



# St Jude's News

JUNE 2018



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Thank you for sharing our newsletter  
with your family and friends



## Sights Set on Sebastian's Success

Meet one of our students defeating the odds

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# Meet one of our students defeating the odds

Sebastian earned his academic scholarship to St Jude's at the end of 2013 and started in Preparatory class at Sisia Primary Campus the following year, eager to learn and participate.

In four years, he has gone from strength to strength thanks to his Australian sponsors and many generous donors who go the extra mile to support students with additional needs, through St Jude's Medical and Welfare Fund.

Sebastian, 11 years old, was born with albinism and nystagmus, an associated eye condition that impairs Sebastian's ability to see or read as easily as his classmates.

However, the exceptional young student refuses to be diminished by his medical conditions. In fact, he is one of St Jude's best-performing students in Standard 4, regularly achieving all A and B grades in each of his nine subjects.

Currently, the nation does not have sufficient resources to support all children like Sebastian.

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In Charlotte's care: Our dedicated Community Relations Manager oversees the welfare of all students.



There is one doctor per approximately 32,500 people in Tanzania, according to Global Health Action. It is estimated that one Tanzanian child out of 1,400 births will be born with albinism.

Although the odds were once stacked against Sebastian, his gift of a high quality education at St Jude's means he is leaping towards a successful future.

People with albinism are at risk of stigmatisation, cruelty and violence in Tanzania due to cultural and spiritual beliefs that their hair, skin and body parts contain magical powers, or that they are ghosts of European colonists.

At St Jude's, Sebastian is kept safe from potential harm and his peers are educated and supportive of him.

"My best friend is Joshua in my class. We enjoy playing at lunch time and telling jokes on the school bus. Sometimes I am even able to help him if he needs extra help with school work!" Sebastian shared.

St Jude's Community Relations Manager, Charlotte, oversees the welfare of all students across our primary and secondary campuses. Each day, she communicates with Sebastian to ensure he is content and healthy.

"If Sebastian were in Australia, I believe he would be considered legally blind, because he cannot see the blackboard even if he sits at the front of the class. To address this issue, the Rotary Club of Brisbane High Rise donated an iPad to the School, after they met Sebastian during a 2015 visit to the School from members of this Rotary club," Charlotte explained.

"In 2014 when I started Preparatory class I did not have an iPad and it was hard to learn. With my iPad, I can just take a photograph of the blackboard and zoom in as much as I need to, which makes it much easier," Sebastian added.

"Every day in the afternoon, Sebastian drops off his iPad to St Jude's Business Office to be recharged overnight. He collects it from the office in the morning before school. This works well because we can ask him how he is doing and we can help him to clean his eyeglasses."

"Our Medical and Welfare fund helps us to pay for students like Sebastian to receive glasses. Every year, we take him for eye testing in case his prescription has changed and we can get him a new pair," Charlotte said.

Beyond providing visual aids and classroom support for Sebastian, he also receives additional care during annual Medical Checks every March.

Three of Sebastian's sponsors are medical professionals, two of whom lead St Jude's annual Medical Check team.

"I loved seeing Doctor Pip and Doctor Craig in March. They brought me my favourite book. It is called My Secret Book of Rules. I really love it!" Sebastian said.

Given Sebastian's admiration for all his sponsors and ongoing support from compassionate medical professionals in Tanzania, his dream job comes as no surprise.

"I want to become a doctor when I grow up. I dream to help a lot of people," Sebastian said.



iPad, iCan: With visual and electronic aids, Sebastian's quality of learning is significantly improved.



Sebastian's all smiles: Enjoying his favourite school meal, pilau (spicy rice and meat).

Sebastian will be able to help many people in the future, and it is thanks to donors and supporters from around the world. Donate today to St Jude's Medical and Welfare Fund to give our most vulnerable students some additional care.



# A Double Take for Student Sponsors

## Amanda and Jenifer give twice the gift through sponsorship

Amanda signed up to sponsor an academic scholarship with St Jude's in 2009. Almost a decade later, she and her mother, Jennifer, made the long journey from Australia to Tanzania to support Form 6 graduate, Dainess, on Graduation Day last month.

Amanda and Jennifer have been so impressed by St Jude's sponsorship scheme, and excited by Graduation Week, that they decided to sponsor another student together, Glory, who is currently in Form 3 at Smith Secondary Campus.

"I have always believed in the adage that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime."

"Gemma's story really resonated with me because I come from a teaching background. I was, and still am, a firm believer in the power of education to transform lives. The joy of making a difference to a stranger halfway around the world, and the great expectation and desire to one day meet them in person... it's been a goal many years in the making," Amanda said.

"Mum always used to say, 'you have no control over which house you are born into.' As a baby, no one chooses their family's economic situation, so I think it is especially important to sponsor the most disadvantaged children, as is the St Jude's path," she said.

"The best part of being a sponsor with St Jude's is writing to and receiving letters from your sponsor student. Dainess said she hoped and prayed I would come to visit her. To cry and laugh and smile with her, and finally meet the student's family with whom you share a common bond, is life changing."

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Leading the way: Amanda and Jennifer led guests into the Graduation ceremony.



Signing up for seconds: The mother-daughter duo are excited to co-share a new sponsorship!



All her Glory: Glory was surprised by a visit from her two new sponsors at football!

Amanda and Jennifer's visit took a heartwarming turn on their final day at St Jude's, when they had the impromptu opportunity to surprise their newly sponsored student, Glory, at one of her football matches.

"It was such a special encounter. Mum in particular was affected, knowing this may be the only opportunity she'll have to meet Glory, since she may not be able to travel back in three years for her Form 6 graduation," Amanda said.

Having started Dainess on the path to a bright future nine years ago, Amanda is now settled back with her family in Queensland after a whirlwind visit, but her journey with St Jude's is far from over.

"Some of my friends who read all my happy social media posts about St Jude's and Graduation Day were also moved and wanted to know how to sponsor. So, I have suggested we co-sponsor some female students next year and make it our goal to travel over for their Form 6 graduation," she excitedly shared.

"That's the thing about St Jude's. Once you start sponsoring, and especially when you visit, it gets under your skin and weaves its way into your heart."



Weave a thread in St Jude's rich tapestry and join thousands of international sponsors and donors, who make it possible for 1,800 students to break the cycle of poverty. Our Annual Appeal runs until June 30 - donate or sponsor before then to have your contribution matched!





## Broken Boundaries



**Torrential rains destroyed our boundary wall, but nothing stops us fighting poverty**

In the early hours of a blustery Thursday morning, flash flooding at Usa River, the site of St Jude's Smith Secondary Campus, swept away huge parts of the School's main boundary walls.

Standing 2.7 metres high, the wall crumbled in two large sections beneath the weight of recent heavy rains. The total length of wall damage is 250 metres — the length of a football field, and then some — and will cost almost AU\$49,000 to repair.

The School of St Jude Facilities Manager, Laurian, is overseeing the repairs and explained the toll it has taken on our school community, infrastructure and budget.

“When the askari (guards) heard the wall collapsing before the sun rose, they immediately contacted the Smith Secondary Campus leadership to inform them.”

“It was clear we would need to employ more askari to patrol the destroyed sections of the boundary wall. We employed six new guards — three for during the day and three overnight,” Laurian said.

St Jude's committed askari ensure our staff, students and campus are kept safe around the clock, and that no intruder could, quite literally, slip through the cracks.

In addition to six new guards, it will take 18 local construction workers almost two months to restore the wall to tip-top condition.

“To prevent this from happening again, we are increasing the depth of the passages which allow water to flow under the wall from 60 centimetres to 90 centimetres. The problem with flash flooding is that the water quickly blocks the passages. The weather we have had in Arusha this year has been unusual and unpredictable,” Laurian remarked.

Indeed, it's not just St Jude's which has been affected by unseasonal heavy rains this year. One day before our wall collapsed, a Tanzanian news provider, The Citizen, reported that 15 people nationwide were killed and at least 250 dwellings were destroyed in the torrential downpours.

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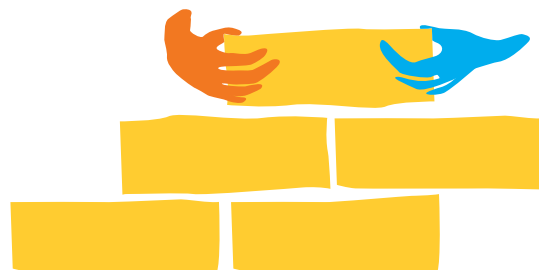
"It is difficult to explain this year's weather scenario," Laurian said.

"We are putting in place more preventative measures so we are best prepared if this happens again. The emergency response from everyone on the ground, from the askari, to the maintenance team and the workers, was impressive under the circumstances," he added.

School Founder, Gemma Sisia, was shocked to see the impact the heavy rain made on the wall, which has ensured students' safety and weathered many storms since it was first built more than 10 years ago.

"We face unique challenges as a school and not-for-profit organisation based in Africa. Unpredictable events like this occasionally crop up and cause us to reconsider strategies and goals. On top of that, it means, from time to time, we must call upon our friends around the world for some extra support," Gemma said.

Day by day, our wall is being restored to its original condition, but we still need all hands on deck!



Will you give us a hand? Your money will be doubled, thanks to our Appeal match. Donate today to our Area of Greatest Need.



**Top** Assessing the damage: Smith Secondary Campus askari were first responders.  
**Middle left** All hands on deck: An aerial view of repairs taking place - brick by brick, a new wall is built.  
**Middle right and bottom** A hard day's work: We have had to employ dozens of people to help rebuild the wall.





## School Teachers Take St Jude's to Wakakiri

**Alana and Natasha are  
empowering students to fight  
poverty!**

St Jude's supporters never cease to amaze nor inspire us with their creative means of raising awareness and funds for our cause.

Just when we thought we'd heard every bold and brilliant idea in the book, two of our recent visitors, Alana and Natasha, surprised us with the phenomenal news that they were taking St Jude's story to Wakakiri — Australia's largest performing arts events for schools.

The inspiring teachers, from Our Lady Help of Christians in Rosemeadow, have mobilised 58 students, who are practicing hard during lunch breaks and arriving to school early to rehearse for their big performance on August 11.

"From this performance, we hope people see the difference that education can make to a child's life and that one person can make a difference in the lives of others. It's never too late to follow your dreams and set yourself a challenge," Alana and Natasha said.

The idea to transform the inspirational tale of our Founder, Gemma Sisia, and The School of St Jude in to a stage performance evolved last year.

"We heard about St Jude's when we were looking for a story for our students to perform [at Wakakiri]. My Mum suggested we do the story of Australian woman, Gemma Sisia, who was changing lives through education," Natasha shared.

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This suggestion fell like a drop in a pond, spreading a ripple effect that resulted in a visit by the pair to the School in April and whole-school fundraisers hosted by Our Lady Help of Christians.

Their generous school community have raised upwards of \$800 this year alone to help us fight poverty through education, with more funds still to come!

Alana and Natasha's life-changing visit to St Jude's has helped them spread the ripple effect even further. Curious students, the same age as those they are helping to gift a free education, often ask their intrepid teachers about The School and Tanzanian life.

"The best part of our journey to Tanzania was returning home and sharing our experience with our school community. The students got to experience Tanzanian culture through us. They have been amazed and captivated by the stories we have shared with them," Alana and Natasha enthused."

"One little boy told me, "Miss Ferderer I am going to go to Tanzania on the weekend and give all of my clothes away." The students have been inspired to reach out and help others less fortunate than themselves," Natasha added.

Perhaps the most profound story Alana and Natasha shared with their students was about their visit to Aziada's home.

Aziada, a seven-year-old girl in Standard 2, started school at St Jude's this year, and lives in a two-room house with her Mama. Every day, she catches one of St Jude's yellow school buses to and from her home, easing the journey along bumpy roads.

"Students were amazed by the difference in education opportunities and understood the distances that some students have to travel to go to school. Our students have become more appreciative of the opportunities that they are given."

It is this appreciation and empathy that has fuelled hundreds of young Australian students to spread the word about St Jude's and raise much-needed funds, to support their Tanzanian peers.

Wakakiri night is just eight short weeks away and is being held at the Win Entertainment Stadium in Wollongong! If you can, be sure to attend the event and give students and staff from Our Lady Help of Christians and extra loud cheer. Tickets are available at: [www.wakakirri.com/tickets-merch/tickets/](http://www.wakakirri.com/tickets-merch/tickets/)



Fundraising superstars: Alana and Natasha have raised almost \$1000 for our school!



Happy heroes: Our Lady Help of Christians staff and students have enjoyed supporting St Jude's.



Spread the word about St Jude's and you may ignite an idea as creative as Alana and Natasha's. Our Appeal ends on June 30 — encourage a friend or family member to donate.





## Amani's Living the Dream

2016 graduate, Amani, shares the impact of his education

Amani started at St Jude's in 2005 when he was 10 years old. Throughout his schooling, he was well-respected by staff and students alike, and although he graduated from Form 6 in 2016, and moved to Zimbabwe for university last year, he has continued to inspire his classmates and younger students.

Amani is a shining example of how St Jude's academic scholarships change lives.

Raised in a local orphanage, Amani grew up with many other children and thought, for a while, he might like to become a teacher because he enjoyed passing on skills and techniques he learnt from excellent staff at St Jude's.

"The teachers at St Jude's did more for us than most teachers in Tanzania. Learning well requires more than just having a book and resources, you also need strategies," Amani reflected.

As Amani grew, he found his niche in science and mathematics subjects and has decided he would best contribute to society by becoming a medical practitioner in Tanzania.

"Tanzania requires excellence in the medical field and this way I will help people in great need. My dream is to open my own medical laboratory and create employment for people."

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Destined for great things: Amani's education at St Jude's gave him access to technology and learning resources.



Moment to shine: Amani was so happy to be joined by his sponsors on Graduation Day 2016.



Beyond wildest dreams: Amani's Community Service Year with the Beyond St Jude's team was a life highlight.

Amani is well on his way to achieving the dream. He graduated from secondary school and earned a scholarship through the School's partnership with the MasterCard Foundations Scholars at African Leadership Academy, which has enabled him to study a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science at Africa University in Zimbabwe.

Prior to beginning his university course, Amani participated in Beyond St Jude's Community Service Year as an intern in our Beyond St Jude's team. This valuable experience empowered him to demonstrate independence and work ethic.

"University is different from school, but St Jude's made me feel prepared. They taught us always to be humble, but proud and because of that, I am

so proud of who I have become. I am lucky to have many friends and they encouraged me to apply for university student elections, but I want to focus on my studies and just lead by my own example," Amani said.

With wisdom beyond his 23 years, Amani is eager to use his knowledge to help others in need. In his summer break, Amani has returned to Tanzania to complete a Community Action Project for his university scholarship and is voluntarily teaching academic techniques, like those he learnt at St Jude's, to children living in Arusha's orphanages.

"We must respect everybody, whether they are older than us or not. People are equal and these children are my younger brothers and sisters. I would like to teach these children

self-discipline so they can work hard and reach success, and be proud of themselves too. St Jude's taught me that. I am so happy when I teach them because we all learn from each other," he shared.

Amani recalls his Form 6 Graduation ceremony whenever he is looking to find inspiration and motivation.

"I could never have dreamed of going to university before I came to St Jude's. I was just focused on getting to secondary school. Then I realised on the day of Form 6 Graduation that my dream was coming true."

"I felt so happy on Graduation Day. My sponsors came to the ceremony with my uncle. I felt like I had gone from having no parents, to having many! My sponsors were so familiar to me. They

always wrote to me and gave me words of encouragement. I felt complete when I met them," he smiled.

"I remember I was interviewed one day at school, and I said I wanted to grow up and be a good citizen and be able to financially support myself so I could give back. That is the big dream still."

Amani's almost there. In just a few years, he will graduate into a profession that will potentially see him helping thousands of Tanzanians. Supporters from around the world, who take our students hands, help them rise to meet their goals.

Give us your hand and sponsor an academic scholarship for the next young Amani!

