



St Jude's News

JANUARY 2022



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Above Maize field to school: The plot of land on which St Jude's first buildings were constructed and St Jude's today, 1,800 students and over 300 staff.



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

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

St Jude's 20th Birthday

Celebrating two decades of milestones.

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St Jude's 20th Birthday

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In the last 20 years, The School of St Jude has grown so much that it's almost unrecognisable. Buildings, fields, buses, campuses and whole new schools have been added to keep pace with the need for free, quality education in the Arusha region.

Over these two decades, St Jude's has celebrated milestone after milestone. Barely a term passes without something new here, but as we look back we can see the turning points which have shaped St Jude's into the school it is today.

1998

1998 is a little more than 20 years ago now, but it's a very important year in the St Jude's story. In this year, Gemma Sisia was gifted the original land on which St Jude's was built, by her future father-in-law.

Following the gift of land, Gemma began to plan in earnest and collect donations for The School of St Jude. "The aim is to raise over \$150,000, and even if it takes 10 years I am determined to build it," she wrote, in a 1999 newsletter sent to supporters of what was then called the East African Fund.

Little did Gemma know how generous people would be – in less than four years, St Jude's first students would be learning on the land she had just been given!

Left Maize field to school: The plot of land on which St Jude's first buildings were constructed.

2000

In this year, the very first classrooms were built at St Jude's, thanks to some amazing Rotary volunteers from the Armidale Central and Gosford North clubs.

Gemma recalls in her book, St Jude's, "A great friend of my family, Rotarian David Steller, who was an engineer with Armidale Council, offered to lead the Rotary team and there was a young builder, Tyson Jackson, who'd just finished his apprenticeship, but apart from these two, the main building qualification of the first team that went over was goodwill."

The very first building still stands today as the Visitors Centre.

Left Thank Goodness for Rotary: Visiting Rotary volunteers get their hands dirty as they prepare foundations for the first ever building.



2002

29 January 2002 marked the first day of classes at St Jude's. Volunteer teacher, Angela Bailey, was just 19 at the time. She reflects, "It was so exciting, I was a little nervous... It was mostly about orientation on the first day, showing the students our first small library, where the toilets were... My students were completely overwhelmed and shy. It was only a few hours and then they went home for lunch."

"I remember, I asked Gemma what her vision (for St Jude's) was and she said she would love to have two streams all the way to the end of primary....I thought that was an incredible vision!"

By 2003 the number of students at St Jude's had grown to 120 and the school was in serious need of extra classrooms.

Left Art with Miss Angela: Some of the very first St Jude's students make papier mache pigs with teacher, Angela Bailey.

2005

In 2005, Gemma and St Jude's were featured in an episode of the ABC's (Australian Broadcasting Commission) Australian Story. The episode told Gemma's story of growing up country New South Wales, moving to Tanzania and starting St Jude's.

The response to Australian Story was extraordinary. After watching the episode, many new people decided to support St Jude's as sponsors, donors and volunteers. This increased support encouraged Gemma to consider opening boarding houses and a second school.

This same year, St Jude's Standard 4 students sat their first ever national examinations and received amazing results, placing St Jude's third from 204 schools in the region and establishing a tradition of academic excellence.



Above Thank you Saint Jude: Students perform during the school's first St Jude's Day celebration.



Above St Jude's Primary School Today: Thanks to many generous supporters, our primary school has grown into a beautiful campus for students from Standard 1 to Standard 7.

2008

In 2008, St Jude's took a big step by opening a second school. The new school, located in Usa River, about 50 minutes' drive from our original site, began as another primary school.

Today, the campus at Usa River is called Smith Campus in recognition of the generous Smith family, long-time supporters of St Jude's. It now houses St Jude's Secondary School, where our Form 1 to 4 boys and Form 5 and 6 girls and boys live and study.

In the same year, we opened a third campus – Moivaro Boarding Campus. As a boarding school, St Jude's is able to offer students with a safe, stable environment where they can focus on learning without the pressures and challenges they often face at home.



Above Our Second School: The lush green Smith Campus today.



Above Home Away from Home: Moivaro Boarding Campus now has capacity for approximately 600 female students from St Jude's Girls' Secondary School.



2014

In 2014, we celebrated an exciting milestone – St Jude's was finally a whole school, with classes from Standard 1 (the first year of primary school), to Form 6 (the final year of secondary school).

In this year, our decade long building program was completed!

Left A Whole School, at Last: All students from Standard 1 to Form 6, plus all staff, gather for a group photo on St Jude's Day 2014. This is now an annual tradition.



2015

In 2015, we held our inaugural Form 6 graduation. 61 overjoyed graduates celebrated the end of their secondary education in the presence of 1,000 guests, including supporters from around the world. We've now celebrated seven Form 6 graduations and each time it is a wonderful reminder of how far we have come.

Later that year, these graduates became the very first Community Service Year (CSY) volunteers through our newly established Beyond St Jude's Program (BSJ). To this day, BSJ supports secondary graduates through a period of community service and then a higher education qualification.

These first graduates spent a year volunteering in the community to share their skills and knowledge. Some volunteers lent a hand in the St Jude's office, while others taught in understaffed government schools, reaching more than 10,000 students.

Left The first graduates: The Class of 2015 sings celebrates their graduation from secondary school.



2019

In 2019, after 17 years of St Jude's, the very first BSJ scholars graduated from university. Since the earliest days of St Jude's, we had dreamed of our students graduating from university, starting their careers and breaking the poverty cycle. We were so excited to celebrate the graduation of 26 BSJ Tertiary graduates.

The number of BSJ Tertiary graduates continues to grow each year with hundreds more being supported through their tertiary studies.

Left Young Professionals: Five of the first 26 BSJ Tertiary scholars on their university graduation day. (L-R Sara, Omary, Edwina, Justin, Baba)

2020

In 2020, we opened a third school – St Jude's Girls' Secondary School, to give more girls, and more students overall, an opportunity to attend secondary school.

On average, girls in Tanzania from poor, rural backgrounds receive just four years of education, and this was being reflected in our scholarship application process. The new school has capacity for 600 students all of whom are boarders in Form 1 to Form 4. The same number of boys continue to be educated at St Jude's Secondary School.

Left A Third School: The beautiful campus of St Jude's Girls' Secondary School, with capacity for 600 students.

Right St Jude's Girls' Secondary School: Our girls' school, with its science labs, computer rooms and large sports field, is the perfect place to learn.



2021

In 2021, we celebrated the graduation of the very first BSJ medical scholars – the first St Jude's educated doctors! Following jubilant graduation celebrations, the graduate doctors started internships at hospitals across Tanzania in preparation for impactful careers.

Right A Dream Fulfilled: After years of dedication and support, the first St Jude's educated doctors graduate from university.



2022 and Beyond

This year, we celebrate our 20th birthday, take a moment to look back and turn our eyes to the next 20 years. What began with three students, has, with your support, become a school of 1,800 with a successful graduate program.

So much has changed since 2002, but our motivation is the same as ever; together, we are fighting poverty through education.

20 years is just the beginning. **Donate** or **Sponsor** at schoolofstjude.org to help us keep fighting poverty through education.



Above A Uniform of Hope: Standard 1 and 2 students in their new St Jude's uniforms.

Shining Bright in Blue

Wide smiles spread across faces of the newest students on Uniform Day at The School of St Jude.

Every year, a St Jude's uniform is a gleaming ray of hope for the brightest, poorest Tanzanian students who are lucky recipients of an academic scholarship.

The school's blue uniform is a dream come true for these students joining either in Standard 1, Form 1 (O Level), or Form 5 (A Level).

There are three key stages of school in Tanzania; seven years of primary school from Standard 1 to 7, then four years of secondary school from Form 1 to 4 in Ordinary Level (O Level) studies, and finally the final two years of secondary school, Form 5 and 6 in Advanced Level (A Level) studies

Primary Students

Meet Happiness, Alvin, and Rahma, the newest Standard 1 and 2 students at St Jude's.

Rahma and Alvin hope to become pilots when they grow up.

"I am happy to wear these new uniforms," says Rahma who is Standard 1.

"When my mother saw me with the new uniforms, she congratulated me and we celebrated together," she adds.

Recalling his own experience, Alvin says, "My mother brought me to the school on Uniform Day, she was delighted to see me wearing my St Jude's uniform."

"In class, I now enjoy writing and reading. Hopefully one day I will achieve my dream of becoming a pilot," Alvin adds.

Happiness who aspires to become a doctor when she grows up showed off her new uniform. "I look really smart in my uniform. I love it!" she says shyly.

Below The Start of a Journey: (L-R) Happiness, Alvin, and Rahma wearing their new uniforms, ready to begin their educational journey.



Form 1 Students (O Level)

Wearing the St Jude's uniform for the first time is a proud moment for new secondary school students who have completed their entire primary education in a government school.

The school invites top-performing students from government schools to take part in the scholarship application process. Scholarships are awarded only to the brightest and poorest students.

Juma, who just started his first year of secondary school at Smith Campus, is thankful for the opportunity to wear a St Jude's uniforms.

"Wearing these uniforms gives me hope for my future. I used to walk for hours to get to school, we didn't have hot lunches, proper learning resources and classroom essentials like we do here," says Juma.

"With St Jude's, I don't have to worry about walking far to get to school. I can now focus on my studies and become a better student," Juma explains.

Similarly, Naftal, who joined St Jude's this year, is thrilled to be receiving a free education. "Compared to the government school I attended before, I get the opportunity to study more at St Jude's. I'm looking forward to a beautiful future," Naftal says with excitement.

Aspiring to become a president, Maurene believes that wearing a St Jude's uniform brings her closer to her dreams. "Being accepted to receive free quality education means that I can study hard and help my parents when I graduate."

"I hope to become a leader one day. It is my dream to help my community out of poverty. Should I not be a leader, I wish to become a doctor," Maurene adds.

Academic scholarships for secondary students cover a student's educational and boarding expenses including; uniforms, boarding facilities, learning resources, daily nutritious meals, clean water, health and welfare support, and everything else needed for a successful education.

Now that they have uniforms, all the new students are ready to begin taking steps towards a brighter and better future for themselves and their families.

Your support provides all new primary students with the resources they need for a successful education. **Sponsor or Donate today!**



Above Tomorrow's Smart Leaders: Juma (R) and his classmates wearing their uniforms for the first time.

Below Ready to Lead: Maurene, pictured with her family (left) during the scholarship process, now shining bright in her new uniform (right) and has high hopes for her future.



Celebrating International Day of Education

St Jude's teachers and students share what International Day of Education means to them.

"Education can free anyone from poverty," says Ms Helen, primary teacher. She teaches social studies and civic and moral education to Standard 3, 4 and 6 students.

January 24 each year is the International Day of Education. Led by UNESCO, the day aims to highlight and promote every human's fundamental right to education. And in celebrating this day, Ms Helen believes that good quality education has the power to help end poverty.

"Education enables students to develop different skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. To be able to help their society and lift themselves out of poverty, students need to develop these skills," Ms Helen explains.

In Tanzania, about 60,000 students drop out of the lower secondary schools per year, of which 50% are girls.

The School of St Jude empowers students to become community-focused leaders who challenge the status quo and find solutions to assist Tanzanians living in poverty.

"Education is important for changing people's perceptions. This is especially important when it comes to gender equality in education. For example, women in our communities still believe that a woman's place is at home. But as awareness increases, this mindset is slowly changing when it comes to increasing the number of girls attending school," Ms Helen states.



Above The Passport to the Future: St Jude's primary students learning computer skills.

Below Real World Skills: Ms Helen teaching Standard 5 students the values they need to lead their communities.





Above Little Dribblers: Daudi coaching basketball to primary school students.

Attesting to the importance of education is Daudi. He has recently finished Form 6 (A Level) and is now volunteering as a PE teacher in the primary school and assists the Social Impact team through the Beyond St Jude's Program (BSJ).

"Because of the free, quality education I received here at St Jude's, I have the confidence to stand and speak on my own and to make informed decisions," says Daudi.

In BSJ, Form 6 (A Level) graduates can volunteer through a Community Service Year (CSY), and then get the funding they need to continue onto higher education.

"My goal is to major in project planning management or agriculture in university. I believe the two majors will assist me not only in the job market but, I can also be an entrepreneur and hire other youth from my society, thus providing them with a path out of poverty," Daudi adds.

"To be educated means to get the knowledge and information so that you can go back to your community and solve the problems they are facing. Our country doesn't just need graduates, it needs problem-solvers."

St Jude's strives for academic and moral excellence. The school promotes a holistic education so students can develop self-confidence and broader world views to become future leaders in Tanzania.



Above On Cloud Nine: Geovin expressing his happiness after securing the top spot in the National Examination results for Form 2.

"Education transforms lives, and I am a living testament to that," says Geovin, a Form 3 student who recently placed first out of 600,000 Tanzanian students in the Form 2 National Examinations last year.

"Because of the good education, I'm receiving at St Jude's, I am now more focused and interested in finding ways to solve my community's problems. This is an important step towards eliminating poverty," Geovin adds.

With three-quarters of Tanzania's school-aged children not in secondary school and unable to access skilled employment, St Jude's encourages students to fulfil their academic potential and develop leadership qualities to lift their communities out of poverty.

You can make a difference in creating a brighter future for Tanzanian students and their families. **Sponsor or Donate today!**



Blood Donation at St Jude's

St Jude's staff donate blood after being inspired by a primary student's fight against leukemia.

Blood isn't something we tend to spend a lot of time considering. Some people might even feel a bit lightheaded at the thought of it! However, if you fall ill, blood products could save your life.

In 2021, staff at The School of St Jude learnt about the lifesaving impact of blood donations first hand, when Standard 5 student, Petro, urgently required transfusions of platelets. Later in the year, after Petro had made a full recovery, they were inspired to donate again, to share this important resource with others in need.

Petro, now in Standard 6, is an enthusiastic and friendly student. In March 2021, he was diagnosed with leukemia (cancer of blood forming tissues). Faced with expensive treatment, Petro's family successfully applied for St Jude's medical fund, which covers medical and transport costs for the families of severely ill students.

"In the hospital it was not so fun, but I was happy because teachers and people from St Jude's came to visit me. They brought me some work to study and also puzzles," Petro recalls.

While Petro's treatment was incredibly effective, a common side effect is a reduction in platelets, which can be life threatening, as platelets are crucial for blood clotting. In May and again in August, Petro's platelets neared zero, and St Jude's made a call out for members of our community to donate blood.

"I had a lack of platelets because of the chemotherapy, so I needed some blood transfusions. I can't remember how many! I got to learn my blood type which is O+," explains Petro, who is clearly fascinated in the science behind his treatment.

One staff member who answered the call for blood donations was Mr Focus, who works in the Head Office.

"It's just excellent to know that we could help him," says Mr Focus. "I believe our little contributions made a difference and I am so excited that Petro is back at school."



Above Feeling Positive: Now in remission, Petro (centre) is happy to be back at school with his friends Lucas (left) and Samwel (right).

Below Making a Difference: Mr Focus enjoys a well-earned soda.





Above Happy to Help: Brenda, a CSY volunteer, was happy to have the chance to donate blood.

Thanks to donations from people like Mr Focus, and continued medical treatment, Petro was found to be in remission in late September. In October, he returned to school!

“I am very, very happy to be better. I came back to school at the end of the year and I was very happy, seeing my friends, seeing my lovely teachers and studying science,” beams Petro.

While everyone at St Jude’s was overjoyed to welcome Petro back to school, his challenges had opened staff’s eyes to the great need for blood donations in Tanzania. In order to help others in need of blood products, St Jude’s staff decided to make another round of donations.

Here in Tanzania, around half of all blood transfusions are administered to children under five years old. The next most common use is for women who are pregnant or who have recently given birth, while around 5% of transfusions go to people with cancers, like Petro.

In early December, around 20 St Jude’s staff members gathered to donate blood. Some people made their very first donation, while others were return donors.

One donor was Brenda, who is currently completing her Community Service Year (CSY) through Beyond St Jude’s, our program for St Jude’s secondary graduates.

“I know that there are some people who are having a hard time and don’t have access to blood. So, by donating I can reach out a hand to those people who are sick,” Brenda explains of her motivation for donating.

“I wasn’t nervous to donate, I was actually happy. I would do it again,” she enthuses.

Despite donating earlier in the year for Petro, Mr Focus was keen to donate again when he could, and he joined Brenda at the donation day in December.

“It’s a chance to do something good for humanity,” smiles Mr Focus. “And you always get a soda and biscuits afterwards, so how could I be nervous?” he adds with a laugh.

While some people were nervous, the thought that they could help others, like Petro, gave them the courage to complete their donations.

Of course, the main work at St Jude’s is fighting poverty through education, but we’re proud to say that our staff are always looking for different ways to help our community. Inspired by our resilient student Petro, we’re honoured to be able to help those in need by donating blood.



Follow us on **LinkedIn**
to hear more about
St Jude’s staff!

Below Inspired to Donate: Some selfless St Jude’s staff during their blood donations.





The School of St Jude

Fighting poverty
through education



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