



Open Arms
Malawi

NEWSLETTER



Helping children in Malawi grow up healthy with the love of their family

Thanks to your support, Open Arms Malawi has been providing urgent care to vulnerable children for over 20 years, helping babies survive a difficult start to life, grow up healthy and return to live with their families for a future they deserve.

This early intervention reduces infant mortality and alleviates poverty, while strengthening local systems - all made possible through your support.

Our summer newsletter brings you some of the highlights of this year and shares news from Malawi.

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Open Arms Infant Homes provides urgent, temporary care for babies whose lives are at risk. Babies are referred by the local Social Welfare Officers when no other option for care exists. The team nurtures infants back to health and supports their return to their extended families as soon as they are well enough.

Sharon's story

After baby Sharon's mother sadly passed away, we welcomed her at Open Arms at the end of 2021.

At three months old she weighed a tiny five pounds. She arrived at Blantyre Infant Home worryingly malnourished and unwell. After her initial assessment, she was quickly admitted to hospital where she was diagnosed with anaemia and a slightly swollen heart.

Thankfully, after four days of treatment, she was well enough to be discharged and returned to the Infant Home where Alice gave her the critical nutritional and medical support she needed, as well as plenty of love.

Now, nearly two years on, it is hard to believe that this happy, healthy, well-adjusted little girl is the same fragile little baby we first met. Sharon can usually be found walking and chatting with her friends in the garden at Blantyre.

Sharon's grandmother has been regularly visiting her at the Infant Home and they have developed a lovely bond. Following successful home assessments she will take on Sharon's guardianship in October with the support of our Community Outreach team.

You can see how far Sharon has come in such a short time which is testament to the nurturing care and support given to her.

Our vision is for all children to have the chance to grow up fit and healthy with the love of a family and the security of a home.

How you can help?

There are many babies who have been abandoned or like Sharon, have serious health conditions which cannot be treated at home so we need your help to provide the care they need.

Short term residential care gives babies at risk the best chance of surviving a traumatic start and sets good foundations for their future development. We work closely with extended families and community members to get children home as soon as possible. This not only protects children from long term institutional care but empowers families and keeps them together.

You can help today. A one-off gift will provide food, shelter, medicines, care and clothing to vulnerable babies who need this temporary support. A regular gift will help us plan for the future so that all children can recover their health and move back home successfully for the long term.



Maggie pictured here is one of the leadership team at Mangochi Infant Home. She oversees the care for the children there and supports community visits to families.

Donate today by phone 01423 530129, online www.openarmsmalawi.org or with the enclosed FORM



Open Arms Community Outreach Programmes support over 300 children and their families. Regular visits help monitor children who have returned back home with the aim of making every reintegration a success and every family self sufficient. The team give families basic resources to help take on the care of each child and provide monitoring, parenting advice and support for as long as the families need it.

Joyce's story

Joyce's mother was mentally unwell, she struggled to care for her and there were signs of neglect. She spent the first two years of her life at Blantyre Infant Home building up her nutrition, strength and getting her health back on track. When she was well enough, Joyce returned to live with her grandmother in one of the townships of Blantyre.

Her grandmother lives in very poor conditions and often struggles to make ends meet but she supports Joyce and two of her siblings as best she can. Through occasional work and farming she earns a little money and is able to provide food for her children.

Sometimes, families such as Joyce's need a bit of extra help and a small monthly cash payment can make all the difference, especially in making sure children go to school.

Her grandmother told us *"In all honesty, if it were not for Open Arms giving us the help they have done, we would have really struggled a lot."*



Chuma stayed at Open Arms when she was younger, she is now 14 years old and lives at home with her aunt. She is at school and is healthy and well.

Joyce has grown into a happy, healthy and active child. She is well cared for by her family at home and is now happily attending a nearby government primary school.

The support offered to families such as Joyce's is intended to help them make sure their children can get to school and help the family move towards self-sufficiency, which is usually reached after a few years.



Joyce and her grandmother are frequent visitors to Blantyre Infant Home, and often bring in gifts for the staff and supplies for the babies to say thank you for Joyce's care when she was younger.

How can you help?

It costs just **£10** for our Matron to visit a family in a rural village and many of the journeys are often difficult due to villages being so far away from main roads.

These visits can be a lifeline. They give access to advice, support, supplies and in some cases a small monthly payment which can protect health and longer-term development while supporting families into self-sufficiency.

£40 will pay for essential supplies which prepare a child for moving home

£20 will pay for basic supplies like water tablets, food and medicines which will be used on a family visit

£10 is an average cost of an outreach visit where our Matron will monitor the child's health and support the family with parenting advice

A regular **£15** a month will provide a small monthly sponsorship to a family which helps towards school expenses or additional food for a family in extreme poverty.



Only 40% of children have access to nursery education in Malawi and this figure is lower in remote communities.

So, we have partnered with nine communities to build and run nursery schools. Each school gives a hot meal and a morning's education to 60 children. This helps prevent malnutrition and better prepares them for primary school.

Early childhood development is recognised as a global priority and early education contributes to many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including combatting poverty, hunger and poor health outcomes as well as improving education, gender equality and access to water and sanitation.

Thanks to you there are around 600 children in Southern Malawi who are getting a nutritious meal and a head start to their education in a safe place near home.

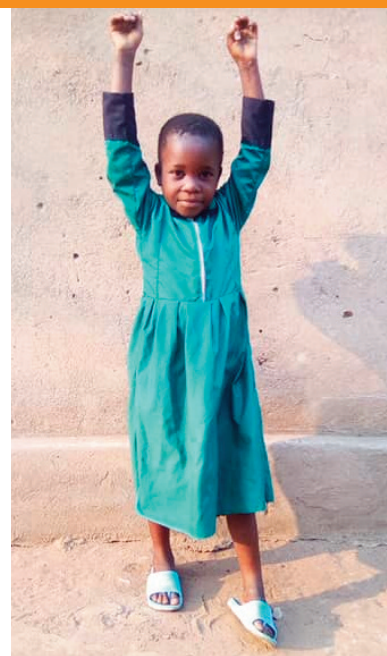
Grace's story

Little Grace came to us after being abandoned. She was tiny and vulnerable but thanks to the nurturing care and support of our care team, she is now a happy, healthy little girl who is well settled at home. She was brought to us by a local lady who found her alone in the village.

This wonderful lady kept in touch with Grace and came to visit her at the infant home. Over time they developed such a bond that when Grace was healthy enough to be discharged from care she was adopted into the lady's own family.

Back in the village, Grace started attending an Open Arms nursery and flourished. The daily meal helped support her growth and she began to learn her letters and numbers. Thanks to this solid foundation, when the time came, she was more than ready for Primary School and she continues to thrive, with a real love of learning.

Her guardian tells us that her writing and speech is good, she plays happily by herself and with friends and she is becoming more independent, confident and helpful every day.



How you can help today

Nursery schools have been a key part of the sustainable community support we give in Malawi for over 18 years.

Every child should have the chance of an education in a safe and secure environment near home to combat future poverty and develop Malawi's next generation. You can make this possible by making a donation today.

- £75 gives one child a year's nursery education
- £300 gives one nursery enough food for a year
- £400 sponsors a teacher for 6 months
- £3,400 provides everything needed for 60 children to attend nursery for a year

Donate today by phone 01423 530129, online www.openarmsmalawi.org or with the enclosed FORM



Isabel is now living at home with her extended family and is supported by the Community Outreach team

Our priority is the health and survival of all children and to support families so that children can grow up at home to realise their potential. We introduced home assessments to make sure every child has a nominated guardian who is able to take on their care by the time they are discharged from Open Arms. These involve meeting with the family, understanding where the child will live, how the family will manage and the other family members who will be involved. We support families by making sure they have considered how they will provide for an extra child and who will be impacted so that they can organise any extra help needed and are fully ready to welcome each child successfully.

Dzwele is happy living at home with her family



Older children at Open Arms

There are several older children and young adults who have been in the care of Open Arms since early childhood. Since 2018 we have been creating opportunities for them to have an independent future with their own families too.



Yhanko moved home with his father in February 2023 and is growing and developing well

This work means that children have progressed with their education, started colleges and universities and taken vocational training leading to the set-up of small businesses. All of this is designed to support self-sufficiency in the long term giving them the skills, confidence and support needed to create an independent future with their extended family members.

Moving on from Open Arms

Malita is just one of the older children at Open Arms that is now successfully living back with her extended family. She arrived at Open Arms at two months old suffering from a serious medical condition. She was cared for in the infant home and when she grew up, she moved into one of the Open Arms Family Houses where she started school. Malita has now moved home to live with her aunt and uncle in Blantyre District who have been regularly visiting her at Open Arms and formed a very close bond. Her elder sister, who lives in the same village, is overjoyed to have Malita home and is also helping her adjust to her new environment.

Before moving home Malita completed a vocational sewing course and she now plans to start her own small business. She is currently gaining some work experience with her uncle who is a tailor, and he is committed to helping her develop her own sewing business when she is ready.

The Outreach Team will continue to monitor Malita's progress at home until they are satisfied that she is entirely settled and has all the support she needs to achieve her goals and move towards independence.



Our Community Outreach programme has gone from strength to strength and we have seen more children supported into self-sufficiency. In line with the changing needs of Malawi, this is where the future of Open Arms will continue to focus.



We are excited to support a new pilot programme which will see up to five babies supported in their communities from birth, instead of coming into residential care. These cases have been selected carefully by our team based on their health, location and the family support available.

This programme has two phases. Firstly, family-based care for children under two years of age, which means children can be supported at home with a nominated guardian. Our Community Outreach team will visit them frequently to support the guardian, monitor the child's health and development, and give essential resources such as formula milk and medicines.

The second part of the programme will be focused on empowering family members taking on the guardianship of an extra child, which is no small undertaking. We will support them to create an income to help raise the child.

Through providing sustainable sources of food such as banana suckers, goats and chickens, which are common in Blantyre, simple to keep, and will help the family support itself whilst creating a positive ripple effect on other community members.

We have chosen to trial this approach carefully with a small number of families, aiming to develop a sustainable family-based care model which leaves families in a place where they are able to positively contribute to their village and community for the longer term.

Due to the nature of this new programme, we will run it alongside our existing services, but additional funding is needed to do this. If you can support, please donate now to make this possible.

Emmie's story

Emmie was born prematurely at the end of last year with her late twin sister Emma. She was welcomed into Open Arms Infant Home weighing a tiny 1.72kg.

Both twins were dehydrated and suffering from a fever. They were sent straight to hospital for urgent medical support and stayed there for eight days getting specialist treatment. Their mother was also very unwell and was admitted into hospital.

Sadly Emma was too poorly and didn't survive. Emmie is still receiving some treatment in the Infant Home but is much better and her mother is being cared for by Emmie's grandmother. Emmie has gained over 3kgs so far and enjoys sitting up and babbling to her carers.

Her aunt and grandmother visit her regularly. They live in Ndirande, in Blantyre which is 6km from Open Arms. Now Emmie's health is back on track she will move home and become part of our Family-Based Care pilot. Her family is happy to take part and work with the team to make sure Emmie can be cared for successfully at home.



A hand up not a handout

Can you support families in Malawi as they take on the care of an extra child?

- **£12** will give a family three banana suckers which will grow quickly to produce both food and an income
- **£32** will give a family two kid goats which a family can use to breed and raise an income from as well as benefiting from milk and droppings for fertiliser.
- **£80** will cover all the medical supplies a young baby could need at home including water tablets, multivitamins, mosquito nets and antibiotics.
- **£106** is enough for six months supply of Likuni Phala once a baby has started to move onto solid food
- **£160** will pay for a welcome pack for a new baby, including blankets, clothing, bottles, cups, brushes and utensils



We have enjoyed working with a number of schools this year to build partnerships and bring global citizenship into the classroom to inspire the next generation.

Richmond House in Leeds, the Grammar School at Leeds, Kingswood School, Lancing College, George Watson's College, Stewarts Melville, Spofforth and Follifoot Primary Schools, Stonegate Primary School, School of Play and King College London have all supported us this year and we are extremely grateful to them, plus many more.

From sponsored walks, runs, artwork exhibitions, plant sales and school fairs, the support has been heartwarming to see. It has also been a pleasure to welcome visitors to Malawi to meet the team and visit some of the communities and projects we work with.

A few highlights from some of our partners



It was a real privilege to work with a fantastic group of individuals from Kings College London at the end of last year. The student founded organisation called "Open Generation" organised a spectacular art event in Austria raising over 15,000 euros for children in Malawi.

Marie Frauenschuh, the founder of this project and an ambassador of Open Arms says *"Only together are we strong and can create better prospects for the next generation."*

More than 300 people came together *"To unite and inspire people of all backgrounds through art and give to a generation in another part of the world".*

If you would like to find out more about becoming an Ambassador for Open Arms and working to improve child health and development in rural Malawi, visit www.openarmsmalawi.org

Supporting long term change

Long-term partnerships are vital in being able to create sustainable, long-term changes in communities. A group of employees from SMBC Aviation Capital not only raised funds this year but also went out to Malawi to visit the team and see first-hand the difference their fundraising is helping to make.

Employees have raised c.£8k through their own personal efforts and SMBC have match funded this. An enthusiastic and engaged group of employees have put their ESG strategy into action by supporting with key projects and campaigns and worked with the teams in Harrogate and Malawi to strategically support the next steps of the organisation.

We are also fortunate to work with a number of Trusts and Foundations who are the backbone to our work. Offering unrestricted grants allows the team in Malawi to work with communities and respond to the needs they see in the most appropriate way, which is vital for a small organisation.



Inspiring the next generation

Introducing the concept of global citizenship to primary schools is a great way to help children develop a sense of belonging to the wider world and an understanding of how their actions can have an impact on the wider society.

We have especially enjoyed working with local Primary Schools around Yorkshire this year to create a range of new resources and lesson plans that children have fed into, vetted and are enthusiastic about using in class. These compliment the secondary school resources we have and have helped widen the work we do with schools to reach more children.

If you would like to find out more and discuss the possibility of a school visit from Open Arms, please get in contact with a member of our team at hello@openarmsmalawi.org

Fundraising is hugely rewarding and great fun. Our fundraisers have some novel and imaginative ideas. A Quiz Night, Golf Day, plant sales, school fairs, coffee mornings are just a few of the events that have been organised this year to raise money for Open Arms.

Thank you to everyone who ran, cycled, baked, sewed, planted, climbed mountains to name a few. Whatever you did, whatever you raised, it means so much and we thank you. If you would like to fundraise for children in Malawi, have a look at our Fundraising Ideas www.openarmsmalawi.org/ and if you're inspired to get involved contact us on hello@openarmsmalawi.org.

Climbing high!

In September, George Watson's College alumnus Adam Rae took it upon himself to complete the Salomon Ring of Steall Skyrace - a 29km / 2,500m mountain race, involving scrambling along mountain ridges with steep ascents, traverses and descents on technical and challenging terrain. And all in support of Open Arms - raising £840!

"I fancied something different from the usual road running races and this was definitely the something different - it was 29km of trail running in the Scottish Highlands including 2,500m of climbing."

Ed's Great Adventures!

Ed's time in Malawi left a lasting impact on him. As a result, he took on some serious physical challenge events in 2014 to fundraise for a cause that stole his heart - raising over £1,400 for Open Arms! *"When I think back to my Open Arms Malawi trip, I am left with a wonderful memory of smiles, warmth and a warm heart."*

His great fundraising adventures ended up being worthy of capturing in a book - so that's just what he's done! In February 2023, Ed's 3rd book 'Great Edventures' was released.

Ride London - Essex!

A huge well done, and thank you to John, Peter, Jack and George for riding the Ride London-Essex 100 in May. They raised over £1700 between them, which is phenomenal and will go a long way in helping the children in Malawi. We are so grateful to everyone who donated and these amazing four individuals who took on such a difficult challenge.

How are you inspired to help this year?



Have you got an event in mind?
Tell us on hello@openarmsmalawi.org



Dates for your Diary

Open Arms Golf Day – Ilkley, September 2023
Royal parks half marathon – London, October 2023
Open Arms Quiz night – Harrogate, November 2023
Edinburgh Marathon – Scotland, May 2024
Great North Run – Newcastle, September 2024

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