



St Jude's News

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Top A Bibi's touch: Bibi making sure Johnson looks at his best for Form 4 Celebration and Awards Day.

Lessons From Bibi

The story of how a grandmother and sister helped Johnson on his journey to Form 4 Celebration and Awards Day.

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Top Left Family Time: Johnson (centre) with Elinipe (sister, left) and Apatakis (Bibi, right).

Top Right A Bibi's Touch: Bibi making sure Johnson looks at his best for graduation.

Lessons from Bibi

The story of how a grandmother and sister helped Johnson on his journey to Form 4 graduation



The sun is peaking through the clouds after a long week of rain. Pouring through the gates of Smith Secondary Campus are hundreds of parents, siblings, guardians and one particularly proud Bibi (grandmother) named Apatakis. Today is Form 4 Celebration and Awards Day.

The procession of guests is a never ending flare of fashion, with everyone dressed in their finest clothing, and the charismatic Bibi is at the pinnacle. She is garbed in a golden mtandio (scarf) with an elegant green kilemba (headwear) and a cascading dress peppered with pink and red flowers. A broad smile is planted on her face.

Bibi has always been stylish, and her reason is simple.

"I love myself," she says, her smile becoming a laugh.

But today it's not just her style that is a source of pride; more importantly it is her grandson, Johnson.

"Neither of us slept last night," says Bibi, gesturing to Johnson's sister, Elinipe, who is also in attendance. "We are very thankful. We depend on Johnson, and his future is bright. He is always there to help me out."

From the age of two, Johnson was raised by Bibi and his older sister in a two-room compound, made from mud and sticks. For Bibi and Elinipe, today is not just a celebration of Johnson's graduation, it is also a celebration of the love they share, and how their love has helped shape Johnson into the person he has become.

"We sacrificed a lot to help Johnson study," says Elinipe. "I was there to offer moral support, advice and to pray."

"I told him - 'don't give up because you are the best, be a believer.'"

Elinipe was right to encourage Johnson. Last year, he was top of his class in Biology, Chemistry, Geography, and History.

"When I was young," says Johnson, "Bibi and my sister helped me out a lot - they were not ready to lose hope."

Bibi taught Johnson the importance of caring for others. Neighbours from the local community will often come to Bibi for advice about their problems.



Top Show Time: Students performing at Form 4 Celebration and Awards Day.

“Growing up, our house was full of laughter and love.”

As the beginning of the celebration ceremony approaches, Johnson rejoins his peers while Bibi and Elinipe assume their seats in the assembly hall.

The stage features enormous threads of blue and orange silk, dotted with stars. As the school choir begins singing, the 135 Form 4 students enter the hall, walking in two lines, parting the audience through the centre.

Bibi is impressed with the school uniforms, clapping enthusiastically. “They always look so smart,” she says.

The Headmaster, Erespidus Fikiri, addresses the Form 4 students.

“This day is about you and what you have achieved through hard work, determination and moments of creative inspiration,” says Mr Fikiri. “Today is just the beginning, it is where you go from here that matters.”

Awards are presented after the Headmaster’s address, and Johnson is announced as the highest achieving student in Mathematics, topping the entirety of the year level.

Johnson is a hard-working student, something he inherits from his sister. Outside the classroom, he spends thirty hours studying every week. Often he can be found in the library reading books by the likes of Edward de Bono, the famed physician and psychologist.

“I’m looking towards the future now,” says Johnson. “The next step is to become an engineer.”

Another Form 4 student, Semu, takes the stage to give a speech on behalf of his classmates.

“We would like to say a word of thanks to our beloved sponsors and donors,” says Semu. “School founder Mama Gemma, headmaster, level coordinator, teachers, parents and our fellow students.”

Semu continues, “you helped us become a better version of ourselves and everything we achieved is all because of you.”



Finally, the students are applauded individually as they are presented with their certificates.

To conclude, the Form 4 Class of 2019 take the stage, singing: “good bye, good bye, we will miss you, we thank you, good bye!”

St Jude’s supports the brightest, poor students. You can help educate more students like Johnson by **donating today.**

Bottom Enjoying the Ceremony: Some Form 4 students in high spirits.





Top Left Reap What You Sow: Alice and her parents work on their vegetable farm.



Top Right Proud Parents: Alice's parents credit St Jude's for helping them to start their business.



Planting the Seed

St Jude's education helps Alice's family grow a successful local business

When a student receives a free, high-quality education at The School of St Jude it helps lift their whole family out of a life of poverty and this is best illustrated by Form 6 student Alice's family.

The seed was first planted when Alice joined in 2006 as a Standard 1 student. Her family was living in a small room in her grandfather's home and her parents were concerned about how they were going to give their daughter an education.

"Oh I remember bringing Alice to the student selection day myself, I carried her on my shoulders and when we got final word she had been accepted it was really good news for everyone in the family," Alice's father, John, smiled more than a decade on.

By a generous supporter of St Jude's sponsoring the 18-year-old's academic scholarship, Alice's family had opportunities they had previously only dreamt of.

"The money we saved by Alice getting a free scholarship allowed us to pay for Alice's younger sister to go to school and motivated me to get back to working," Alice's mum, Nice, quietly reflected.

Six years ago the family were able to start what has become a successful vegetable farm, buying some cattle and employing others from the community. The School of St Jude was one of their first customers before the school built their own shamba at Smith Secondary Campus.

Last year, St Jude's injected over AU\$6 million into the Tanzanian economy, supporting many families who operate businesses in the region.

"St Jude's really helped our business grow in the initial stages and those profits have helped us during the tough times. I am proud to say that we have been an example to our community, they have seen our hard work and success and admire the happy life we now live," Nice added.



Above Community Leaders: Alice's family was the first to be able to afford cattle in their community.

That success helped build the family a house. An achievement that Alice's father calls his proudest moment, other than watching his daughter excel at school.

"Lots of things that our family has done so far has been done because of St Jude's. I was finally able to start making my family a five-roomed home. A union of St Jude's staff even helped me in the building process to get the house to what you see today," John proudly shared while looking over his handiwork.

That handiwork, a family home, is a place Alice can be proud of. She will be one of the 80% of St Jude's graduates who would not meet the school's poverty criteria if they applied for a scholarship at the time of graduation. An indication that St Jude's is fulfilling its vision of fighting poverty through education.

"I am proud to say our family has been the most successful in our neighbourhood in changing our lives and it's all thanks to St Jude's," Alice shared.

Alice parents are happy for her to not take over the family business when she graduates next year however, instead supporting her to follow a career in the medical field.

"I get emotional when I think of how St Jude's has helped Alice academically. I cannot really imagine the joy when Alice walks across the stage at Form 6 Graduation, it will be like magic. I can't explain the joy and gratitude that I will have by then," John said wiping away tears.

"I want to be a dermatologist so people feel happy in their own skin," Alice explained, standing with her proud parents in their vegetable shamba.

A picture of a flourishing family and business, creating positive change in the community, thanks to St Jude's.

A donation to St Jude's helps students help their whole family.

Give today to increase our impact.



Below Future Leader: Alice will pursue a career in the medical field, thanks to her St Jude's education.





Above Engaging with students: Form 3 student receiving one-on-one instruction from Mr Polepole.

Below The Friendly Teacher: Mr Polepole begins his chemistry class.



Being a Teacher, and a Friend



Chemistry teacher, Victor Polepole, talks about his experience working at St Jude's and his philosophy behind education

The bell rings and Mr Victor Polepole ushers his Form 3 students into the Chemistry lab, waving his arms with more enthusiasm than a plane marshall at an airport – “welcome, welcome, welcome!”

Chairs screech as students assume their seats, opening their notebooks to a crisp new page. Mr Polepole, wearing a striped navy shirt, turns to write on the whiteboard.

“Today we are talking about compounds and metals,” he says.

Despite this being his fourth ninety-minute lesson for the day, Mr Polepole is pulsing with energy as his marker scrawls without pause across the whiteboard.

He has loved Chemistry since he was a teenager when his older sister, Riziki, would tutor him about Topic Volumetric Analysis.

In Kiswahili, ‘polepole’ means ‘slowly’ however, Victor Polepole’s classes are anything but that. As he talks to his students, he bounces around the room, like a metallic ball in a pinball machine. One minute he is standing underneath a diagram of a synapse, the next he will be weaving between the students’ desks, his hands a whirl of action.

“Who can tell us the meaning of the word ‘metal’?” he asks the students.

The class hesitates, but Mr Polepole smiles inviting one of his students to stand and respond.

“Metal can conduct heat and electricity,” says a student named Sule.

As a teacher, Mr Polepole’s approach is to be friendly believing this will encourage his pupils to open up.



"We are not the enemies of the students," laughs Mr Polepole. "Here at St Jude's we are their friend."

"We give the students a task to do," he says. "But instead of using force we give them the confidence to speak, and to ask questions - to be free."

When Mr Polepole was a 13-year-old student his teacher caned his arm for not answering a question – the experience left him with scars on his arm.

"At St Jude's we teach students without giving them corporal punishment," says Mr Polepole. "We also learn how to help students coming from a poor environment."

Since arriving at St Jude's in 2015, Mr Polepole has quickly gained a reputation as one of the school's finest teachers.

"He's the best Chemistry teacher in our school," says Form 3 student, Abbas. "He knows how to prepare us for the national exams."

In 2017, Mr Polepole's Form 4 class climbed into the top ten in the country for Chemistry. In recognition of this achievement, School Founder Gemma Sisia presented him with a goat at school assembly, a tradition in Tanzania.

He keeps photos from this day on his laptop and considers it the proudest day of his teaching career.

As Mr Polepole continues to ping around the classroom, the students remain hunched over their books, elbows out, taking notes relentlessly.

Mr Polepole is delighted to discover that one of his students has the surname 'Aluminate' – which is a chemical compound.

He rushes to the whiteboard, pointing to a list of compounds.

"Would you name your children after any of these?" he asks the students jokingly, with a toothy grin.

The students debate which compound they would choose; Mr Polepole, on the other hand, has already made up his mind.

"If I have a son or daughter," he says. "I think I will name them after Zincate."

Without dedicated teachers, our students wouldn't get the quality education they need to become the future engineers and doctors they dream of being. Your donations make this possible, [donate today](#).



Above Tanzanian Tradition: Mr Polepole receives a goat from School Founder, Gemma Sisia and Academic Manager, Mr Mcharo.

Below Talking Compounds: Continuing the discussion about metals and compounds.





Above The DANA Team: The designers and models of Design A New Africa (DANA).

Proud Africans

This year's Cultural Day focused on art, culture and employment

Streamers crackle around the assembly hall like fireworks; it is teeming with rain, but no one seems to notice. Today is the tenth annual Cultural Day at Smith Secondary Campus.

In front of the stage sits the entirety of Smith Campus, swaying to the beat of Tanzanian bongo flava music, blaring from speakers.

The theme for this year is art, culture and employment.

Two Form 4 students, Semu and Jessica, take the stage: "say, 'I'm African and I'm proud!'" they project to the crowd.

"I'm African and I'm proud!" the audience responds.

"Our art and culture is an opportunity for employment," says Semu. "It is now our chance to use it."

Throughout the day, hundreds of students will take the stage performing traditional dances, dramatic stage plays (ngonjera), fashion shows, and showcasing artwork.

Backstage stands Faith, who is the leader of a group called Wakereketwa (which ironically means 'bored' in Swahili). They will soon be performing a family-based ngonjera featuring a story local to her east African coastal origins.

'This is the day where Tanzanians express their feelings,' says Faith, who is dressed in an ankle-length dress splashed with a bright palette of colours, and topped with a kilemba (Swahili for turban) carefully wrapped around her head.

As the morning transitions into the afternoon, everyone's attention turns to the much-anticipated fashion show.

"It feels so good to be a part of it," says Agnes, a Form 6 student who is modelling for a group called Design a New Africa (DANA). "Everyone always waits for the fashion show."

Both spectators and participants love the fashion show, with the event maintaining a strong tradition over the years. The designers prepare for weeks, using their weekends and afternoons to producing their outfits and work on their designs.

"We are so excited," says Elay, who alongside her friend, Gift, are the co-designers of DANA. "I slept for thirty minutes last night."



DANA have won the fashion show for the past two years and are aiming for a three-peat.

Upon finishing school, Gift has set her sights on studying Fashion and Design; while Elay wants to study Law.

As the shows begins, students stride onto the stage, chins held up proudly, wearing colour coordinated outfits.

Creativity and originality abound, with highlights including patterned face and body paint, rippling colours of bright green and yellow, and a student wearing a jumpsuit made of magazine clippings.

At the end of the show, the winner is announced: DANA, for a third year in a row.

Pandemonium ensues, Elay and Gift hug each other and rush onto the stage to accept their award; the crowd are on their feet and whooping.

"If you want to show your talent," says Elay. "You need to take the chances the school provides."

The rain has now eased off, and the celebration continues.



Left African Pride: One of many students who put a lot of work into their face paint. **Right Traditional Dance:** Students performing a traditional African dance.

Below Three-peat: Elay and Gift reacting to being announced as 2019 winners of the Fashion Show.



Help St Jude's support students to achieve their dreams of tomorrow by **sponsoring a student today.**





Students teaching adults



This year a record number of Standard 7 students volunteered their time to help out around the school

Recently, the Standard 7 students finished their national exams, ranking in the top 0.3% of Tanzania. A fantastic achievement that saw St Jude's rise 30 places in the rankings.

One would assume the students would want a well earned rest – however, this is not the case, with 45 students voluntarily applying to help out around the school.

Every year, upon completing exams, St Jude's offers the opportunity for Standard 7 students to volunteer for a range of activities. This year, a major focus has been for the students to teach English and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to the bus drivers and cooks employed by the school.

"It's a way to put the teaching spirit in them," says Deputy Headmaster of Operations, Sebastian Gitbang. "The students get to use what they learn in class."

Left Learning and Fun: One of the St Jude's cooks learning about laptops.

Mr Gitbang originally planned to have 20 students participate in the volunteer program but was overwhelmed with applications, having to expand the program to include 45 students.

One of those students is Jackline, 14, who recently received straight A's for her national exams. Jackline has been teaching bus drivers how to type.

"I like teaching because I learn new things," says Jackline. "Before I taught them, I had to teach myself first because I'd never typed before."

Jackline has found her students to be receptive and enthusiastic during classtime.

"They are always doing their best to speak English," says Jackline. "Whenever they ask questions, they will ask in English."

Cornel, another teenage Standard 7 student, has been teaching English, and has a newfound appreciation for teachers.

“It’s important to have confidence,” says Cornel. “To be a good teacher you need to trust yourself, have knowledge of the topic, and be confident.”

Cornel, alongside his peers Loveness, Amina, and Karen, have all been teaching cooks and bus drivers.

The cooks and bus drivers, who mostly speak Swahili, have now mastered how to introduce themselves and greet people.

In Tanzania, being able to speak English is an important skill because it opens up more options for employment. This means students from St Jude’s take a particular pride in their English skills.

Moving forward, Mr Gitbang sees this program as essential in preparing the students for when they graduate and move onto Beyond St Jude’s (BSJ), and participate in the Community Service Year.

“It’s good to prepare them now,” says Mr Gitbang. “So when they finish school they can give back by teaching in government schools.”

For now, Mr Gitbang has his hands full as the volunteers are proving to be in high demand.

“I just got another email,” says Mr Gitbang. “The students do such a good job, they are in demand. I’m always receiving emails asking if they can help out.”



Above Confident cook: The students’ teaching has been so successful, that some of the cooks can now work on their own.

Instilling a pride for education is an important part of the St Jude’s tradition.

Help continue this tradition by **sponsoring a students’ scholarship today.**



Above Greetings: Teaching the finer points of “hello” and “good bye”.

Below Driving ahead: St Jude’s bus driver being taught how to prepare a Word document.





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