCan could always count on them.

“Away from doing what we love most (property investment and development), we have taken time to interact with you because we know it is necessary to understand the day-to-day operational challenges that will help us explore how we can be of assistance. We believe the grocery hamper will go a long way in ensuring that affected children emerge victorious over the disease,” said Musundire.



Vatal School Donates

Going through social media pages, one of the teachers at Vatal Academy came across a KidzCan post from a recent outing at David Mascott School Awareness campaign during the school's Wellness Day. Touched by what she saw, she immediately organised their own event where they raised an assortment of groceries and blankets. The amazing donation was well received by the KidzCan awareness team. Speaking at the event, KidzCan Nurse and Health Coordinator Charity Kawadza thanked the school authorities and said the amount of commitment seen at the school was impressive.



“Thank you for your generosity towards our children who have cancer. This will surely go a long way in lessening the burden. Giving is caring,” said Kawadza.

The well-organised day proceeded with an awareness campaign on childhood cancer in the neighbourhood. Teachers and students joined the flyer distribution procession stretching 4 kilometres around the school. Such initiatives are a great way to make a difference in the community.



CIVNET makes a cash donation

12. First Bulawayo Golf Shines

The inaugural Bulawayo Golf Tournament took its first steps to life and set the usually vibrant City of Kings further alight as the good people and corporates of Bulawayo joined hands to play for charity.

They were two competitions in one, the main competition, an 18-hole, a 4-ball alliance with the best three scores to count. The normal golfers who play on Fridays at the Bulawayo Country Club were allowed to join in the fun and play 9 holes, and the 9 holes were the front 9. Organising committee member Hazrine Hapazari described how they fixed the competition,

“So, to make it fair, the guys who also played 18 holes were allowed to compete in the 9-hole competition instead of the 4-ball alliance. Within the 4-ball alliance, they were split into partnership.

“It’s a better ball AB, and CD. The better ball score for AB and CD were recorded. The golfers were then competing with players who only played 9 holes,” said Hazrine.

At the end of play, there were no losers, the real winners being the kids battling cancer in the various walls within the confines of cancer in Parirenyatwa, Mpilo, Sekuru Kaguvi, and Sally Mugabe Hospitals, and beyond. The prize-giving ceremony was a marvel to watch as winners were treated to PowerPoint and video presentation of the work of KidzCan by Executive Director, Daniel Mckenzie who thanked the Bulawayo community for coming in their numbers to support. The fundraiser set the stage for yet another pulsating experience with hopefully a full house next year.



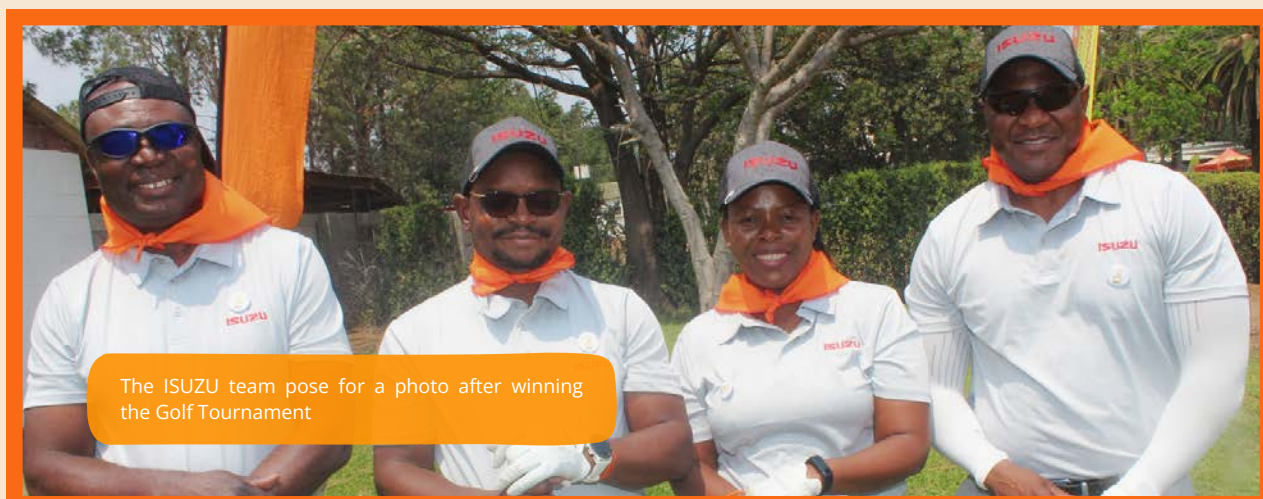
An all ladies team



A participant takes a putt



One of the teams which participated at the Golf event



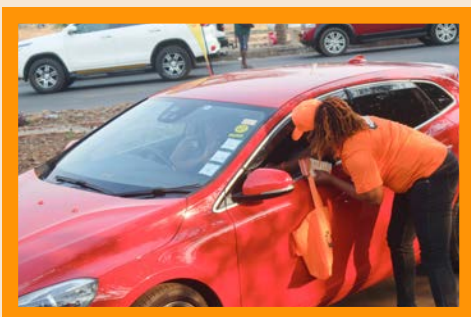
The ISUZU team pose for a photo after winning the Golf Tournament

13. StarFM Breakfast Show



Nikki (StarFM) presenter interviewing Daniel Mckenzie during the September Childhood Cancer Awareness Programme

Below are photos from the awareness programme conducted by KidzCan in collaboration with StarFM. More pictures



As the roosters made their last call in the serene suburb of Belgravia, Team KidzCan and the StarFM breakfast Show contingent ensured the September Childhood Cancer Awareness Month would end in style. The team ably, and generously drove the childhood cancer message across the nation with early morning drivers waking up to it and giving positive feedback to the crew.

The trio of Nikki, Ephraim Tagu, and Sakhy kept the physical audience on their toes with soothing music intermittently interpolated with interviews with KidzCan Executive Director, Dr. Loice Hlatshwayo from the Paediatric Association of Zimbabwe, and clinical nurse Charity Kawadza who all with one voice hammered the central message that children do get cancer and can survive it. They also shared critical information on childhood cancer.

“In the case of retinoblastoma, (cancer of the eye), we are saying parents should be on the lookout for that glow in the eye.

Any difference in colour and form should prompt parents to send children for further investigation,” said Mckenzie. During the same 3-hour live show, at the corner of Churchill and Sam Nujoma Street, staff and a battalion of volunteers went on a mission, distributing 5000 fliers on September gold, the month of childhood cancer awareness.

The 6-9 am StarFM Breakfast Show is a popular programme that came tops in the 2022 report, according to the Zimbabwe All Media and Product Survey (ZAMPS). The station enjoys a 25 % listenership among radio listeners in Zimbabwe according to the latest 2023 report. ZAMPS is an independent board mandated to monitor and undertake market research on behalf of advertisers, the media, publishers, advertising agencies, and public relations consultants in the country. It has the advantage of low bandwidth that ensures good reception on most ex-Japanese cars.

14. Agricultural Show Exhibition 2023

The 2023 Agriculture Show, came into life on 25 August running for 6 days under the theme

“Productivity, Adaptation, and Linkages”

KidzCan Awareness Team was there in full force disseminating information through the distribution of flyers and one-on-one conversations with those who passed through the stand.

The central message was that children do get cancer and they can survive it.

The KidzCan team created a virtual setup, showcasing the work of the organisation starting on the right with the Rainbow Children’s Village (RCV) and the work that goes on there. The centre panel showed survivors, KidzCan staff, and caregivers. The left had the mission, vision statement, fundraising activities, and the retinoblastoma banner.

A major highlight of the week-long event was the presence at the show of Charmaine (16) a leukemia cancer survivor.

Many people were surprised to see her live at the show. It was noted that generally, people do not know that kids get cancer.

KidzCan Nurse and Health Coordinator Charity Kawadza echoed the objectives of the WHO’s Global Initiative do raise the childhood Cancer (GICC) survival rate to 60% by 2030.

Zimbabwe is part of a low to middle-income economy that has a general survival rate of 20%. Through awareness campaigns, it is hoped that early detection and treatment will improve resulting in a reduction of the mortality rate.



Some of the visitors who graced the KidzCan Agricultural Show stand



Sister Charity Kawadza takes a visitor through one of the leaflets at the Show



Visitors get a lecture on Childhood Cancer from Sister Charity Kawadza



15. Rainbow Children's Village Project Phase Two

Phase 2 of the Rainbow Children's Village (RCV) building kicked off at the beginning of July and should be complete by December. We appreciate all stakeholders whose support has been instrumental in the development of this project.



16.

September: The Month of Childhood Cancer Awareness

Past Event Photos

Did you get snapped at our last event? Check out the photos below and also our social media to see if you were snapped!



Next Issue

In the next issue we will be bringing you the story of Tafadzwa on how he survived eye cancer



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September is a month that the international community has dedicated to childhood cancer awareness and continuing the research and treatment of the disease. As part of these efforts, we have gone out using an array of media facilities available to us: radio, newspapers, television, social media etc. It is a month that provides us with an opportunity to be more acquainted with childhood cancer and all its forms, and the various diagnostics and treatments available.

This comes after Zimbabwe joined the global alliance on childhood cancer with a mandate through the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Global Initiative on Childhood Cancer (GICC) to raise the Childhood Cancer survival rate to 60% by 2030. A robust awareness campaign promotes early detection, which is key in the treatment of cancer. As part of spreading awareness, in September we wear gold ribbons. Why gold? Because children are precious and resilient.

It should be known that cancer is expensive to treat. We, therefore, offer free chemotherapy drugs, diagnostic scans, x-rays, psycho-social support, admission and discharge packs, bereavement support, awareness campaigns, and housing through our home, the Rainbow Children's Village (RCV).

It is against a background of a low survival rate of around 20% in low-medium income countries, Zimbabwe included, that we seek to at least give a chance to the little ones to life. The major cause of the high mortality rate is lack of awareness, late diagnosis, and cheaper but unproven alternative treatment. The reality with childhood cancer is that it is curable provided there is early detection and treatment.

The major types of childhood cancer affecting Zimbabwe are neuroblastoma, leukaemia (blood cancer), retinoblastoma (eye cancer) bone, Wilms tumour (kidney) brain, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Through so many of our activities, we always try to raise awareness and we have registered great success with the survivors' numbers growing. We are happy that some of our childhood cancer survivors, have gone on to do well in top universities across the globe. That's the difference we want to continue to make. Research has shown that very few people know that children do get cancer. We know that when a child has cancer, literally everyone in the family suffers the agony. With everyone's support, we hope to rally resources, tame the disease, and help our children become children again. With better knowledge, it is possible to raise it higher!