



# St Jude's News

OCTOBER 2021



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**Above** Coming Together as a Community: St Jude's students, teachers and staff come together to celebrate St Jude's Day.



The School of St Jude is a project of The East Africa Fund

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

## It's St Jude's Day!

A day to give thanks in the spirit of our school's namesake, Saint Jude, and the one day of the year when all three schools come together to celebrate.

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# It's St Jude's Day!

A day to give thanks in the spirit of our school's namesake, Saint Jude, and the one day of the year when all three schools come together to celebrate.

As you approach the dining hall at St Jude's Girls' Secondary School, beautiful voices are heard singing and offering a thanksgiving prayer to St Jude.

Every October, The School St Jude celebrates St Jude's Day to honour the patron saint after which the school is named.

Students, teachers, staff and guests gather as a community and observe the school's culture, with a focus on giving back to the community and those in need.

"To me, St Jude's Day is a day to commemorate what St Jude, the patron saint, did for the community. This is a day we express those good deeds," says Mr Elimringi, Headmaster of the girls' secondary school.

**Below The Host with the Most:** Mr Elimringi, headmaster of the girls' secondary school hosting St Jude's Day for the first time.



**Above St Jude's Day Winners:** A traditional dance group wins the competition for St Jude's Day.

"During this day, we have a photo taken of the entire school and then we hold a special thanksgiving mass. In the course of the mass, our students, through their parents, offer items such as sugar, soap, toys and more, which are then donated back to the community and those in need," explains Mr Elimringi.

"The purpose of the offerings is to instill a spirit of giving in our students. It is important that they are ready to sacrifice for other people the way that our supporters sacrifice so that they can receive a free, quality education," he adds.

It was the first time that this special day was held at the girls' secondary school. "Being the youngest of the three schools, I feel honoured and proud to host St Jude's Day," says Mr Elimringi.

"I'm pleased with how the mass went. We prepared a delicious, special lunch for people to enjoy, and the entertainment was wonderful. As part of St Jude's Day tradition, students compete in traditional dance, drama, and singing. Students take today's competition seriously as each hopes to walk away with a trophy," states Elimringi.

"We performed a traditional dance today," says Magdalena with excitement.

Magdalena, a Form 2 student, is one of the winners along with her teammates. "Our performance was awesome. This is why we won," says Magdalena.

"There was a lot of competition today, and other groups also performed well. So, I'm glad we won because winning always feels good," she says with a smile.





**Above Thanksgiving:** Students giving an offering at mass on St Jude's Day.

**Below St Jude's Day Festivities:** Winfrida, the Supporter Relations Officer, after enjoying the St Jude's festivities.



St Jude's Day is filled with festivities, which students, teachers and non-academic staff can enjoy.

"It is my first time attending St Jude's Day," says Winfrida, who works in the Head Office helping to communicate with our supporters.

"It's a beautiful and memorable day. The highlight of my day was seeing the students from all three schools come together to celebrate this day as well as the teachers and non-academic staff," says Winfrida.

"It was moving! One of the biggest memories I will carry from this day was how students gave offerings during the mass so that whatever they offered could be given to those in need. This demonstrates that our school extends its helping hand beyond its borders, as well," she adds.

The act of giving is one of the pillars of St Jude's culture and is an important component of creating strong, moral leaders of Tanzania.

Your spirit of giving is helping us educate the future community-focused leaders of Tanzania.

**Sponsor or donate** today to support St Jude's students' academic scholarships.







**Above Left A Presidential Vaccination:** President Samia receives a COVID-19 vaccination in July 2021. Credit: **The Citizen**



**Above Right After their Vaccinations:** Liz and Moses rolled up their sleeves and received the COVID-19 vaccine.

# COVID-19 Vaccination in Tanzania

Learn more about the vaccine rollout and optional vaccines at St Jude's.



It would be hard to find an Australian who hasn't got one eye on current COVID-19 vaccination rates. Many supporters have reached out to St Jude's to ask about how Tanzania is addressing the pandemic and the availability of vaccines.

While eligible Australians were first able to access vaccinations in February this year, the vaccine didn't become available in Tanzania until late July. The cost of purchasing vaccines has put them out of reach of many developing countries, but when Samia Suluhu Hassan assumed the presidency of Tanzania in March, she made sourcing vaccines a priority.

After talks with her US counterparts, President Samia secured a donation of one million Johnson and Johnson vaccines for Tanzanians with hopes for more to follow. Arusha, where St Jude's is located, was among the first regions to receive vaccines due to its status as a tourist destination. The vaccine requires a single dose and is freely available to those adults who wish to be vaccinated.

Since the arrival of the vaccines almost 900,000 Tanzanians have been vaccinated, however this accounts for a small fraction of the total population of almost 60 million people. Around 1.5% of Tanzanians have been vaccinated, in comparison to 75.5% of Australians over 16 years old.

St Jude's staff were among some of the first to be vaccinated. When it was found that staff who wished to be vaccinated were struggling to find time during their busy days to visit a vaccination centre, St Jude's organised for two busloads of staff to visit a vaccination centre in Arusha.







**Above** Liz was among the first St Jude's staff members to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

**Below** Moses decided to get his COVID-19 vaccination in September.



Liz, who works in the Head Office, thanking the school's generous donors, was looking forward to receiving her vaccination.

"I contracted COVID-19 twice, but the first time was the worse experience I have ever been through. I stayed in bed for almost two weeks. So, when the opportunity to get vaccinated presented itself, I didn't think twice because I didn't want to get sick anymore." Liz explains of her decision.

In late September, St Jude's staff requested for another vaccination day. This time, the school provided an opportunity for those who wished to get vaccinated at Sisia Campus, the site of the primary and girls' secondary schools.

Moses, a gardener at Sisia Campus, was one of the staff members who decided to get the vaccination during September after seeing many of his colleagues get vaccinated the previous month.

"I decided to get vaccinated to protect my health," he shares. "It did hurt at first but only for the first day. I feel so happy and safe now that I am vaccinated." (Translated from Kiswahili)

Still other staff have organised their own vaccinations outside of work hours.

Of surveyed staff throughout the St Jude's, more than 35% are vaccinated and a further 34% plan to get their vaccination soon.

As a country which relies heavily on tourism, Tanzania has struggled during travel restrictions. Many St Jude's students' parents have lost work as porters, guides and hotel cleaners as the flow of tourists stopped abruptly. However, the country's slowly growing vaccination rate offers hope for the return of safari-goers, Kilimanjaro-climbers and most importantly, visitors to St Jude's.

It's inarguable that Tanzania's vaccination rate is far lower than those of developed nations, like the US and Australia. However, it's expected that vaccination rates will continue to increase as more vaccines become available. Vaccination remains entirely optional for St Jude's staff and Tanzanian citizens in general.

We look forward to welcoming visitors back to St Jude's soon. If you'd like to visit us and experience first-hand our success in fighting poverty through education, please contact us at [visitor@schoolofstjude.co.tz](mailto:visitor@schoolofstjude.co.tz)





# A Month of Exciting Events

Celebrating culture, graduations and alumni.

Is there such a thing as too many celebrations? We don't think so!

October has been a month of celebrations here at St Jude's. Each weekend has included an exciting event, commencing with Cultural Day at St Jude's Secondary School, followed by Form 4 Farewells for our Form 4 boys and girls and concluding with the Alumni Reunion.





## Cultural Day at St Jude's Secondary School

Tanzania is home to more than 100 tribes, 69 of which are represented in the St Jude's student body. Each of these tribes has its own songs, dances, foods and fashions, which makes Cultural Day a diverse celebration.

This year, as always, St Jude's Secondary School's Cultural Day was a colourful event. Students performed traditional dances, sang songs in Kiswahili, and modelled their own handmade fashions in the hopes of being crowned the winners of their section.

Tumaini, in Form 6, presented a selection of original outfits for the design section. "I have always been a designer," she explains. "When I was a kid I'd spend time with tailors in my village making ragdolls and outfits for those dolls. My fashion designs carry a message, this year my collection was based on preventive measures against COVID-19. I spent my time creating designs that could attract people but still raise awareness of the preventive measures against COVID-19," Tumaini reflected.

In the audience were students, community members, staff and invited guests from a local cultural centre. Although Cultural Day is a lot of fun, it is also a competition, and the students were all hoping to win. In the end, the Bugana Group were crowned winners of the poetry section, Graacious Group won both the dance and choir sections and Swahili Fashion, Tumaini's fashion line, won the design section. All winners received an enthusiastic round of applause!

The high-energy event finished with a delicious lunch, including many different cultural specialties.



**Above Jump for Joy:** Students perform a Maasai dance.

**Below An Enthusiastic Audience:** Students and visitors alike enjoyed watching the performances and cheering for the winners.







**Above** The End of O Level: Form 4 pose with their headmaster, Mr Sabas.

## Boys' Form 4 Farewell

The ninth of October was a very special day at St Jude's Secondary School; the Form 4 Farewell. In Tanzania, Form 4 is the fourth year of secondary school and marks the end of O Level studies.

The average education level of St Jude's students' mothers is Standard 7, the final year of primary school and for students' fathers, the average education level is Form 2, the second year of secondary school. So, graduation from Form 4 is a huge milestone for St Jude's students!

For Ally, one of the 66 graduating students, the day was made even more special by the presence of an American visitor, Laurel. Laurel and her husband, Jeff, have sponsored Ally's academic scholarship since 2018 and visited the school in the same year. In addition to being a sponsor, Laurel also sits on the American Friends of St Jude's Board, where she works to increase knowledge of St Jude's among Rotary clubs in the US.

When Laurel heard that Ally's Form 4 Farewell was approaching, she organised a group of friends; Marcia, Adrienne, Sally and Sandra – all members of the Cultural Arts Rotary Club of Fresno, California – to travel to Tanzania to cheer Ally. The Rotary club are committed St Jude's supporters and even sponsor the scholarship of a St Jude's student. Back in 2014, Laurel was the incoming President of her Rotary club, and attended the Rotary International Convention in Sydney, where she heard Gemma speak about the school.

"The ladies who are here with me today remember me coming back to our club and saying, 'We have to get involved with The School of St Jude' – I went on and on! So that's how our club got involved. I sponsored a scholarship for a student, Ally, and then our club started to sponsor a scholarship for another student. When I decided to visit St Jude's again this year, all I had to do was say, 'I'm going' and then everyone wanted to come too."

At the event, the visitors were not just audience members, in fact, they helped out by handing the students their certificates on stage. It was a very special moment when Laurel handed Ally his Form 4 graduation certificate.

"That was the highlight of my whole trip," says Laurel. "I had no idea I would be handing out certificates, but seeing Ally walk across that stage was certainly the highlight. I'm just so proud of him."

**Below** A Moment to Remember: Laurel presents Ally with his certificate for completing Form 4.







**Above Today is the Day:** Form 4 students sing their song for an audience of their parents, friends, teachers and supporters.

**Below The Procession:** The Form 4 students make their way to the ceremony, through a guard of honour formed by the school's Scouts.



## Girls' Form 4 Farewell

Since the opening of St Jude's Girls' Secondary School in 2020, St Jude's has enjoyed celebrating not one, but two Form 4 Farewells each year. While both Form 4 Farewells celebrate the same milestone, the individual schools bring their own spirit to the event.

On the morning of the girls' Form 4 Farewell, parents, students and special guests arrived at St Jude's under grey skies, but as the joyful ceremony progressed the sun began to shine to complement the celebrations. The whole audience enjoyed listening to inspiring speeches by students and special guests and each of the 115 students received a certificate to commemorate her completion of O Level studies. Perhaps the most moving moment of the ceremony was a special song written and performed by the graduating class.

*Today is the day*

*When we celebrate*

*By holding each other once again*

*Today is the day*

*When we celebrate*

*By sharing love and joy to everyone*

As these lyrics rang out across the school, it was a poignant reminder of what these students have achieved so far and their achievements yet to come.







**Above Together Again:** Over 200 alumni returned to St Jude's for their reunion.

**Below right Speaking from Experience:** Benjamin, a scholar of electrical engineering, tells St Jude's students about studying at university.

**Below left Lifelong Friends:** Friends Queen and Irene catch up during the Alumni Reunion dinner event



## Alumni Reunion

St Jude's students spend up to 13 years learning, living and growing together with their classmates. These are strong connections, but after secondary school, graduates must make their way to universities and colleges right across Tanzania, Africa and the world, to continue their learning journeys.

The annual Alumni Reunion is an opportunity for St Jude's 800+ alumni who graduated from 2015 to 2021 to reconnect with each other and share their knowledge with St Jude's students.

The Alumni team organised for alumni to share their experience of university and employment with senior students. Keynote speakers, including Thomas, a recently graduated Occupational Therapist, and Vedasto, a graduate in the conservation and wildlife management sector, shared their stories of finding their passions and forging a path for themselves through study. Then students split into groups for Q and A sessions about their areas of interest.

In the afternoon, it was time for sports! Alumni and students went head to head in games of football and basketball, both of which were narrowly won by the student teams.

In the evening, alumni enjoyed the main event of the weekend – a special dinner, alumni awards and dancing. Old friendships were reignited and new friendships were formed between alumni from different graduating years.

Founder, Gemma Sisia, made the opening speech, during which she reminded alumni to maintain the bonds of friendship they formed at school.

"I still visit my old school every year when I'm in Sydney," she told the assembled alumni. "Don't forget to keep up with your classmates as you never know how you can help each other." The daily work of fighting poverty through education keeps the St Jude's community busy, but there is always something to celebrate at St Jude's, from big events like graduations, to smaller milestones, like a Standard 1 student learning a new word. This month, the whole community appreciated the opportunity to pause, celebrate and reflect on recent achievements.

You can give St Jude's students even more to celebrate. Help us continue fighting poverty through education by **making a donation**.







**Above Alumni Convocation:** St Jude's alum Anna listens intently during Alumni Reunion.

**Below Alumni Reconnecting:** St Jude's alum, Edna (middle), reconnecting with fellow alumni.



# The Spirit of Giving

Alumni carry St Jude's legacy by giving back.

Seeing alumni in the corridors of The School of St Jude is not surprising. Many are eager to give back to the school in any way they can, embodying the true spirit of giving.

At St Jude's, an alum is a student who successfully graduated from Form 6 (A Level) (or Form 4 (O Level) graduates who have reached Form 6 age). St Jude's graduates are alumni whether they participate in the Beyond St Jude's (BSJ) Program (an optional scholarship program for our secondary graduates) or not.

The school has more than 800 alumni. Many alumni are enrolled in higher education in Tanzania, while more than 30 are studying abroad. In addition, many alumni are now tertiary graduates, working within East Africa.

Of these, 80% are working in crucial sectors to ensure Tanzania's prosperity, including engineering, health, information technology, education, finance, and accounting. 20% are self-employed and have generated employment opportunities for over 150 people within their communities.

Through the St Jude's Spirit Program, St Jude's alumni are dedicated to supporting the school financially and non-financially in the same spirit with which they received their free, quality education.

St Jude's Spirit Program is a movement that unites St Jude's diverse family of change makers – students, staff, families, local community, alumni and our international supporters; with one mission of fighting poverty through education.

"The Alumni Spirit Program that is managed by Alumni Association was started in 2018 with the aim to assist unsponsored students and help the school both financially and non-financially," says Edna.

The Alumni Association of The School of St Jude exists to promote the mission, vision, educational and community aims of St Jude's to our graduates. The association also provides opportunities for members to network, offers training and skill development, share employment opportunities and organises social activities.



Edna is a St Jude's alum herself and now works in the Alumni team, engaging with fellow alumni and making sure graduates' achievements are recorded. "I graduated from Form 6 in 2015. As a proud member of the St Jude's Spirit Program, I support the school financially by donating AU\$3 every month."

The school currently has more than 100 alumni donating through the St Jude's Spirit Program. Alumni donations are predominantly allocated towards St Jude's Un-sponsored Student Fund, which funds uniforms, transport and learning resources for students whose scholarships are currently un-sponsored.

"Alumni also support the school non-financially by sacrificing their time to assist in various school departments, help in fundraising activities and spreading the word about the school," explains Edna.

St Jude's has more than 200 alumni volunteering at St Jude's. Some are teachers, sports coaches and some help with organising alumni events.

Tatu is an alum who completed her A Level education in 2021. She now volunteers in the Alumni team and she's a member of the Alumni Spirit Program.

"I feel obliged to give back to my community after acquiring a free, quality education from St Jude's. My community needs me to support them," says Tatu.

"Currently I'm supporting the school both financially by donating AU\$3 each month and non-financially by volunteering in the Alumni team," adds Tatu.

Tatu, who is volunteering through the BSJ Program, hopes to one day sponsor a student once she becomes a successful accountant.

"Volunteering has been part and parcel in my life. Once I'm blessed with enough resources to sponsor a student's scholarship I will be glad to sponsor one or even two students. As a former St Jude's student, I am proof that education changes lives and I would like to transform the lives of my younger sisters and brothers," explains Tatu.

Alumni are the heart and soul of the organisation, carrying the school's legacy. Their spirit of giving is a testimony to a St Jude's education that creates hope for the future of Tanzania.

Your generosity has helped St Jude's transform the lives of many students and their families.

**Share our story!**



**Above Inspiring Others:** Tatu, a St Jude's alum, speaks a word of encouragement to the other alumni during the Alumni Reunion.

**Below House of Cards:** Alumni playing cards during their annual Alumni Reunion.







# The School of St Jude

Fighting poverty  
through education



[www.schoolofstjude.org](http://www.schoolofstjude.org)