



# St Jude's News

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**Top** Happy to Be Back: (From left) Samson, Daudi, Joshua and Daniel at Smith Secondary Campus.

# Back to School

A look at how students are adjusting back at school after the shutdown caused by COVID-19

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**Left Adapting to Masks:** Daniel adapting to the challenges of wearing a face mask.  
**Right Ready to Study Hard:** Daudi is prepared to focus on his studies until December.

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# Back to School

A look at how students are adjusting back at school after the shutdown caused by COVID-19

The new academic year has started for A Level students and Form 6 students are currently doing their regional exams. Walking towards the shade at Smith Campus is Joshua, Daniel and Daudi, Form 6 students who've just finished their regional examination for that day, joined by Samson who is in Form 4.

Cracking a joke about how hard the physics paper was, Joshua said, "Today's exam was difficult. We had to leave some questions worth ten marks unanswered because it was a topic that we haven't covered yet. Starting a new academic year is a bit of a challenge for me because we still have to cover some of the Form 5 topics."

"Honestly, it feels great to be back at school. I felt like my brain was becoming slow and I was a kindergarten student learning to read and write by the time I'm back. It was a difficult period."

"We had our study packs but it's not the same thing. I believe you need a supporter, a teacher, a school and lesson materials to be able to study properly. We are glad that the school is open again," Joshua added.

Agreeing with Joshua's sentiments, Daniel said, "Life at home was really challenging. I prefer coming back to school, and I never want to go for a holiday again until I graduate. I feel safe here more than when I'm home."

"For me, the most difficult part was to wear the face masks the whole day and washing hands regularly. When I left, this wasn't the culture but I had to adapt," he added.

Schools across Tanzania, including St Jude's, were mandated by the government to close on 16 March and all students had to return home. Having to stay home for over three months, Samson and Daudi said they had a tough time coping when they returned to school.



“When I got back, having to stick to the school’s timetable was challenging.” To make up for the lost time all students are required to do an additional two hours of learning per day as directed by the government, “this has made it even more difficult for me to adjust,” Samson said.

Daudi who was also of the same opinion added that, “Although it was tough, the teachers had tests prepared for us when we returned to keep ahead in our learning.”

To support the students, St Jude’s had prepared and delivered four rounds of study packs for all students to continue learning while they were at home. These included lesson notes, worksheets and even mock exams. Joshua, Samson, Daniel and Daudi all agreed that the study packs were extremely helpful, affirming that the packs were a reminder of their studies and priorities, and that St Jude’s truly cares for them.

“The study packs were indicators of us going back to school. Before the packs, I would spend most of my time doing different chores around the house and helping my parents with some of their work. When the packs arrived, this helped me to re-focus on my studies. It was the best idea from St Jude’s,” Joshua said.

“My parents took the study packs very seriously. Before the study packs, it was hard for me to study. I would probably study for two minutes and

get discouraged especially when I knew there was no grading. But the thought of teachers preparing, printing and delivering the packs and that the school was incurring cost in doing so just to support its students, this made me study hard as if I was studying for a real test.” Daudi said with a soft chuckle.

Now that the students are back at school, they’ll be studying hard until December. One thing is certain: despite all the challenges St Jude’s students faced due to COVID-19, education remained top priority.

**Want to know more about how students are adjusting now they’re back at school?**

**Hear from Mr Musa, a St Jude’s teacher, as he speaks to Gemma about the school shutdown and the new academic calendar in the latest episode of our podcast.**

**[Listen on our website.](#)**



**Above No Student Left Behind:** Joshua grateful for the study packs he received during the school shutdown caused by COVID-19.

**Below We’re All In This Together:** Form 6 students are enjoying working together in the library after three months away.





**Above Passion:** Baba leading by example at St Jude's Girls' Secondary School.

*\*The photos in this article were taken before the Tanzanian Government mandated all students and staff to wear masks.*



# A Leader by Nature

St Jude's alumni Baba is once again walking the corridors of St Jude's as a teacher, ensuring others can make the most of their free, quality education just as he did.

He was one of the first Beyond St Jude's scholars to graduate university but that doesn't mean Baba has cut any ties with St Jude's. In fact, it's quite the opposite. After graduating from university in November last year, Baba applied for a teaching position and is now teaching mathematics and ICT at St Jude's Girls' Secondary School.

"I hope I can help these students to perform well and pursue their dreams," Baba says.

Although his new position at St Jude's is his first official employment, teaching has been a common theme throughout Baba's educational journey.

"They say a teacher is a leader by nature. I like teaching but I didn't start teaching here at St Jude's, I started by teaching my young brothers and sisters at home."

Baba grew up in his family's Maasai boma in the district of Monduli, three hours drive from St Jude's Girls' Secondary School. His late father had seven wives - of which Baba's mother is the sixth - and 49 children. Baba is the first born to his mother, with five younger siblings.

"My home was like a school in itself. During the evenings, you would find many children studying there and I would organise my siblings and teach them some lessons."

He successfully completed his primary school education at a government school, excelling in mathematics. At secondary school he encountered challenges, like lack of teachers, that are all too familiar for students in under resourced government schools.

"In subjects where there was not any teacher, we used to teach each other. We'd say to each other 'you know algebra and I know fractions', so I'd go and teach fractions and you would go and teach algebra," he says.

"When I reached Form 4, one temporary physics teacher came to our school. I was a poor performer in physics because we had never had a physics teacher, but after he came we revised Form 3, Form 2 and Form 1 physics, trying to catch up. And I managed to pass!"

It was after receiving his above average national examination results that Baba heard about The School of St Jude and, after passing the entrance exam, was offered a place at St Jude's for Form 5.

In May 2015 Baba graduated from Form 6 and went on to join the Beyond St Jude's program, finding himself back in an overcrowded government school teaching mathematics during his voluntary Community Service Year.

After his Community Service Year Baba learned that he had been accepted into a Bachelor of Science with Education degree at the University of Dar es Salaam.



Inspired by the opportunities his education was affording him, he also became an active member of the University of Dar es Salaam's Maasai Students' Association, visiting Maasai regions and encouraging parents to take their children to school.

"We used to live in a very poor house so when I did my Community Service Year internship I used my stipend to improve it. Now I've managed to save some money and I'm helping my mother to build a house."

After finishing university he returned to Arusha and successfully applied for a teaching role at the girls' secondary school.

"This school changed my life totally, I'm employed here because of the education I received and I was even able to improve my family home. I am very lucky to join here again."

**You can sponsor a Beyond St Jude's tertiary scholarship and help to support many of Baba's younger peers who are just beginning their higher education journeys.**

**Below Family:** Baba's family is proud to have a university graduate in the family.



**Above Giving Back:** Baba helping his students in class, just like his teachers helped him.

**Below Achievement:** Baba feeling ecstatic after being the first in his family to graduate from university.







# The Pineapple – An Art Project



Take a seat inside an art lesson with Ms Edina, Smith Secondary Campus art teacher

*\*The photos in this article were taken before the Tanzanian Government mandated all students and staff to wear masks.*

“What do you see here?” asks Ms Edina, nodding towards her desk, as the class settles into their seats.

“A pineapple,” says one of the students.

Indeed, standing proudly at the centre of Ms Edina’s desk is an enormous pineapple, the size of a leopard’s head. The pineapple is strategically placed, so it can be seen from any point in the room.

“So, why did I start painting and drawing?” Ms Edina, an art teacher, ponders to the class. “Well, let me tell you a story.”

She starts to explain that when she was five years old she used to play a game called ‘Baba mdogo’ which means uncle in Swahili. Participants sit in a circle and sing a song, afterwards one person in the circle will name an object, anything they like, and the entire circle is given one minute to draw it. Whenever it was Ms Edina’s turn she would only ever name one thing – a pineapple.

Once Ms Edina began drawing, she couldn’t stop. Sometimes, she would even draw pineapples on the walls inside her family home, landing her in trouble with her parents.

“Now, today, as my students, I want you to draw a pineapple too!” says Ms Edina.

Only, on this occasion, students will not be drawing on walls, instead being given blank sheets of paper.

“I don’t want you to draw the pineapple exactly as it is,” Ms Edina adds. “I want you to improvise, I want you to use any colour you like, and I want you to use detail.”

“You have one hour!”



**Above All Smiles in the Art Class:** Ms Edina guiding her student during art lesson.

**Below A Room Full of Creativity:** Students’ art hangs on every wall in the room.







**Above Future Artists:** Students working on Ms Edina's assignment, the pineapple.  
**Below The Finished Product:** Students proudly showing their masterpieces.



The students begin rummaging around the classroom; picking up pencils, paintbrushes and anything else they can find. She then lists the principles of art as the students get to work.

The art room offers a serenity for the students, tucked away in a corner of the secondary campus, at the top of several flights of stairs. There is no conventional door to enter the art room, instead you brush through beaded curtains, a nod to the idea that the art room is always open. Inside, there are beautiful panoramic views of Mount Meru on one side, and rolling foothills on the other.

"So, what did you all draw when you were little?" asks Ms Edina to the class, as she works on her own pineapple.

"Cars!" "Dogs!" "Flowers!" "Potatoes!" students cry out.

The last response causes a stir amongst the students, and the class begin to exchange stories from their childhood. At 27 years of age, Ms Edina is one of the youngest teachers at St Jude's and enjoys an easy rapport with her students.

Two Form 6 students, Isaac and Lillian, involve themselves in Ms Edina's art classes outside of their normal timetable, as art is not an A Level subject, but they still like to join in. "I'm always painting in my spare time," says Isaac. "Madam Edina always supports us and she always challenges us to do more."

Lillian, who likes to draw whenever she is feeling stressed, agrees with Isaac. "Ms Edina never discourages us," says Lillian. "She will always say, 'you can do it!'"

During the school shutdown period due to the spread of COVID-19, Ms Edina continued to support her students in their art studies.

"When schools shutdown, I gave each of my students assignments and references for them to practise at home. Even though the schools were closed for over three months, the art packs that the students received proved to be helpful. I've seen a massive improvement in my student's with some coming back with fresh ideas."

However, with the introduction of an adjusted academic calendar, Ms Edina added, "currently it is tough for the students to make time to practise their art. But I do advise them to spare at least 30 minutes a day to brush up their craft."

Thanks to generous supporters, St Jude's is able to offer a rich curriculum with plenty of resources and teachers, like Ms Edina, to inspire our students. You can help by donating today!





# Even on the Weekend

Accounting teacher, Mr Somboka, talks about how he helped to get St Jude's into the top 10 in the country and why he chooses to help his students on weekends

It's 5am on a Sunday, pitch black outside, with no hint of light. Mr Somboka, the accounting teacher at St Jude's picks up his phone to turn off his alarm, the screen glowing on his face.

Most weekends, Mr Somboka volunteers his time, going into St Jude's to help his students.

His morning routine involves having a shower before eating his breakfast and, as the sun rises, he begins looking over his notes. Mr Somboka likes to meticulously prepare his lessons, reading absolutely everything that he can find.

At about half past nine, he says good-bye to his wife and two children, before arriving at St Jude's just before ten o'clock.



**Above Dedication:** Mr Somboka teaching his students on weekends.

As Mr Somboka arrives at St Jude's, he walks towards Room 10 of Block B where fourteen of his Form 6 students are waiting for him. Today's focus will be going over their previous exam.

After arriving, students begin approaching Mr Somboka's desk, he goes over each exam with them individually. Some of them come holding a letter which outlines what errors they made in the exam, and strategies they can use to improve.

"After receiving the letters I sit with them one after another and we talk," says Mr Somboka. "We find a way to solve a problem with each student."

Last year, St Jude's Form 6 accounting class made it into the top 10 schools in Tanzania and Mr Somboka identifies one key factor in this success.

"I came up with strategies on how students will love my subject," he says. "Accounting is everywhere!"

To connect with his students, Mr Somboka keeps his classes practical, relating the curriculum to the real world.

"If a student's dream is to be a business person I will ask them about managing their funds and turning a profit," says Mr Somboka. "They're the practical questions I ask my students."

Mr Somboka is one of four children, his parents taught him the value of being patient and believing in yourself.





**Above Left Aiming for the Top:** Mr Somboka instructing students in their core curriculum with hopes to get St Jude's into the top 10 in the country again.

**Above Right All Smiles and Hard Work:** Mr Somboka sitting in his office preparing for his next lesson.

**Below Working as a Team:** Mr Somboka helping to solve a problem with his students.



His family would work as a team, helping one another, in order to face their problems. This is an approach Mr Somboka has taken with him to St Jude's.

"We do everything as a team, for each department," says Mr Somboka. "If there's a student failing a business subject, we as a department will meet and help that student."

Teamwork and helping make up the spine of Mr Somboka's teaching philosophy, and are values that he passes onto his Form 6 students.

"I'm happy to see my students back in class after so long. My focus right now is to help the students cope after being home for over three months. Currently the students are doing regional examinations and once that's done, we will be going through all the past papers to prepare for the national examinations."

"I absolutely believe that this group of Form 6 students will make it into top 10 again because the students worked extra hard coming out of the coronavirus pandemic," says Mr Somboka.

On some days, Mr Somboka will be sitting in his office and hear a knock at the door. The person standing at the door will be a student, seeking help on an upcoming exam or even seeking counselling on what they are going through outside of school.

"One of the problems students have involve parents who are divorced and they will be sitting in class thinking about their mum and dad," says Mr Somboka. "I tell them that this is their parent's problems, and it is up to them to find their own future."

"Once they have found their own future, they can help their parents." He added, "My advice to all students is to focus on their priorities. They should always live based on St Jude's core values which are Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Kindness."



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