



The School of St Jude

St Jude's News

Thank you for sharing our newsletter with your family and friends

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Felix Prepares for his Fourth Journey to Australia

Felix carefully folds his pressed trousers and t-shirt, zips his packed suitcase and begins the airport commute, bound for Sydney.

It may sound like an ordinary day for business men around the world, but for Felix, a Maasai tribesman in Northern Tanzania, it's a life he never imagined.

Felix is preparing for his fourth trip to Australia, joining Gemma on her annual tour to help spread the word about the amazing work at St Jude's. He grins as he thinks back to his first journey in 2013, remembering his first impressions of the Western lifestyle.

"I remember everything seemed so different. Driving around the Australian cities I saw a very big difference in the roads, how they were functioning, trains, trams. Everything, to me, was very well organised.

"Some of my favourite experiences were also the strangest. I remember my first time on a rollercoaster at Seaworld on the Gold Coast, it was a shock, but I liked it. And the 3D video at Sydney Tower, that was amazing. Things were in your face and it was unbelievable, I have no idea how they created that."

Now, as Felix prepares for another Australian adventure he feels it will be less of a shock and he is excited to share his story with even more people.

"Now I have been to Australia a few times, I know more about Australians, and I understand better what is most different for them to hear about my culture."

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"I really enjoy telling people about my own story with St Jude's and my Maasai culture. People find it so interesting the way I dress as a Maasai and how life is so different in Tanzania.

"Some things are very foreign to people, like negotiating the number of cows for a daughter's dowry."

"Some things are very foreign, like negotiating the number of cows for your daughter's dowry. Also, Westerners find it strange that I don't know the date, or even the year, I was born. But that just doesn't matter in my culture.

But some things, I think, are the same everywhere. A good example is how Maasai try to impress a woman and find a wife. We go to dance celebrations, the boys are all on one side, the girls on the other, and everyone dances their best to see if they can find someone they like. It's always the boys who can jump the highest that impress the girls the most. I think this is similar in Australia, but maybe the dancing looks different!

I went to Brisbane and it was my first city there, I saw a road tunnel for the first time, I was so surprised when I was told that one of the tunnels goes under the river.

Felix is particularly animated when it comes to discussions about the changing attitudes toward education in his culture. His passion about improving education makes him proud to be a part of St Jude's.

"When I was a child, education wasn't valued in my community. It was most important to learn to tend the cows. And the modern changes that come with education, like wearing uniforms, were seen as a barrier to our traditions."

But Felix now sees positive change in his community, with more children attending school, and increased acceptance and pride for Maasai who choose a life and career away from the farm.

"I think the real change began with Edward Moringe Sokoine, the second Prime Minister of Tanzania. He was a Maasai, and it was the first time we saw a Maasai representing us for the country. It was a moment of great pride for Maasai people everywhere."

"Since then, you see Maasai doctors in the hospitals, and it's a positive thing, it is good for Maasai to have people who understand our culture in these important roles."

Spreading the word about how St Jude's is improving education in Tanzania is important to Felix, and makes the time away from his family while he tours worth it.

On his return to Australia in March with the St Jude's Founder Gemma Sisia, Felix looks forward to catching up with familiar faces, meeting new Aussie friends, and tucking into some Weetbix again.

If you would like to hear Felix and Gemma to speak at in March, check out our calendar to find an event near you.

Kim will also be coming over in April and May so keep your eye on our website for all the upcoming events!

www.schoolofstjude.org/about-us/calendar.html



Our Graduates to Give Back to Tanzania

As we continue to prepare for our first class of students to graduate from St Jude's, we're excited to offer a few more details on plans for their continued education. We're exploring many different possibilities to offer support to students who want to pursue a tertiary degree, including partnerships with universities in East and South Africa. However, we also want to make sure our students have the opportunity to give back to their communities and witness how their education has already empowered them to make positive change in Tanzania.

To facilitate this, after completing high school, St Jude's students will enter the Community Service Program for a year.

Our students are very aware of the benefits they have received thanks to supporters around the world giving them an education. The Community Service Year is a chance for the students' to show their appreciation for their free, high-quality education by using their skills and knowledge to help those less fortunate in the community.

With a drastic shortage of around 47,000 teachers in the region's government schools, especially in math and science subjects, the Regional Education Officer is extremely grateful to have well educated students to supplement the teacher shortfall.

This time of work experience will be character building as well as an opportunity to learn additional life skills while contributing much-needed assistance to the local education system.

How and where will the students serve the community?

The graduating class will be divided into two groups. Group 1 will be teaching in government schools in our region. Since our senior students are studying and excelling in Mathematics and Science they will be able to impart the knowledge they received from their quality education, providing a vital resource for the 25 schools they will be attending. Group 2 will work at St Jude's where they will assist in the boarding campuses, classrooms and administration departments, learning the skills required in the workforce while giving back to the school so that other students can benefit from the same education they received at St Jude's.

Halfway through the Community Service Program, the groups will swap work places so that each graduate has the opportunity to experience, contribute to and gain from both environments.

How will the Community Service Program be funded?

Some sponsors will continue supporting their student during this important year and we will be fundraising to cover the gap. Money raised will cover a stipend for the student to help them cover the costs of living and transport, basic teaching resources for students to take to the schools they teach and some administrative costs.

If you would like to support our students in giving back to the community [click here to make a donation!](#)





A World of Possibilities For Our New Students

"Four months ago, we introduced you to Juliana, one of our newest students. Thanks to your support during our "A World Full of Possibilities" appeal, she and her classmates now have access to nutritious meals, safe transportation, well-qualified and experienced teachers, and all the resources they need for a high-quality education. Because of people like you, Juliana's life has changed forever and she now has the chance to escape the poverty cycle. We couldn't be more grateful! – **If you would like to sponsor a student like Juliana, click here!**



Students Help Plan School's First Graduation



As St Jude's prepares for its first graduation, we wanted to make sure our students had a voice in the process. As a result, Form 6 students Kudra and Enock were chosen by their classmates to present ideas and help the school make graduation the most amazing experience possible.

"I am most excited to see all the sponsors. Some of us have never seen them in our 13 years at St Jude's!"

What ideas are you working on now?

KUDRA: Some of the decisions that still need to be made are: planning for the night concert after graduation, picking the guest of honour, putting together gifts, and preparing our Farewell presentation.

What are you most excited about?

ENOCK: I am most excited to see the sponsors. Some of us have never seen them in 13 years! I am also very excited to graduate A-level, it has been two busy years of hard work and sacrifice.

What are your plans after graduation?

KUDRA: After graduation I will do my community service year in two sessions: Outside St Jude's, I will teach commerce, accounting, bookkeeping and Kiswahili at Arusha Secondary School. At St Jude's, I will love to serve as a boarding matron at the Moivaro campus.

ENOCK: I will take a month to rest and plan for my community service program. I will also use this time to explore tertiary education and be with my family.



What do you think graduation will be like?

KUDRA: I hope it will make a remarkable day at St Jude's; Many people will come over including sponsors, donors, volunteers and parents to join us celebrating our achievement.

ENOCK: I know it will be a remarkable one. One in history. Having all the well-wishers around will be just incredible.

Are you interested in visiting St Jude's for our first graduation? There are a ton of events and tours arranged for this time.

[Check out complete details here!](#)



High School Student Travels Solo to Volunteer in Tanzania

By Eliza Cohen

Last summer my family and I took a trip to Tanzania and spent two nights at The School of St Jude. It was my favorite part of the trip and I immediately knew I wanted to return. So, last month, I was lucky enough to come back to St Jude's as part of a volunteer project for my high school.

For three weeks, I worked with the primary and secondary art teachers, assisting them in their classrooms. During morning break and lunch, I led my own project with about 20 students who were especially interested in art. I brought materials over with me that I presented to the kids and we made collages.



What was amazing to me was that although St Jude's is different from my private school in Philadelphia, the quality of education is the same and the kids are just as smart. The students and teachers have created a

safe classroom environment where students are eager to answer questions and are not afraid of being wrong. They are quick learners who take pride in their education and enjoy their school days.

"It's amazing how I am so similar to these girls with such different lives"

One of the most special aspects of my time at the school were the Tanzanian friends that I made who are about my age. The first time I went to Smith Campus, I sat down at lunch with three girls. Those three girls ended up being my closest friends during my time volunteering.

I will never forget when they told me they wanted to go to college in America. I asked them if they knew which colleges. When they showed me the list, I gasped as I realized it was almost identical to the college list I have. It's amazing how I can be so similar to these three girls, yet we live such different lives. Our lives are extreme opposites, but at the end of the day we are all teenage girls with much in common, talking about things like celebrities, music, and boys.

I had an outstanding experience, and even a few days later I can't stop smiling. It was not only life-changing, but also eye-opening. I could not be more thankful for this experience and can confidently say that I will return to The School of St Jude.

I know that I made an impact on many of the students, but what they may not know is that they made a larger impact on me.

Are you interested in volunteering with us? Check out our short-term volunteer program and make a difference while you travel!



St Jude's Librarian Summits Kilimanjaro



By Lightness Isojick

This is my story about climbing Kilimanjaro and I must tell you that it was not an easy trek!

The first day we walked 8 kilometers from Marangu gate to Mandara hut. It was an easy walk in the park, with great weather and interesting plant life. A cool breeze dried our sweat as we went up. Every one was chatting, shouting and singing. It was a happy day.

On the second day we walked from Mandara huts to Horombo, almost 12 km away. This was the longest walk, but we were still strong and energetic. Day three was the acclimatisation day. It was the day for everyone to assess if they could manage the climb as some people were beginning to get nauseous and have trouble breathing.

On day four, although some people were sick, we had to continue on to Kibo. This was undoubtedly the hardest part of the trip so far. It definitely wasn't the happy journey that we expected. It was raining and windy and there was nothing to enjoy—not even a single green leaf. It was like we were moving towards nothing. After 10km, we finally reached Kibo. We were advised to have our dinner as early as possible and get some rest, as we would start our ascent to the summit that night; but we couldn't sleep because of the cold. At 11 pm we lined up to start our summit. It was an

endless zigzagging walk up to the mountain. I had a 55-year-old guide as my guide and he carried my bag and held my arm the whole way. He kept encouraging me even when I was tired and I wanted gave up - and I felt like I could collapse at any time!

At around 5 am we reached Gillman's point. I was very happy to see beautiful, shimmering snow and ice. At this point most people were tired and weak and some decided to go back. Thanks to my guide, he managed to convince me to keep going.

We walked on the ice through Stella point up to Uhuru peak. My camera froze and there was no one to take my photo! Whoever reached to the top reached at his or her own time. Guides concentrated on individuals rather than a group. This must be what we call differentiation in the teaching profession!

After the summit we sprinted down to Kibo and had a deep sleep before we set out for another walk to Horombo on the same day. It was a happy and hard day for everyone who made it to the top.

Do you want to climb Kilimanjaro? We are nearby so you can visit our students on the way! Get all the details on our website:

www.schoolofstjude.org/visit-us/making-a-visit.html



Rebel Wilson Spreads the Word About St Jude's

Rebel Wilson is still helping us spread the word! Check out this great article about Rebel's career and read about her very special relationship with her long-time sponsored student, Winnie. **[Read the full article here.](#)**

A Letter From Gemma About The Parent's Committee

The key to a successful school is not only to have professional teachers and hard-working, non-academic staff, but also to involve the extended community, particularly the students' parents and guardians. Here at St Jude's we are fortunate to have a dedicated Parent Committee who are the voice of our parents and guardians. Established in 2002 with only five members, the committee now has 50 parents serving as members, with one parent from each district the school serves.

Here's how it works in the community:

- Each parent representative holds a monthly meeting in their area where people can ask questions or submit an issue for school to review.
- If a parent cannot attend this meeting they are welcome to visit the home of the representative to speak with them individually.
- Each parent representative organises a roster so that each day someone is present to monitor the children at their bus stop, ensuring that students depart and arrive safely from each drop-off point.
- The committee ensures that every student's family is visited several times a year so that any welfare issues can be reported.
- The Parent Committee started a "Parents Fund" into which parents pay the equivalent of 50 cents a term to support those families who are struggling.
- A committee representative visits the home and school of every prospective student before their final acceptance into St Jude's is granted to ensure their academic and living situation are genuine.
- If a student has academic, behavioral or boarding issues the school alerts the appropriate parent representative who will visit the child's family and work with them to assist with the situation.
- Once a month a representative attends a school assembly to address the students about the importance of the core values of the school (respect, responsibility, honesty and kindness) and what it means to be part of the community.
- The members hold an annual seminar in various areas around Arusha to discuss with and offer advice to parents/guardians on how they can make a positive impact on their child's education.
- Parent Committee representatives attend the various governing bodies of St Jude's, to provide a voice for the parents and keep them up-to-date with decisions and policies made. These are reflected in the annual Parents Expectations Forms that are discussed and signed each year.
- Each January, all committee members visit every family for whom they are responsible to assess changes in circumstances and welfare needs.

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Looking for an Adventure? Join Our Team at St Jude's!



Our recent Finance Manager, Daniel, with our students

Working alongside our 350 Tanzanian staff members are volunteers from around the world, providing their professional skills to help St Jude's fight poverty through education through supporting some of the smartest, most disadvantaged children in the region. As well as offering a wonderful opportunity to discover an amazing country and its people, the school provides accommodation, an adequate stipend for life in Arusha and the company of like-minded people from around the world.

In this interview, our most recent Finance Manager Daniel Groves discusses his two-year experience volunteering at St Jude's.

What made you decide to volunteer at St Jude's?

I was an accountant back in Australia working at an accounting practice where I sat at a desk all day. I knew I wanted something different to what everyone else was doing and I wanted a chance to give. I've always felt strongly that education should be a basic human right, so when I found the Finance Manager role at St Jude's, I knew it was a perfect fit.

What is your role at St Jude's?

I manage the finance, accounting and procurement function for the school. This includes directly managing a team of nine professional staff members. We account for all the sponsorship donation income for the school and handle all the school's expenses.

What has been the most exciting and the hardest thing about working here?

The best is easy: all the amazing people I get to work with. We have a wonderful community together with local staff and volunteers from so many different countries. It's such a dynamic and inspiring work environment. Plus you're surrounded by people all working together for one common goal! As for the hardest – if you come with a can do attitude and you are willing to experience new things – nothing is hard!

Interested in the Finance Officer role? [Click here!](#)

Current Openings

Marketing

[MARKETING MANAGER](#)

Sponsor Relations

[SPONSOR RELATIONS ASSISTANT](#)

Tertiary

[TERTIARY SPONSORSHIP OFFICER](#)

[CREATIVE WRITER](#)

Finance

[FINANCE OFFICER](#)

Work Experience Program Inspires Students to Dream Big



St Jude's students, Simon and Irene, sit with a group of visitors from the United States, explaining what it's like to be a student at the school. They talk easily with the group, always smiling and answering each question thoughtfully. It's hard to believe they're only in form 4.

Simon and Irene are part of a new work experience program at St Jude's that gives Form 4 students the opportunity to gain hands-on knowledge about working in a business environment. Because of exam schedules, Form 4 students have six months off school before beginning Form 5. To make the most of this time, St

"I get inspiration for new ideas from the people I meet here"

Jude's developed a competitive work experience program with positions in the sponsor relations team, visitor relations, purchasing, maintenance, and in the kitchen. Irene and Simon were both elated when they were chosen out of 26 applicants for the positions in the Visitors Team.

"When I grow up, I'd like to be an automotive engineer that develops new technology for people with disabilities," explained Simon. "That means I need to know how to talk to people and work in customer service. I knew that joining the Visitors Team would allow me to meet people from all over the world and get so many new ideas."

Irene wants to be a businesswoman and a lecturer at a university. "You have to know how to talk to lots of people and not be nervous!," said Irene. "On the Visitors Team I knew I'd get to speak in front of people all the time."



They have been part of the program for over a month and said they've already learnt so much about cooperation and working as a team.

"Sometimes we have large groups of more than 20 visitors and there is no way you could handle that alone," explained Simon. "You have to rely on each other."

When asked about their favourite part of the job so far, they agree that it's getting to meet so many new people from around the world. Simon said he spoke to a man from Canada who told him about tricycles designed to carry up to a ton and help people in rural areas.

"There are so many great ideas that can help disadvantaged people – and I get inspiration for those ideas from the people I meet here," said Simon.

"When I meet people in the careers I want to be in they inspire me to follow my dreams!," explained Irene.

