



CLASS
OF

2015



Special Edition Newsletter



GRADUATION 2015

They made it!

After years of hard work and study, The School of St Jude's first Form 6 (Grade 12) class proudly graduated on May 30 in a beautiful ceremony at Smith campus.

More than 1600 people - local, international and special guests, school staff, graduates' families and students of all ages - united to celebrate the milestone event.

On that last Saturday of May, before the morning sun's rays had brushed the sky, the Form 6 dormitories buzzed with activity.

Bright-eyed students busily donned their graduation outfits, as the excitement of the day spread throughout a colourful Smith campus.

By 9.30am, the ceremony had begun. Stirring anthems were followed by speeches from various dignitaries, as well as plenty of student entertainment in the form of song and dance.

School founder Gemma Sisia gave a particularly touching speech, laced with the emotion of the landmark occasion. Special guest, Deputy Education Minister Anne Kilango Malecela, completed the speeches with addresses in English and Kiswahili.

Once the canary yellow and navy blue-adorned graduates received their certificates, an impressive goat "cake" was presented to complete the ceremony.

The week leading up to graduation was filled with a busy schedule of activities, as St Jude's campuses began to fill with supporters from overseas.

Students led visitors through playful sporting events, a cultural and drumming workshop and a cooking lesson, as well as The Big Picture art project. Gemma led a special Q&A session, and supporters were given the opportunity to visit restaurants and landmarks in Arusha.

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It was the culmination of 61 secondary school students' education, and we are so proud of them we have dedicated this special edition newsletter to their achievement.

These students will be the first from The School of St Jude to share their free, high-quality education with those less fortunate. Before embarking on further pursuits, many graduates have chosen to spend a year as teachers in local government schools.

Many have already completed their community service training, and we are confident they will make us proud.







ACTIVITY FUN

Visitors from near and far came to St Jude's for our graduation celebration.

During graduation week, a number of international sponsors and supporters joined in with the fun-filled activities. The majority of these offered students and visitors alike a chance to get to know one another and enjoy the full experience of being part of the St Jude's community.

Some activities pictured here include The Big Picture collaborative art project (which served as a wonderful graduation day backdrop, as seen above), cultural dance and drumming demonstrations, and an afternoon of quirky sports featuring volleyball, tug-of-war, and an obstacle course finishing with a wet sponge-throwing competition.

It was a wonderful week, thanks to all who participated!





ACHIEVEMENT EXHIBITION

Graduating students clearly enjoyed their time showing visitors what they had achieved through their education at St Jude's. On the morning before graduation, they guided international visitors and parents through a room filled with examples of their work, achievements throughout the years, memories from school and much more.

I want to improve the methods of local farming of crops like maize and cotton, to help families in the area.

Displays included topics such as excursions and trips; science and technology; music, arts and culture; entrepreneurship; sports achievements; cultural and important days; early days at school; the people who inspired us; the people who made it happen and future aspirations and dreams.

As the angelic voices of Form 6 students Esther and

Elizabeth drifted from the music station, Form 5 videographer Godson explained how his creative graduation film came together while it played in the background.

"It's so we could look at where we came from, to now. (Producing videos) is my passion," he said.

Nearby, Form 6s Jackline and Anna explained what they hoped to become in the future and why.

"I want to improve the methods of local farming of crops like maize and cotton, to help families in the area," Jackline said.

Anna, who wants to become an auditor, said she wanted to encourage people to use funds for the right reasons" and to stop misappropriation.

Smith student mentor Sika Somberg helped organise the event, and was very happy with how it was received.

"The students spent hours and hours working on this, so it's great to see everyone enjoying it," she said.



Parent Committee chairwoman Fausta Alfayo said the Form 6 students' parents who came to enjoy the exhibit were certainly not let down.

"Really, they are very, very happy (to be here). We didn't know that St Jude's would take our students up to Form 6, because when it started nobody knew that it was going to go like this, and do well, the way it has now. It's like Gemma's dream has come true," she said with a radiant smile.

"We've seen our children from when they were young up until now (at the

exhibition), everything they've done, so it was very good."

Not only as chairwoman, but as a proud grandmother of Form 6 student Anna, Fausta Alfayo is well-placed to express the emotion of the moment on behalf of parents.

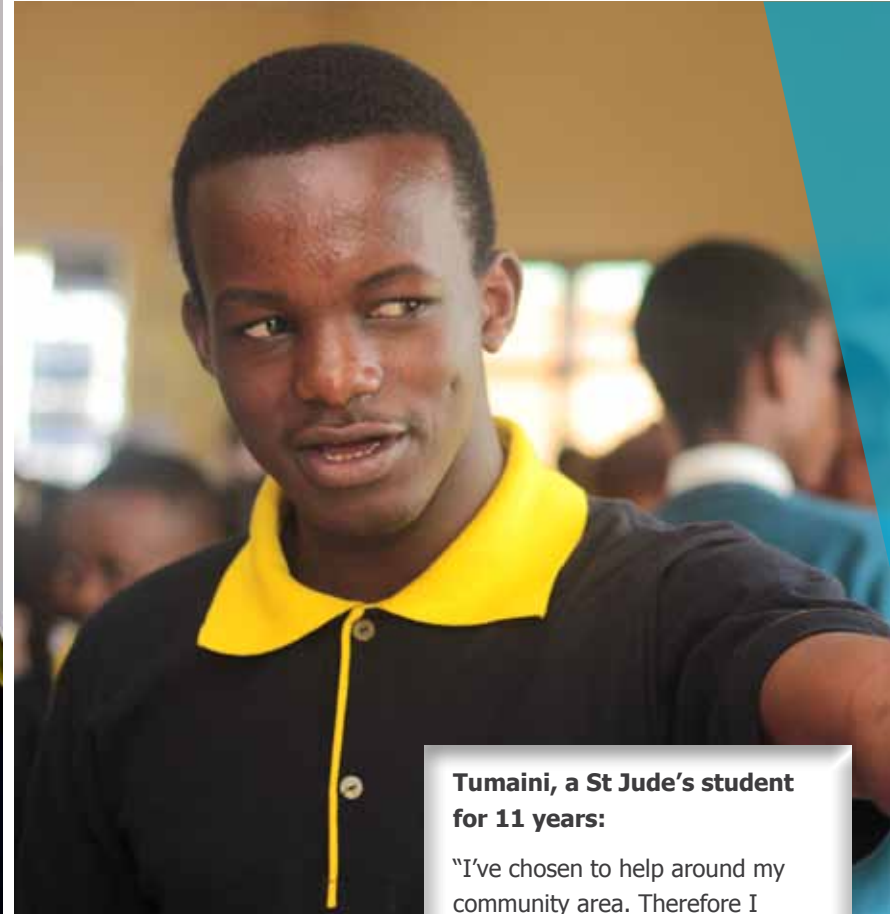
"These students have been encouraged in speaking because of the way they've been brought up in school. They don't have any shame, and can talk about anything. Even when students in Standard 4 are asked to stand up and make a small speech, they can do it with confidence."





Carolyn – a St Jude's student for 11 years:

"I love kids, so I have chosen to work with the lower primary students at St Jude's. I'll be teaching them because it reminds me of where I came from, how far my dream was and how far it might still be. It's about giving the children hope that St Jude's is there to support them because it has supported us and enriched who we are. I'm looking forward to going to university – I'll be doing a degree in medicine because I'd like to work in hospitals."



Tumaini, a St Jude's student for 11 years:

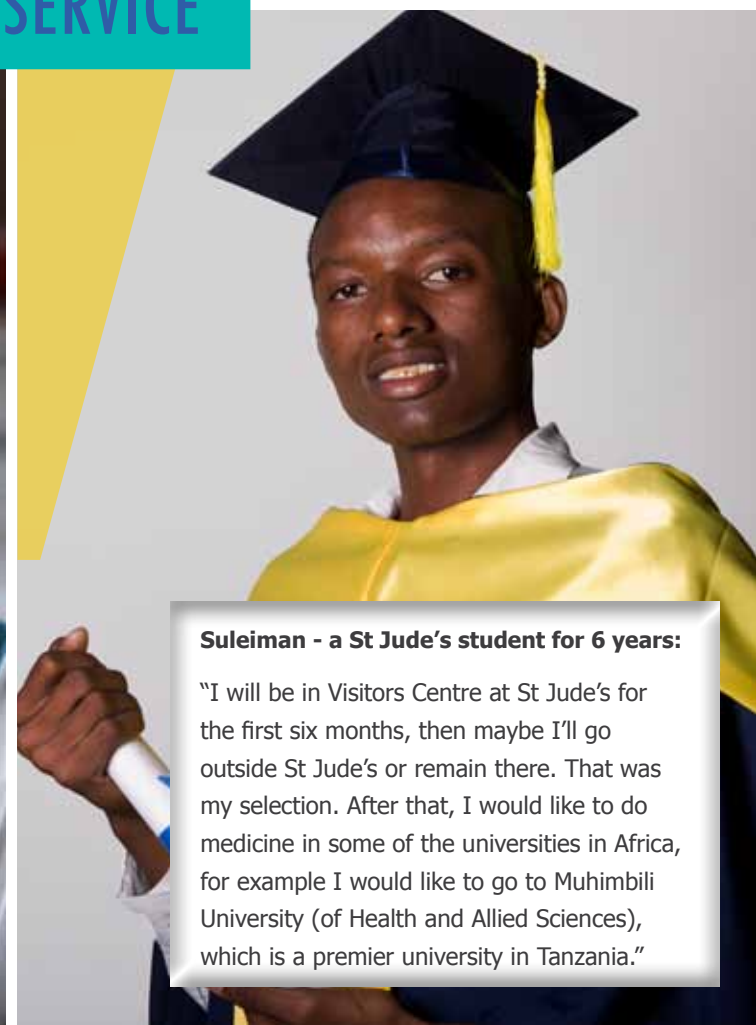
"I've chosen to help around my community area. Therefore I will teach at a local government school as there are less teachers and a lot of students who need help. After community service, I'm looking forward to any university, especially abroad, because I want to expand my mind."

TIME TO GIVE BACK: GRADUATES SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON A YEAR OF COMMUNITY SERVICE



Violeth – a St Jude's student for 9 years:

"In my community service I will be helping at a government school, teaching history, geography and physics. (The school) is close to my home. Then I'll go to university to do education and training because I love teaching and I want to give the young ones the knowledge that I have been given."



Suleiman - a St Jude's student for 6 years:

"I will be in Visitors Centre at St Jude's for the first six months, then maybe I'll go outside St Jude's or remain there. That was my selection. After that, I would like to do medicine in some of the universities in Africa, for example I would like to go to Muhimbili University (of Health and Allied Sciences), which is a premier university in Tanzania."



Rachel, a St Jude's student for 6 years:

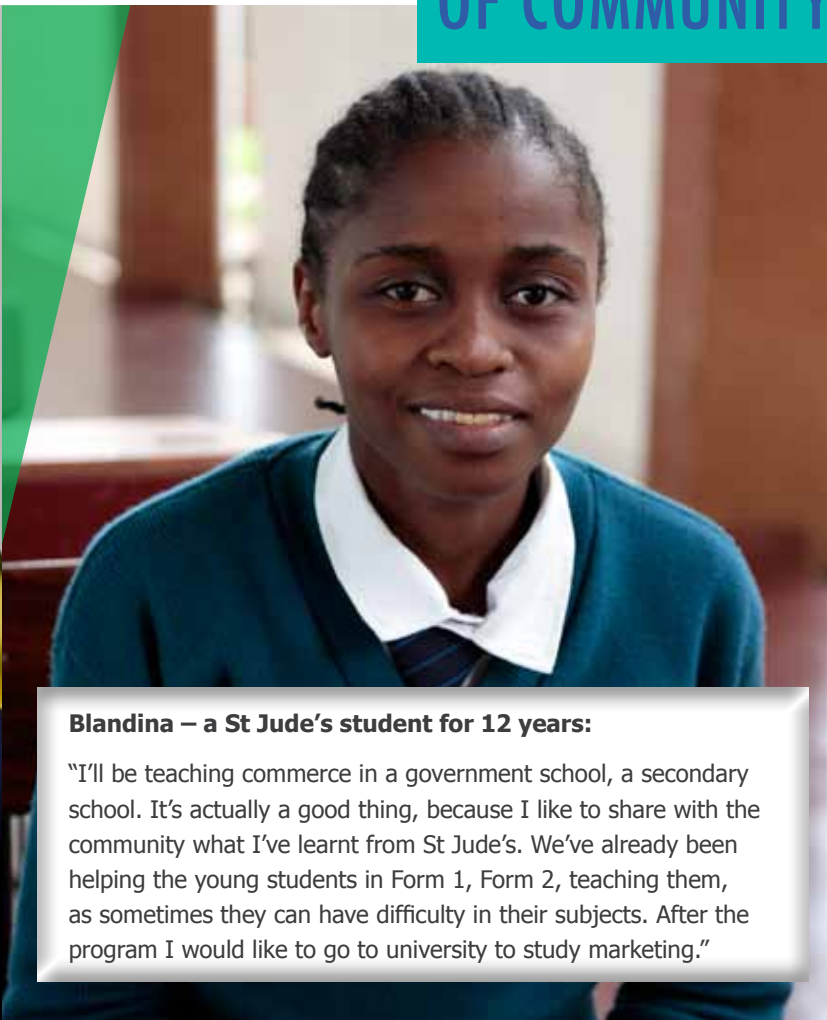
"I joined St Jude's in 2009, since Form 1, and my life has been so amazing. I did several leadership activities as well as my academic achievements, so that showed me how to deal with people and how to have compassion. I will be a biology teacher at one of the secondary schools. After that I will go to university for my medical degree. I want to be a doctor. I once went to the hospital with my father and I found some people really suffering. There were few doctors and nurses."



Justin, a St Jude's student for 2 years:

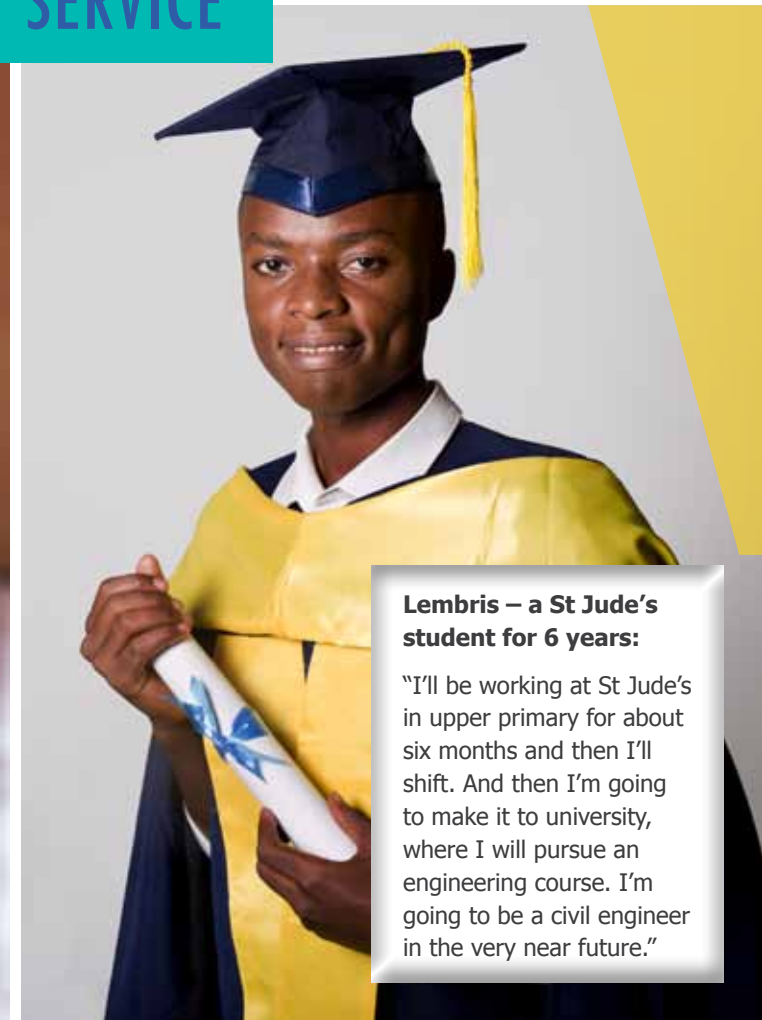
"I am going to conduct my community service in a government school. I chose this government school because I came from there and I know the students there have a shortage of teachers. Even before the school introduced the community service, I was helping to teach some students about how to do their exams. I decided that it would be better to help those people, and I'm ready to help those people. After community service I would like to go to university. I'm going to take a bachelor of business and administration. After that I would like to take economics very much to help my country."

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Blandina – a St Jude's student for 12 years:

"I'll be teaching commerce in a government school, a secondary school. It's actually a good thing, because I like to share with the community what I've learnt from St Jude's. We've already been helping the young students in Form 1, Form 2, teaching them, as sometimes they can have difficulty in their subjects. After the program I would like to go to university to study marketing."



Lembris – a St Jude's student for 6 years:

"I'll be working at St Jude's in upper primary for about six months and then I'll shift. And then I'm going to make it to university, where I will pursue an engineering course. I'm going to be a civil engineer in the very near future."



BUILDING BONDS

While visiting The School of St Jude for our recent graduation, Australians Julie and Kevin Smith shared their experience about sponsoring new graduate Amos and Form 2 (Year 8) student Faith.

"We started sponsoring Faith about nine years ago. We found out about St Jude's when Julie saw a program on Australian television, Sunrise. The same day, she said, 'look, I've got to find out more about this school' and went out and bought the book, and we had a look at what it took to be a sponsor," Kevin explained.

The Western Australian couple also started sponsoring Amos when he began at St Jude's in Form 1.

"It's been a great experience watching them grow, we've seen the school grow as well from those fairly humble, small beginnings. We've thoroughly enjoyed it," Kevin said.



"This is the second time we've visited. In fact, this time we've spent lots more time with them, which has been really nice," Julie said, explaining that staying at the same campus has allowed them all a great opportunity to build their relationship, even with Amos' parents.

As parents to two daughters of their own, it's clear that Kevin and Julie also hold their student sponsorship relationships very close to their hearts.

"I think we get a lot more back than what we give. It's really lovely to see (Faith and Amos) grow and to know that you're helping someone that may not have been able to do this. They don't have the opportunities here, and we come from such easy backgrounds so to help someone, make it easier for them, is very satisfying," Julie said. "We have their pictures alongside our girls' pictures on the kitchen counter - they're just part of our family. One big, happy family," Julie said.

"It's really benefitted our children, because they have a very easy life," Julie said, laughing. They're quite aware now how lucky they are, with the life that they've had. We would love to bring them and shown them, but they're both adults now and they have jobs, but hopefully one day we'll be able to bring them."

It's clear, as the four of them sit comfortably in conversation on a sunny Tanzanian afternoon, that the Smiths' visit has been mutually beneficial.

"Being sponsored by Julie and Kevin is such an amazing opportunity, so I really appreciate that. I am so happy I will be together with my sponsors and my parents for this very special day (graduation). I think it's going to be amazing, it will be wonderful," Amos said with a grin. "In Tanzania, the education system is very different and it is very hard. In public schools, the situation there is very hard. I am very happy to be in such an institution that cares about education."

We have their pictures alongside our girls' pictures on the kitchen counter...

"They have sponsored me since I was at prep and Grade 1, they give me challenges and I'm proud to be at St Jude's. It's really fun," Faith added, a shy smile emerging.

That night, during a student-held variety concert, Kevin and Julie watched Amos demonstrate one of his passions – dance.

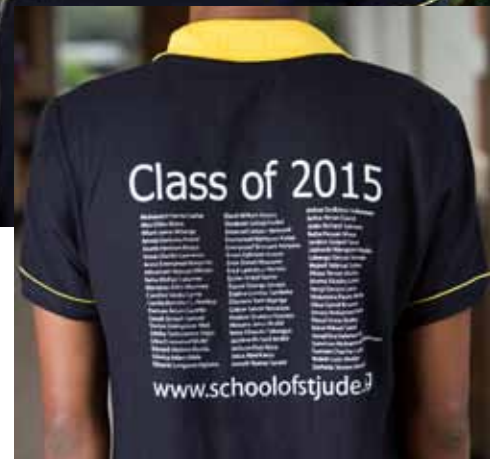
"It's pretty exciting (to see the Form 6s graduate). Today, with the (achievement) exhibition, they've shown a lot of passion, a lot of enthusiasm and commitment, and they will make a difference. They will go on to do something that they could probably only have dreamed of when they first started at the school," Kevin said.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT



Now there's a smart, colourful and commemorative way to show your support for St Jude's, with our inaugural graduation polo. Each unisex shirt is \$24 AUD and, as with the rest of our merchandise, all proceeds go directly to the school.

We have clothing, jewellery, books and much more available, so check out what's in store [here](#).



SHARE YOUR ST JUDE'S STORY



When The School of St Jude was listed on TripAdvisor last year, we were hoping to hear some good feedback from people who have visited. We were delighted to discover so many great recommendations! While a day visit to The School of St Jude is currently ranked sixth on TripAdvisor's list of 'things to do in Arusha', we think we can do better. We want to be number one! If you've visited St Jude's, please share your experience by writing a review. Help us become number one so we can find more supporters for these awesome students. Go to www.tripadvisor.com. Your support makes a world of difference to so many!



Where it all began...



THEN



Smith campus





NOW



Our first Form 6 graduates - The story continues...



The School of St Jude
Fighting Poverty Through Education

THANK YOU

