



St Jude's News

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Indigenous Role Model Touches Lives in Tanzania

Russell returns to St Jude's after an inspiring school trip.

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Indigenous Role Model Touches Lives in Tanzania

St Jude's Sisia primary campus is always a bustling hub of activity and cheer on Friday afternoons.

Weekly assemblies excite the whole school community, providing students with a platform to showcase exceptional academic and creative talents.

An added air of intrigue infused the auditorium when 18-year-old Russell, a Birpai man from New South Wales, took to the stage in front of a crowd of more than 700 at a recent school assembly.

Watch the performance here (video)

The deep drone of Russell's didgeridoo cued the tap of clapsticks, played by Fatima in 5C, as she and 27 classmates approached the stage from the back of the auditorium.

It was an apt primer to a performance that won't be soon forgotten.

The captivating performance gave the audience an insight into important Indigenous traditions. Pamoja inspired the experience of two cultures coming together in celebration.

Russell is becoming a seasoned expert at performing for the St Jude's community; he first had the opportunity in April last year, during a visit with his school, St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill.

"I was lucky enough to be selected for the school trip. I remember being told about it by a friend, whose younger brother had visited St Jude's as a Joey's student in 2016."

According to Russell's teacher and long-time supporter of St Jude's, Linda Roden, there was no doubt that Russell would prove to be the perfect fit for a visit to our school.

"Russell often guides younger students to strive for better things. He is a special young man who has a positive attitude and makes the most of opportunities presented to him."

Being a teacher, Linda understands that education is vital to ensuring the cycle of poverty is broken, and that young advocates like Russell play a crucial role in supporting St Jude's.

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Calling Australia home: You can take the man out of Australia, but you can't take Australia out of the man!



Shining souls: Gemma is inspired and moved by Russell's leadership and compassion.





“Schools can fundraise towards sponsoring a student, a teacher or even a bus. Most importantly, students can spread the word. Let people know about the amazing work being done at St Jude’s. Every dollar raised for the School is important.”

Russell is dedicated to fighting poverty through education and knows a high quality schooling experience can change an individual’s life trajectory.

“I wouldn’t have had doors opened for me if it weren’t for the education I received. The kids at St Jude’s enjoy the greatest gift.”

“As a representative of a minority group in Australia, I can really identify with the students. Being here has opened my mind to possibilities for the future. I’d love to explore work in the performing arts, but I’m also considering being a primary school teacher.”

Of all the experiences that touched Russell’s life during his first trip to St Jude’s, it was a visit to the home of Goodluck in Form 1 which affected him most.

“Seeing where St Jude’s students’ come from and the conditions some Tanzanians are living in is challenging.

It gave me perspective. It helped me to appreciate what I’ve got.”

“Gemma Sisia is a shining soul. If she can do what she’s done, then we can do so much to help. I take my hat off to her. Telling the story about St Jude’s and its beginnings is so important.”

“We saw Mount Kilimanjaro as soon as we arrived at the airport in Tanzania, reminding us how far from Australia we’d travelled, but a group of students from Smith secondary campus were there to greet us with a dance. They made us feel welcome. You can’t compare this experience to any other.”



Are you ready for the experience of a lifetime? Do you have a special talent to show our students at school assembly? Email our friendly Visitor team at Visitor@schoolofstjude.co.tz and book your trip to The School of St Jude!



Talking it up with New Form 1s



There's no stopping St Jude's newest students from reaching their bright future.

Some of our eager new secondary students are proving their dedication by participating in optional weekend English conversation lessons at Smith secondary campus.

Until beginning their studies at St Jude's in January, the students had only been educated in Kiswahili at government primary schools throughout Tanzania's Arusha region.

Starting secondary school is a high achievement in itself for these young people.

Passing their Standard 7 national exam at the end of primary school is sadly not the norm for many Tanzanian children who have to contend with class numbers of over 60 and walking long distances to and from school every day.

It is estimated that only 30% of secondary school aged Tanzanians are receiving an education.

But, our new Form 1s have one obstacle remaining: learning to speak fluent English.

Several St Jude's international employees voluntarily travel to Smith secondary campus on Sundays, where they engage students in informal conversations, presentations and debates.

St Jude's Community Relations and Welfare Coordinator, Tracey, devised the program after Form 5 student selection last year. She saw it as a way to complement the School's formal academic and language support processes.

"Some students [during house checks] struggled to understand simple things said by foreigners — for example, 'how old are you?' or, 'please sit here.'"

"These students, aged between 17-20, had done very well in their Form 4 exams, which are completed in English, so I felt that maybe they had not been exposed to foreign accents and different ways of saying things."

"Hopefully by becoming used to hearing foreign accents, they will be able to make use of the opportunity to meet visitors to St Jude's, who have experience in all sorts of professions which may interest our students."

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Happy and hopeful: Goodluck aims to improve his family's prospects when he finishes school.



Living the dream: Lenatha has an opportunity her mother never did: to finish secondary school.



Lenatha and Goodluck, aged 13, participate in the conversation program, which has helped to improve their confidence.

"Speaking English is a great challenge for us," Goodluck confirmed.

"Until now, I learnt English from repeating conversations foreigners had with me in the street around town. If we can speak English it means we have greater opportunities after school," Lenatha added.

"The teachers are very good. I feel blessed to be at this school. In one sentence, I can say what St Jude's means to me: it shows us who we are and it makes us proud," Goodluck shared.

"In the villages we come from, St Jude's is known as one of the best because the quality of education is high and it helps people who need it most."

Goodluck's mother, a waitress, is the sole parent of three children. Goodluck is the eldest child, with two younger sisters for whom he sets an excellent example.

A free, private education at The School of St Jude opens the door to higher education, giving Goodluck every hope of securing his dream job in the science or medical field.

With wisdom and insight beyond his years, Goodluck spoke of his ultimate goal.

"If I can finish school, I will provide a foundation for my family's dreams and future. Life is very hard in this world, but I will help to make ours good."

Lenatha is the beneficiary of an opportunity her own mother never had.

"My mother got high enough grades to go to secondary school, but her parents could not afford it, so she is really happy that I get the chance [to attend secondary school]," Lenatha said.

"Mum sells potatoes and tomatoes in a small shop. She teaches me that it is good to have some money, but money can be taken away."

"Education is like the ocean; it never ends and it cannot be taken away from us."



Our courageous new students are already making waves in their communities. Help St Jude's fight poverty through education so that students like Goodluck and Lenatha can achieve their dreams: become a Form 1 sponsor today.



Bringing it home: Wens (pictured back, left) accompanies visitors to local government schools.

Extending Family Beyond St Jude's

Community Service Year
interns showcase the best of
our school.

The moment you step outside a St Jude's school bus and into the grounds of Sisia primary campus, chances are, Irene and Wens will be among the first people to greet you with a 'karibu sana' (you're very welcome) and broad smiles.

Irene and Wens's confidence and attention to detail suggest they've spent years in training as Tanzanian tourism professionals, to prepare them for important roles in St Jude's Visitor team.

Indeed, it's taken 13 years of fieldwork for the dynamic duo to develop their thorough knowledge about The School of St Jude — first, as our students, and now, as 2017 graduates and participants in Beyond St Jude's Community Service Year program!

The Community Service Year offers graduates an internship opportunity to teach in under-resourced government schools or work in various departments at St Jude's, to gain work experience, increase confidence and help give back to their local community.

As interns in the School's Visitor team, Irene and Wens help to prepare itineraries, lead school tours, translate conversations during our guests' visits to students' homes, chaperone excursions to government schools and maasai communities, and guide visitors through the bustling streets of Arusha.

Irene and Wens are overjoyed that they have the opportunity to represent St Jude's, but it isn't a responsibility they take lightly.

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Top tour guides: Irene and Wens facilitate school tours for our guests.

“We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to express gratitude to sponsors, donors and visitors who come to St Jude’s, every day. No matter if you have heard about the School before or not, you are helping just by being here. You become a part of the school family,” Wens said.

“We had the chance to apply for an internship in a government school, but I really wanted to do something within St Jude’s as a way to show thanks.”

“Just to know that the people who sponsored us for more than 10 years — read our letters and saw our photos — that our stories were enough to inspire them to sponsor... I need to find a way to say ‘thank you’ for that,” Irene added.

“For all Beyond St Jude’s interns, whether you are teaching in a government school or doing a Community Service Year inside St Jude’s, it feels good knowing that even if we can’t give back to our sponsors in the same way, we are at least doing something for our society.”

“And, for our families too, they are proud to see us coming into St Jude’s office every day. It is like a flashback for them — remembering how we were as small children in 2005 and 2006 when we started Standard 1, and now as adults working here,” Wens shared.

Participants in Beyond St Jude’s Community Service Year develop professional skills and experience personal growth.

Wens is hoping to study Electrical Engineering when he starts university.

“In the Visitor team, I have learnt many things which will help me with my career. I know how to be organised and how to communicate with people from many cultural backgrounds.”

Irene has aspirations of becoming an international business leader.

“As a member of the Visitor team, we are already leaders. We are people’s hosts and all the information they receive about the School comes through our stories. We may not be interning in government schools, but I think this is another form of teaching.”

“There is no organisation that compares to St Jude’s. Coming here, you will see the full effect of a St Jude’s education. Visitors see how far their donation goes and how it can change our lives.”



If you would like to meet inspiring Beyond St Jude’s interns like Irene and Wens, be sure to book a visit to St Jude’s. Email us at visitor@schoolofstjude.co.tz

Staff Spotlight: Mr Kashia

Find out how Mr Kashia has inspired our primary students for almost a decade.

How long have you worked at The School of St Jude for?

I started working at St Jude's Sisia primary campus in 2008. Here, teachers have access to the very best resources to improve students' quality of learning. St Jude's students are among the brightest in Arusha/ St Jude's cannot be compared to any other school in Tanzania.

Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Teaching runs in my veins; I love learning from my students and helping them to grow into strong leaders with great potential to help their community.

Have you ever taught in a government school?

I taught in government schools for a few years after completing university. However, there were not enough resources to teach with, and there were dozens of students in each class. As one of 11 children in my family, and the only one to go to university, I needed to financially support members of my family, but found this extremely challenging while working in a government school.

Describe your experience as a school student in Tanzania...

I was raised in a very poor family. My stepfather was unable to support me in addition to the children he shared with my mother, so we received help from my uncle, who was a teacher in a government primary school. As a child, I attended the school he taught in, and later, through his support, I attended government secondary school. I took my education very seriously because I knew it would give me opportunities to improve my life.

Why do you think education is crucial in the fight against poverty?

With the education I have, I can help other poor children and am now able to support my own family members. I educated my younger siblings and taught them to speak fluent English, which enabled my sister to work in a hospital as a cleaner. Between both of us, we are able to provide our family with financial support when necessary and assist with our parents' healthcare needs.

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Tell us about one of your most memorable and special moments as a teacher...

I always say that teaching is a learning experience in itself. A highlight of my time at St Jude's was a school excursion to a swimming pool several years ago. At the time, we had international teacher mentors supporting Tanzanian teachers in class. My teacher mentor from Australia, Barbara, encouraged me to swim — I had never been in a swimming pool before! I was scared, but it is a moment I will never forget. One of the best in my life.

Another great honour was when Gemma Sisia and Kim Saville awarded me with a gift for never missing a working day in more than a whole year. I felt valued.

What do you hope for your students' futures?

I always tell my students to try their best to reach their goals. Our students will become the leaders of tomorrow. This gift of a free, quality education is a stepping stone to their successful future. I am so proud to see the first students I taught at St Jude's in the Beyond St Jude's program, doing a Community Service Year and attending university.

Finish this sentence. Education changes lives because...

...Once you are educated you can see light, which gives you direction, leading towards your life's purpose.



Each cent donated helps St Jude's to provide amazing teachers like Mr Kashia with everything they need to give students the best possible learning outcomes. Make a donation to help us change lives!

