



St Jude's News

MARCH 2021



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Above Excited To See You!: Vivian, Head of Beyond St Jude's (Middle) with scholars in a university in Dar es Salaam.

Going the Extra Mile for our Scholars

Team members of the Beyond St Jude's program travel throughout Tanzania on tertiary visits.

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Going the Extra Mile for our Scholars

Team members of the Beyond St Jude's program travel throughout Tanzania on tertiary visits.

Three Beyond St Jude's (BSJ) dream teams headed out for their bi-annual tertiary visits where they visited more than 250 St Jude's Tertiary scholars in 14 regions across Tanzania.

BSJ is an optional, yet popular, scholarship program for our secondary school graduates and is made up of two parts. The program enables our graduates to give back to their communities in an educational context through a Community Service placement and then provides them with the funding they need to go on to access higher education.

Through the Tertiary Program, Form 6 graduates (A Level) are supported in their first higher education qualification; whether that be a degree, diploma or certificate course. A BSJ tertiary scholarship supports the graduates to continue on this transformative path, helping to cover tuition fees, scholars' accommodation, living expenses, study materials and costs of examinations.

The BSJ team provides year-round support to Tertiary scholars and visits them twice a year to check in on the scholars' welfare, academic progress, health and provide any support they may need.

"This time around we did about 294 visits across Tanzania. I spent a lot of time in Dar es Salaam because almost 60% of our scholars are based there," says Vivian, who oversees the entire BSJ team.

Vivian's team who visited Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Zanzibar further explains, "The first visit is to check up on the first year scholars who've just started university. The purpose of that is to make sure fees and accommodations are paid, registration has been done, and they are comfortably settling into their new academic journey."

"The second visit is to check up on the continuing scholars so we can get updates on how they are faring, what are their prospective plans for field placements and also to check if they've changed accommodation," Vivian clarifies.



Above Excited To See You!: Vivian, Head of Beyond St Jude's (Middle) with scholars in a university in Dar es Salaam.

Below Meet the Scholars: St Jude's Tertiary scholars in a university in Mwanza.





Left The Journey: Crossing the river to visit a tertiary scholar.



Right Dreaming Big: Albert, a third-year student and Prime Minister of his university in Mbeya, dreams of being a future leader.

BSJ currently has 294 tertiary scholars enrolled in higher education institutions across Tanzania, of whom about 89 are expected to graduate this November.

Sharing her highlight, Vivian says, “One of our scholars is an assistant lecturer teaching ICT. Currently, he has volunteered to fill the gap of a sick lecturer, teaching the class full-time until the lecturer returns, and a student at the same time. This says a lot about St Jude’s spirit of giving. Our students are learning the importance of giving back and you can see the ripple effect of the school is transcending beyond.”

Francis, who supervises BSJ Higher Education officers, was part of the team that visited scholars in Arusha, Dodoma, Kahama, Nzega, Shinyanga and Mwanza, regions in Northern and Central Tanzania. They spent 14 days on the road and covered over 2,500km.

“We travelled to six different regions visiting more than 20 scholars. Accessing some of the universities in these regions was a bit challenging. For example, Mwanza region is famously known as ‘The Rock City’ and it’s indeed very rocky. The roads were so rocky that cars could not get through and we had to walk up to 30mins at times to reach a scholar’s university” says Francis.

“These are my first tertiary visits and I was happy to see the scholars, especially the first-year scholars who are settled in and happy. Most of our scholars choose to live together and have a culture of helping each other. This gives me hope that they will be fine and are safe.”

“Some of the continuing scholars extended their helping hand by supporting the new scholars to settle in. This shows a lot of unity among St Jude’s community of scholars,” he adds.

Francis believes, that by visiting our scholars every year it helps to understand more about a scholar’s life.

Reiterating on how remote the areas are, Lulu, who provides administrative support to the BSJ team and scholars, says, “My team and I visited Moshi, Tanga, Singida, Iringa and Mbeya, that’s the Northern and Southern side of Tanzania... almost 4,000km of driving for 14 days! These places are beautiful, but getting to see the scholars was challenging. There are some places you have to take a Boda Boda (A motorcycle taxi in Kiswahili) to get to a university. All in all, it had to be done and we managed to visit all our scholars.”



“Some of our tertiary scholars are holding high positions in their universities such as ministers and high positions in their university governing bodies. For example, Albert, a third-year scholar at a university in Mbeya, is Prime Minister of his university but he’s looking forward to vying for the presidency in the upcoming university elections,” Lulu adds.

All in all, the three teams travelled over 8,000kms and visited 294 Tertiary scholars, with each team enduring an extremely tough but rewarding journey. The stories from the visits prove that St Jude’s scholars continue to lead and reach for their dreams, even beyond the school gates.

Support a St Jude’s graduate through higher education and help educate the future, community focused leaders of Tanzania.



**Sponsor a
Beyond St Jude’s
scholarship today.**



The St Jude's Special

Meet St Jude's Form 6 graduates and ambassadors, Ester and Victor, in an online event with Gemma.

The School of St Jude is coming to you! Meet Gemma and some of our amazing graduates at your school, church, Rotary Club... or even in your very own living room.

St Jude's is bringing Tanzania to you this year with The St Jude's Special. On Thursday, 29 April at 9am AEST, you'll be able to view an exciting and inspirational show, which will be live for just 96 hours.

Usually at this time of year, Founder, Gemma Sisia, along with a St Jude's graduate ambassador, would be making their way around Australia to connect with supporters and share the news about St Jude's. This year, Gemma, two extraordinary graduates, Ester and Victor, and some of our previous ambassadors will be making their way to your screens, wherever in the world you are.

Ester and Victor will be telling their stories in their own words, and while they tell them best, we'd like to introduce them to you today!

Both Ester and Victor are St Jude's Form 6 graduates from the Class of 2020, and commenced at St Jude's in primary school. They're excited to connect with the supporters who have made their education possible and continue to support them as they embark on their lives after school.

Victor and Ester are now midway through their Community Service Year (CSY) during which they are volunteering as teachers in local government schools. The CSY is part of the Beyond St Jude's (BSJ) Program, where participants spend one year giving back to the community before commencing further studies. Victor explains, "I am in a government school voluntarily teaching physics to Form 2 and Form 3. There are about 40 to 60 students in a class... two to three times as many as at St Jude's."

Ester is also teaching in a government school, where she teaches Civics to Form 1 students, about 300 in total. She's been looking forward to her CSY for a long time and loves that she can make a difference in her community.



Above A Volunteer Teacher: Victor is spending his CSY teaching in a government school.

Below Ready to Share My Story: Ester joins Victor as an ambassador for The St Jude's Special.



“My brother and sister graduated from this school. There are good students here, but they lack resources... I wish sometimes I could have another year here!”

While the show doesn't require air travel or changing time zones like the usual tour, it will still put the graduates' public speaking skills to the test as they share their stories with you, our international supporters.

“At first, I was very nervous about it,” says Victor, “But then I remembered that I am a teacher and I am always speaking to students. So I imagine that everyone watching is a student and then I can do it.”

Ester too is ready to speak to St Jude's supporters from around the world. But she wasn't always so confident. “My family were surprised when I told them about this. My mum was like, ‘Are you going to be able to do this? You're very shy,’” she laughs, before continuing.

“I want to say to people; St Jude's taught me how to live, how to be confident. I want to say to supporters; don't stop what you're doing, even though you're far away. You are changing the lives of thousands of people here in Tanzania.”

You'll love meeting Ester and Victor and hearing their stories.



There'll be some familiar faces at The St Jude's Special too. When you join the event, you'll get to reconnect with 2020 Ambassador, Judith, 2019 Ambassador, Godwin, 2017 Ambassador, Winrose and 2016 Ambassador, Dorice. For those of you who met these ambassadors on previous tours, there's a lot of exciting news to catch up on!

Victor and Ester will lead an engaging conversation with each of the past graduates so you can get to know them even better – and they already have their questions prepared!

“I'm really excited to see them,” exclaims Victor. “I have lots of questions, like what are their experiences of moving to another country to study?”

Of course, the show is your chance to hear from Gemma about how St Jude's began and the school's progress over the last 12 months. A passionate presenter with an inspiring story to tell, Gemma loves to speak about St Jude's, and new and returning supporters will be captivated.

If you can have gatherings where you live, why not make an event of it? If events aren't possible (or a cosy night on the couch sounds more appealing) you can easily watch at home. However you choose to view The St Jude's Special, one thing is certain; you don't want to miss it!



Above Where it All Began: Victor and Ester back in 2007 when they started at St Jude's.

If you'd like to catch up with Gemma, Ester, Victor and St Jude's ambassadors from past years, be sure to sign up at the link below. **The link will be available for 72 hours, from Thursday 29 April at 9am AEST to Monday 3 May at 9am AEST.** Or, if you're in the US the link will be available from Wednesday 28 April at 3pm PDT to Sunday 2 May at 10pm PDT.

Sign up to attend The St Jude's Special with hosts, Ester and Victor and special guest appearances from Gemma and past St Jude's ambassadors.

Sign up to watch The St Jude's Special



Student Selection at St Jude's

Students from near and far make their way to St Jude's Form 5 Student Selection Day.

This morning, you can sense the nerves and excitement as hundreds of government school students arrive and take their place in long lines of their peers. Some, who live very far away, even arrived yesterday evening, and spent the night at St Jude's Boarding Campus.

They came by bus, motorbike and even on foot; some travelled for up to 12 hours from Arusha, Manyara and Kilimanjaro regions. They all made the journey for one reason; to sit our academic examinations in the hope of receiving an A Level secondary academic scholarship to St Jude's.

In Tanzania, there are only around 600 A Level secondary schools compared to almost 17,000 primary schools, so places are highly sought after. In particular, the competition for St Jude's scholarships is strong, as they give students a chance to receive a quality education, completely free of charge. Our selection process, based on academic results, poverty and school values allows us to identify the brightest, poorest students, in line with our mission.

For many of these students, today will be the beginning of an exciting journey. Form 5 is the final St Jude's entry point; the last stage at which government school students can join the school to receive a free, quality education. In Tanzania, Form 5 is the second last year of secondary school and marks the beginning of Advanced (A Level) studies.

St Jude's Student Selection Process begins with an invitation to attend a Student Selection Day. Today's students were invited following exceptional performance in Tanzania's Form 4 National Examinations in physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics.



Above An Early Start: Eager students arrive at St Jude's from 7:00am on Student Selection Day.

Below Registration: St Jude's staff review student's registration documents.





Above Filing Extraordinaire: Happiness, a member of the Community Relations team, is in charge of the team filing for all exams and registration documents.

“We take the results from NECTA (Tanzania’s National Exam Authority) for the combinations we want. Then we invite them by writing letters to their headmasters and the students are informed that they are invited to the exams at our school,” explains Happiness.

After their arrival and registration, the students proceed into the school for a fortifying cup of tea and a scone. Then, it’s time for an introduction by Mr Mcharo, Academic Manager, and before the students know it, the exams begin. Today, students are sitting down to three, one-hour exams.

As they finish each exam, it is relayed to an efficient team of teachers who mark it and pass it on to staff who enter each score into a database, then file it under each student’s name. After three hours, the students hear the command, “Pencils down,” and know that the hardest part of the day is over.

In the midst of all this marking and filing is Happiness... “What we are doing today is filing all the exams, and all the information about each student. Each student writes where they come from, where they go to school, how many kilometres from their home to a bus stop. And all that information and their exams go in one file,” says a busy Happiness.

In a remarkably short time, thanks to the hard work and organisation of staff, like Happiness, the exams are marked and the scores collated. The students who have achieved the required exam mark are notified, and move onto the next stage, when a small army of St Jude’s staff reviews their documents to confirm their age, grades and identity.

Soon, this stage is complete, and approximately 200 students are one step closer to an A Level academic scholarship at St Jude’s. In the coming weeks, St Jude’s staff will visit their homes to assess their living situations. Those who show the greatest need during House Checks will then be offered a scholarship to receive free, quality education at St Jude’s.

This afternoon, as they prepare to return home, the students are tentatively excited. They know the value of a St Jude’s scholarship, and the transformation it could bring to their lives, and that of their families.

While Form 5 is the last point at which a student can enter St Jude’s, it’s an incredibly important entry point. The last two years of secondary education are crucial for students who wish to pursue higher education. At the same time, as students grow older, the pressure to leave school and work to help support their families increases. An A Level scholarship to St Jude’s can help break this cycle and allow students to finish their secondary education. Following this, the opportunities only increase; many St Jude’s Form 6 graduates proceed to higher education with the support of the Beyond St Jude’s Program.

Form 5 Student Selection Day for 2021 has been busy for staff and prospective students alike, but it’s another important step in St Jude’s journey in fighting poverty through education.

Sponsor an A Level academic scholarship
and support a St Jude’s student in the
final stage of their secondary
school journey.





Left Let's See!: Faraja Nyalandu, a Tanzanian Social Entrepreneur intrigued by the students' experiments.

Right Welcome to the girls' school: Irene (L), Head Girl, guiding Faraja (R) through St Jude's Girls' Secondary School.



Visit from a Local Legend

Faraja Nyalandu, a prominent social entrepreneur in Tanzania visits The School of St Jude!

Whether our visitors are touring one of our beautiful campuses, or participating in interactive class activities, such as art, music, PE or in the library... a visit to The School of St Jude is always an unforgettable experience.

Faraja Nyalandu, a prominent social entrepreneur in Tanzania who is passionate about promoting systemic transformation in digital learning in primary and secondary education in Africa graced St Jude's with her presence to get a first-hand experience on how the school is changing the lives of 1,800 students and their families.

Greeted by Odemari, a cheerful and enthusiastic host from the Visitors Team, Faraja was led to the Visitors Lounge to learn about the school's history.

The Visitor Lounge is a hub of activity and information. The eye-catching timeline provides an overview of significant events in St Jude's history. Within a few walking paces, along the back of the room you can see the progression of the school community.

Faraja, who is well-known for developing social and educational programs in Tanzania, took a brief tour of Sisia Campus, stopping by the library, computer labs and the science class.

"I've visited Smith Campus before but I never thought Sisia Campus would be this big," said Faraja with great delight.

To show her around the girls' school, Irene, Form 4 Head Girl, was excited to lead the tour and meet Faraja, who is a role model to many students in Tanzania.

On entering the computer lab, Faraja received a warm, cheerful greeting from the overjoyed students who were delighted to meet a local legend.

Faraja told Irene, "I went to a boarding school as well. I used to love being part of the student government. Being a school leader gives you the confidence and the skill set needed to lead others even after school."

The tour didn't end at the girls' school; Faraja also had a chance to visit and have a chat with Vivian, Beyond St Jude's (BSJ) Manager.

"The Beyond St Jude's program is an eye-opener for me. I didn't know that the school has such a wonderful program for the graduates," Faraja said.

She further suggested, "I truly believe the program paired with digital learning can equip the students with all the necessary tools to also be able to give back to the community as they do in their Community Service placements in the government schools."

BSJ is an optional, yet popular, scholarship program for the Form 4 graduates (O Level) and Form 6 graduates (A Level). It is comprised of two parts; the program enables graduates to give back to their communities in an educational context as volunteers through a Community Service placement as one way of giving back in appreciation for the free education they received at St Jude's. Those who successfully complete their Community Service placement may then be eligible to receive a BSJ scholarship to pursue higher education, enabling them to become the future professionals that their country needs.

Advising the students, Faraja said, "To be an entrepreneur is not easy, but like anything else in life you have to work hard to reach your goals make your dreams come true. I was never good at dancing, acting or singing in school, but I was always a bookworm and loved the concept of how technology can transform lives. I built on that and here I am today."

"I enjoyed my visit so much today and meeting the students. I promise to come back and bring my children along so they can have the same experience."

A visit to St Jude's can open your mind; from inside the classroom to beyond the school gates, you'll see first-hand how St Jude's is fighting poverty through education. The enthralling itinerary comprises many activities, including a visit to a student's home, allowing visitors to create a memorable experience and showing them the difference the school is making in the lives of students, their families and the wider community.

We hope international travel will be possible again soon... **enquire about visiting** and experience St Jude's spirit for yourself. Visit our website for more information.



Above First-hand Experience: Vivian (L), Beyond St Jude's Manager, explaining the BSJ program to Faraja (R).

Below A Conversation with a Smile: Faraja chatting with students during her library visit.





The School of St Jude

Fighting poverty
through education



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



www.schoolofstjude.org