

RACE DEDICATION AND GOALS FOR 2014 RUN FOR THE 15TH ANNUAL RUN FOR ZIMBABWE ORPHANS AND FAIR

A message from the President of The Sustainable Living Foundation, Ellen Clark

RACE DEDICATION—THE FATHER ERIC FREED 5TH/6TH GRADE MILE

The world lost a compassionate person on January 1, 2014 in the person of Father Eric Freed. This wonderful priest who spread love and joy wherever he went will not be forgotten. He was the presider at the wedding of my son and daughter-in-law's wedding in Santa Cruz in 2009. He gave all of us— Will and Kristin and we parents— papers with the Kanji script for “thank you”. This was to remind us to always be thankful to each other throughout life. Father Freed, also, was a supporter of The Zimbabwe Run. While Chaplain at St. Francis, he came to the run to bless the children who ran and all those who worked to alleviate poverty throughout the world. Thank you Fr. Freed. Arigato.

The Sustainable Living Foundation has 11 races at the Annual Run for Zimbabwe Orphans and Fair. This year, it is our honor to dedicate the 5th/6th Grade Girls' and Boys' Mile to Father Eric Freed. All the dedications include: Sister Batsirai Makoni for the Preschool Race; Lynn Tuite for the Kindergarten race; Coach Jack St. Claire for the 1st/2nd Grade Mile Race; Father Eric Freed for the 5th/6th Grade Mile Race; Brother John Brown for the 7th/8th Grade Mile Race; and Kate Wakerly for the High School and Adult Mile.

GOAL FOR THE 2014 RUN & FAIR: THE SISTER BATSIRAI COTTAGE-- A COTTAGE THAT HELPS

Every year the orphanage, Makumbi Children's Home, chooses a capital project for The Zimbabwe Run to support. This year it will be the Sister Batsirai Cottage. Makumbi youth face a very uncertain future when they are 18 and they are “aged out” (i.e. have graduated) from the orphanage. For girls, especially, it is a frightening experience to go “out into the world”. Young women—if they can't find employment—may turn to prostitution or be subjected to sexual abuse as they attempt to flee to South Africa. In the past year, Father Mueller (the director of the orphanage) founded a program for “aged out” 18-year-old boys. This year, with the help of Run for Zimbabwe Orphans & Fair funds, Father Mueller is initiating the: Sister Batsirai Cottage, a cottage that helps. This cottage is named for a Catholic nun my son, Will Clark, befriended while he was volunteering in Africa in 1997. Sister Batsirai was a triplet and since twins and triplets are considered “unlucky” according to traditional Zimbabwe beliefs, they can be left to die in fields. Fortunately, for Batsirai, she and her two sisters were brought to Makumbi by their mother after they were born. The infants were accepted and grew up in a loving environment. After growing up in the orphanage, Batsirai became a nun and mentored young women in the village of Murombedzi. Sister Batsirai organized a Marching Corps for the young women. The t-shirts the girls wore were “hand me downs” from a race the Clarks use to put on and Sister Batsirai sewed the blue skirts, herself.

Batsirai in the Shona language means “help” and this is exactly what the cottage will do—help. The cottage, supervised by Makumbi, will be composed of eight 17 or 18 year old girls who have “aged out” of the orphanage. The cottage will help the young women find gainful employment or help them with further schooling. Many will not be able to attend college but will receive vocational skills they can use in the job market. Tragically, Sister Batsirai died in a van accident in 2002 but her heritage of helping others will continue at the Batsirai Cottage.