



St Jude's News

MARCH 2019



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Thank you for sharing our newsletter
with your family and friends.



Time for a check up

Biggest Health Check team yet ensure students' holistic wellbeing.

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Left Checking in: The doctors were responsible for checking every student, from head to toe.



Right Sizing up: The team recorded all heights, weights and BMI's of the students

Time for a check up

Biggest Health Check team yet ensure students' holistic wellbeing.

The student sat still, a stethoscope on their heart, an otoscope in their ears and an ophthalmoscope waved over their eyes.

This is just part of the routine our brilliant team of health professionals undertake when assessing every child at St Jude's from head to toe, when they visit the school each year. They're ensuring students can read their school blackboards and books, hear their teachers and are fit and well for class.

It's no small task to adequately assess the needs of 1,800 students in just two weeks, but with decades of experience in a range of medical fields, the team saw the students in record time. They then use their findings to refer students to medical professionals in Arusha for further assessment and support.

With an even wider variety of clinicians this year, there was an increased focus on 'Orthoptics', where students received a more in-depth assessment of their eyes and more recommendations could be made. The multi-disciplinary team also included a wellbeing group, comprising of social workers and school psychologists, who held professional development seminars to help teachers identify and address mental health issues students may experience.

For Melbourne Physiotherapist, Jane Larkin, who co-led the Health Check program in its twelfth year, it's about making a tangible difference during their two-week stay.

"These students come and get ten minutes of our time and it can be life changing for them. There was a student that thought she would never be able to board at St Jude's because of her health, but now as a 17-year-old she is studying and living with her peers in boarding and absolutely thriving. Being able to facilitate that transition and for St Jude's to source things to meet her needs, I think has made a huge difference for that student," Jane smiled.

Newcomer to the Health Check team this year but long term sponsor, Kerrie, was part of the team that checked each child's height, weight and BMI. Not only does this highlight malnourished students who can be given an increased diet, these measurements are also a requirement from the Tanzanian government.

"I was impressed with how many students were really interested in finding out about their health. The older ones even wanted to know what the nutrition protocol from the World Health Organisation was for their age," Kerrie reflected.

It was a special moment when Kerrie met again the students whose academic scholarships she sponsors.


"It was very emotional because I hadn't seen the girls for six years, since I last was at the school, and it was just so rewarding to see how well they are doing, how healthy they are and how well they are getting on at school," Kerrie gushed.

For the Sunshine Coast local it's been a privilege watching the growth of the school and its students.

"I've noticed since I visited six years ago just how everyone's health and wellbeing has improved. The students were really open and welcoming, they just wanted to chat and engage with you," Kerrie expressed.

The team are vowing they'll continue to contribute for another decade, but their ultimate goal is to help upskill local Tanzanian staff, so that more minds and bodies can be kept healthy all year round, one checkup at a time.

"For us to be able to screen these students and find local follow up here in Arusha, it can actually make a difference," Jane smiled, proudly looking at her team.



Are you interested in spending time with our students and staff?

[Visit St Jude's and join our community!](#)



Top Left Special bond: Kerrie with her sponsor students Happiness and Doreen.



Top Right All ears: Students need to be able to hear teachers and classmates.



Bottom International effort: A special thanks to our biggest Health Check team yet.



Meeting the Maasai

Visitors experience life in one of Africa's oldest and most iconic tribes.

Mama Ngonahé quotes translated from Kiswahili and Maasai

Stepping off the bus, visitors were greeted with stark conditions but a warm embrace and the smiling faces of dozens of children. They've arrived in the village of Langidare and are about to meet some of the most iconic and culturally rich people of East Africa.

The bright yellow St Jude's buses are well known here, as it's the home of Form 5 student Lomayani, who belongs to the Maasai tribe.

Lomayani only returns home during midterm and end of term breaks, but the community know his St Jude's education is one of the only roads that will lead their village forward in the fast-changing modern world.

"I am so happy that Lomayani goes to St Jude's and I hope when he finishes there he can support himself and support our family when we need," Mama Ngonahé shared proudly.



Mama Ngonahé is one of three wives to the family's chief, a cultural norm still widely practiced today. She is partly responsible for the survival of her community, where water is a luxury and wealth is measured by the number of animals the family owns.

"There are some challenges here, especially getting water as there is not enough. There are also not enough homes for the children because each of these homes have about nine children staying there," Mama Ngonahé said, looking at her feet.

Knowing this, the visitor group didn't go empty handed, they've spent the morning at Goat Street, a bustling local marketplace for locals trying to jag the best goat. St Jude's Visitor Coordinator and fellow Maasai, Felix, purchased the pick of the morning's offerings, a pregnant doe, that the group later appropriately named 'Judy' after the school.

Gifting a goat goes a long way in the Maasai tribe, they're not only a source of nutrition but goat breeding can be a pathway out of poverty, meaning the family group couldn't believe their luck when they saw Judy was pregnant.



Top Warm welcome: Visitors were greeted by Maasai children.

Bottom Motherly advice: Mama Ngonahé with visitors.





Top Cultures combine: Visitors with Maasai tribe members at Langidare village.

Bottom Tribe talks: Visitor, Lyn, talks with family chief, Langidore.



Experience a Maasai boma for yourself, pay us a visit and enjoy many Tanzanian cultural adventures. [Click here to find out more.](#)



‘Judy’ was formally presented to the tribe leader by a male member of the visiting group and then an impromptu dance was performed by the Maasai children.

The Maasai have long captivated the imagination and intrigue of western travelers, their iconic red blankets (shukas), wooden staff (orinka) and sandals made from cowhide or car tyres, can often be spotted grazing their cattle along the roadsides of Northern Tanzania and Kenya. The opportunity to visit the traditional homes of this ancient tribe is an unforgettable experience.

For 25-year-old Melbourne Orthoptist, Olbie El-Ali, the chance to mingle with the Maasai is life changing. As she walks around the small mud huts in the boma - the traditional name for a Maasai dwelling - the children jump into her arms, intrigued by her skin and hair.

“I have really noticed the difference that education can make to a community like this. You can see the potential with the kids within this village and what an example Lomayani is setting for others,” Olbie said wide-eyed.

Registered nurse, Lyn Whitlam from Sydney, spent time with the wives and was overwhelmed by the welcoming and nurturing nature of the tribe.

“The young children really looked after each other, the older ones were carrying their little siblings on their back to help out. To see a group of twenty-plus children looking out for each other was really special. Until they got the biscuits, then it was everyone for themselves,” Lyn laughed.

The sugar biscuits were another gift from the group and a hot commodity amongst the children.

“We are very lucky. I feel that there would be a lot of people in Australia, and in other western cultures, that would love to experience what we have seen here and I will certainly be going home and spreading the word about what St Jude’s is doing. I fully believe in the ethos of the school, fighting poverty through education, I think it’s marvelous,” Lyn reflected.

For St Jude’s, educating students like Lomayani and giving visitors the chance to visit their villages, threaded with tradition, is helping strike a balance between positive change for the Maasai tribes’ survival and maintaining tradition and identity.

“It’s a happy life here, we are very happy,” Mama Ngonahe smiled.

“Experiences like this change you and the way you think about what’s important,” Lynn replied putting her arm around Mama Ngonahe.



Students Conquer Kili 5km

Our runners shine at prestigious world athletic event.

Fresh off running a grueling 5kms with some steep climbs and rocky terrain, Form 4 student Baraka couldn't believe he finished in the top 30 at the international contest.

The 17-year-old proudly spoke of his Kilimanjaro Marathon run, where he was met with cheering crowds in a packed out stadium as he crossed the line in 22nd place, ahead of 678 other competitors.

"It was really tough; I've never run such a long distance but it was a really good experience. I was able to see some of the professional athletes compete, they are very inspiring. Some of the winners even sprinted most of the way. We have been training hard but the hills and mountains today were particularly challenging," Baraka explained, punctuated by heavy breaths.



13 secondary students from St Jude's rose before dawn to pound the pavement, with the massive mountain making for the perfect backdrop to test their limits. Competing alongside their teachers and against the best from across Africa, their impressive results are a credit to their commitment and training.

Form 2 student, Lucas, crossed the line in 13th position, Baraka was the 22nd arrival and Form 1 student Jenipher secured the 31st spot.

Each student competitor credited their extensive training in the lead up to the event, where they trained for an hour a day, with no excuses!

For Form 4 student, Happiness, running 5km would have only been a dream if not for the specialised training program.

"We are used to doing smaller races, metres instead of kilometres, 100m or 200m for example. We need to work on speed more. It's teaching us about determination and hard work," Happiness said red-cheeked from her run.

Students also praised the adrenalin from the crowd, who cheered them through some tough conditions that even challenged the most advanced runners.

"The steep hills and mountains were definitely the hardest part. We also had to dodge a lot of runners competing over different distances but the cheering crowds made you forget about the pain," Happiness shared.



The marathon event, which also has a 21km and 5km distance, is part of the school's Vocational Skills program that includes athletics, basketball, football and volleyball programs run by the Vocational Skills department teachers. All are part of helping St Jude's students achieve outside the classroom, as well as inside it.

"I really hope to continue with my running and it can complement my studies," a beaming Baraka added.

The school's staff also tried their luck at the brutal half marathon, completing 21kms around the base of Mount Kilimanjaro.

St Jude's Photographer, Onesmo Daniel was one amongst them and crossed the finishing line in just under three hours.

"We didn't do as much training as last year, so I was getting a little tired, but I am proud. We actually started late so the biggest challenge was catching up to other competitors, but with my final position I overtook 1,000 people. It was so nice to see our students there and I hope next year they can run the 21kms for the extra challenge," Onesmo smiled.



Tanzanian athlete, Emmanuel Giniki, won the overall half marathon gold medal finishing the course in an incredible 1hr 3mins, in front of the home crowd.

But after a champion effort by our secondary students and staff, could Emmanuel have a future fierce competitor in someone from St Jude's?

"I don't see myself quitting my day job and becoming a professional but for the students I can see that because they are strong competitors, they have big futures ahead," Onesmo laughed.

Thanks to the generosity of our school's supporters, our students will continue to achieve in all kinds of arenas.

You can help expand their opportunities by making a donation!



Top Left Marathon madness: Photographer Onesmo happy to have finished the 21km.

Top Right Record race: Students and staff contributed to the record number of runners.

Bottom Scenic run: Mount Kilimanjaro made for the perfect backdrop for the event.





Top Test time: Students will undergo up to eight exams.

Aiming for A's

Students sit major midterm exams

Students and staff have entered one of the most testing times of the school year this month, putting pen to paper for the midterm exams.

National Examinations in Tanzania are tough and all students across the country are required to be assessed at multiple stages of their schooling. Exams in Standard 7, Form 1 and Form 6 are particularly crucial as they will have to reach a standardised level to be able to move on to the next stage of their education.

The midterm assessments are designed to identify all students' progress so far and enable teachers to give those who might be struggling additional support. They also contribute to the student's all important report card, sent home to their parents and to their sponsors.

For primary student Theresia, her five exams are helping her to thrive in high pressure environments, something she'll very much need to fulfil her dream of becoming a doctor.

"This year I think I improved because I got more time for revision and boarding has contributed a lot to my performance because we get time to exchange ideas and we get more time to revise. This year I think I am going to improve more than any other year," Theresia beamed.

Students will sit up to eight exams over the two-week period, testing their nerve, as well as their learning.

"Sometimes we get nervous but we advise each other before and after the exam. One thing that helps me is when you get the exam you first settle and read the questions twice," Theresia said taking a deep breath as she speaks of her exams.

St Jude's Primary Headteacher, Mr George, ensures all his teachers help prepare the students psychologically and intellectually, especially for those where exams on this scale are a new challenge.





Top Midterm mindset: Exams are each timed to up to three hours.

Bottom Primary firsts: The Civic & Moral exam will be a first for primary students.



Bottom Putting yourself to the test: Each result will be sent to parents and sponsors.



“At a primary level we have students who are doing the new curriculum which was introduced by the government from 2016. With the new curriculum we have a new subject called “Civic and Moral”, so that is something we are all still having to adjust to,” Mr George reported.

For Secondary Headmaster, Mr Mcharo, who oversees students at the opposite end of their schooling, the exams are a tool to see if his senior students are reaching the benchmark for higher education.

“We have those who want to apply for higher education scholarships with conditions, universities need to know if students continually perform well. Students up to Form 4 are expected to have a minimum Grade B in performance and A level students need to have a Grade C,” Mr Mcharo explained.

Sharing his vision for The School of St Jude, Mr Mcharo says that while the school has a history of performing well in National Examinations he has aspirations to see the school firmly placed in the top five performing schools in Tanzania.

“We hope the performance of our school is improving because we’ve been a bit more strategic on how we approach assessment. We help create a similar environment and pressures to when they take their exams for real, this helps them be prepared and helps them to study consistently across the

year by being assessed regularly.”

School Prefect and Form 5 student, Silvia, knows these exams are one of the key steps in her St Jude’s education journey. The knowledge she’s learnt ahead of her maths and science exams are giving her the best chance to become a pharmacist.

“My best subject is chemistry and I want to perform high. For me at the start of the exam, I check the questions that I can get the most marks and I start doing them first. I think studying, exercising and sleeping in the lead up to the exams helps a lot,” Silvia revealed.

But perhaps the best advice comes from the aspirational secondary school leader.

“Work hard is twentieth century vocabulary; we encourage students now to also work smart,” Mr Mcharo smiled while observing his students studying hard in the Smith library.

Turning one of the most testing times, into the most rewarding.

Support one of our aspirational students, and help achieve in their exams by sponsoring an academic scholarship today.





International Women's Day at St Jude's



'Balance for Better' – join us as we press for progress.

As the school bell rang, hundreds of female students rushed to the Smith Secondary assembly hall, packing out the front rows, eager to get the best view of the assembly dedicated to celebrating them!

Recognising International Women's Day on March 8th was a must for The School of St Jude, as the school is operating in a country still working towards gender equality and female empowerment.

The school's female students are recognised as the trailblazers of tomorrow. Their education is helping them break the cycle of poverty and bring the barriers of inequality tumbling down.

On average, Tanzanian girls from a poor rural background will only receive 3.7 years of schooling and less than 25% will have received some secondary education.

For girls in Tanzania, their chance to attend school is often weighed against their value as caregivers, farmhands, cattle tenders, firewood collectors, house cleaners, water fetchers and marketplace vendors. Meaning the priority of continuing education often comes second best.

This makes International Women's Day, and the girls' free St Jude's education, even more important.

As the first empowering song played out to the assembly hall, students and staff raised the roof, their solidarity was a force to be reckoned with.



Top Raising the roof: Students packed out the assembly hall during the special ceremony.
Bottom Time for change: Students sat together in solidarity to fight gender inequality.



Beyond St Jude's Coordinator, Vivian Deus, opened the ceremony with a stirring speech about the challenges she's faced as a female Tanzanian legal facilitator and an aspiring international trade and investment lawyer.

"At university I was one of the people who were lucky to be mentored by the then Law Faculty Head, (now Attorney General of Tanzania) Prof. Adelardus Kilangi. He instilled a passion in me to want to achieve more for myself, which is what I wish to see in all of you."

Speaking directly to the females, she shared her admiration for St Jude's as a workplace and school of equal opportunity, without prejudice or discrimination.

"The School of St Jude has given you the greatest gift, 57% of your kind are represented across the two campuses. God bless Gemma and everyone backing her. You are all a part of an important history," Vivian declared, her

words met with a roar of appreciation.

Following Vivian's emotive declaration, Form 6 student, Zulfa, took to the podium.

"Based on this year's theme 'Balance for Better,' I think education is one of the most important weapons to create balance in a better world. It is possible to hold a broom in one hand and a pen in the other, it is possible to be an undergraduate without a bump in your stomach, it is possible to have a masters without a baby on your back, it is possible to have a degree and make the most out of it," Zulfa declared.

An all-female line-up of students and staff then entertained the crowd with poetry and comedy, before inviting more than a hundred women to the stage.

The audience jumped to their feet and joined the choir, raising their voices in collective celebration.

Top Leading ladies: The Tonics group entertained students with songs written by African women.

Mr Mcharo, the Headmaster of Smith Secondary Campus, gave his vote of thanks to the women involved in organising the assembly and shared some thoughts about the role men need to play in ensuring women are respected, heard and empowered.

One day is not enough to tackle the challenges facing women, especially in Tanzania, but all those present pledged that the women and men of St Jude's will strive for balance, equally and together.

Providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty and inequality in Tanzania, [sponsor one our inspiring women today!](#)



Top Voicing up: Form 6 students proudly facilitated the ceremony.

Bottom Female empowerment: Our female students are leading by example, they're trailblazers of tomorrow.





The School of St Jude

Fighting poverty
through education



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