



St Jude's News

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Meet the Team: Just some of health care professionals who volunteered for health checks in 2023. Health Check team leader, Jane, is third from the right in the front row.



Our Australian fundraising partner is registered as The School of St Jude Ltd and is responsible for all funds raised in Australia.

Off to a Healthy Start



The Health Check team at St Jude's rises to the challenge to give a promising start to 2023.



Beat by Beat: A St Jude's health check involves a wide variety of tests that give a picture of the student's health.

The start of the year is usually a busy time at The School of St Jude. Students are fresh from the holidays and eager to start the new academic year on a high. Yet amid personal ambitions and academic goals, one thing is important to keep in mind.

"A successful academic year requires healthy students," says Jane, the leader of the Health Check team at St Jude's. In Australia, Jane is a busy physiotherapist and brings these specialist skills to the team.

This February, Jane arrived as part of a team of 21 international and local health care professionals to conduct health checks on St Jude's students. Under Jane's leadership, this team assessed 1,800 primary and secondary school students, running tests and providing recommendations.

"A health check consists of a variety of tests that enable us to assess students' overall health in relation to academic capabilities," says Jane. "The tests include malnutrition, vision and hearing, height and weight, and many others. We also have a well-being team that works closely with staff to develop strategies that improve students' well-being such as mental health, counselling, and other well-being issues," she adds.

Based on the tests, Jane and her team make recommendations on any actions that should be taken to improve a students' health, and make referrals for any health issues that should followed up on by the school and the students' families at local hospitals. Recommendations may involve simple alterations such as a diet change and reading glasses, to hospital referrals for more serious issues.



A Closer Look: Dr Philip performs an ear examination on a student during the health checks.

The health checks typically happen once every year, usually around February. Jane joined the program for the first time in 2015 and has since taken a leadership role.

“This year’s health check is much busier than the previous ones,” reflects Jane. “Due to travel restrictions, we couldn’t organise health checks in the previous two years. This year, we had an astounding 700 new students at the school who had never done a full health check before! So, we had to be very thorough with our assessments,” she explains.



Happy To Be Back: Dr Hosiana living her dream at St Jude’s.

Along with Jane is Dr Philip, a General Practitioner from Armidale, New South Wales, Australia. Like Jane, Dr Philip is a regular health check volunteer since joining the health check program in 2017.

“I first heard about St Jude’s from Gemma at an event in Armidale,” Dr Philip recalls. “When I heard of the opportunity to volunteer in a medical capacity, I quickly jumped aboard and have enjoyed it ever since,” he adds with a smile.

Dr Philip believes academic excellence is best achieved when students are in their best physical, mental, and emotional health. Being a regular volunteer of the Health Check team grants him the opportunity to optimise students’ academic excellence in a special way.

“Having been on the team for several years now,” says Dr Philip, “students would usually remember me, and I would recognise some familiar faces every time. The best part of my experience is to see the joy in students when we tell them they are fine and healthy,” he adds.

Although the Health Check team has historically consisted of a diverse team of international volunteers, this year saw a pleasant surprise. For the first time, a St Jude’s alum, Dr Hosiana, joined this special team.



Letter by Letter: Victor oversees a vision test during Health Checks.

“I had just completed my doctoral internship year when I saw an advert from St Jude’s asking medical professionals to volunteer for the health checks,” recalls Dr Hosiana, a St Jude’s alum who graduated from secondary school in 2015 after 13 years at the school and is now a practising doctor. “I naturally applied,” she adds excitedly.

Hosiana’s dreams of becoming a doctor stemmed from her experiences as a child. She grew up in a small village with a single health officer who was also looking after other nearby villages. Desperate to help, she resolved to study hard and become a doctor herself.

“My hard work paid off and I was awarded a scholarship to St Jude’s!” recalls Hosiana. “Things only got better after that, the plenty of resources and teachers at the school only reinforced my ambition,” she adds.

Hosiana looks back on the health checks as one of many things at St Jude’s that reinforced her ambition to study medicine.

“I would usually have plenty of questions for the doctors,” recalls Dr Hosiana with a smile. “This time I also met some curious students with ambitions of being a doctor. They reminded me so much of myself,” she adds.

Along with Jane is Dr Victor who is also volunteering for the first time in the health checks. Victor was part of a team that carried out eye examinations for students.

“Students spend quite a lot of time studying,” says Victor. “So regular vision checks are very important,” he adds.

Victor’s favourite part of the experience was interacting with students and sharing his experience.

“We’d usually have a few minutes to chat with students at the end of the tests. It was rewarding to answer all their questions and listen to their experiences,” explains Victor.

This is the fourteenth year that a team of international doctors and health professionals has volunteered for two weeks at The School of St Jude to perform free health check-ups for all students. After travel restrictions in recent years, it’s wonderful to see the Health Check team has risen to the challenge and successfully ensured 1,800 students are all off to a healthy start for 2023!



Your support ensures the academic excellence of students goes hand in hand with their health. **Donate today!**



How About That: The Cooking Club showing off their freshly-made mandazi, a Tanzanian doughnut-like snack.

Cooking Club at St Jude's

Students at St Jude's Girls' Secondary School keep their cooking abilities alive with the vibrant Cooking Club on campus.

Once a week, about 80 students from St Jude's Girls' Secondary School take part in a cooking class. They are part of the Cooking Club, one of the extracurricular clubs on campus which teaches students basic cooking skills. Among them is Amina, a Form 3 student with a particular interest in cooking.

"I learned how to cook from my father," says Amina. "Being an older sister at home meant that I had to adopt cooking skills early on so that I could take care of my younger siblings when parents weren't home," she explains.

Like many children in Tanzania, Amina learned to cook so that she could help her increasingly busy parents with day-to-day house chores. The more she tried her hand at cooking, the more she loved it and it soon became a favourite activity for her.

"My father showed me how to prepare simple meals that didn't require much skill or time," recalls Amina. "Naturally, this meant ugali, which was my favourite food and reinforced my desire to learn cooking," she adds.

Ugali is a stiff porridge made of maize flour, similar to polenta. It is one of the most popular foods in Tanzania. Ugali is traditionally taken with a side dish which may include beans, vegetables, meat, or fish.

When Amina joined secondary school and moved into boarding, she knew she would spend less time practising her favourite hobby – but she needn't have worried. In 2021, a new Cooking Club was started at St Jude's Girls' Secondary School to cater to students who enjoyed cooking.

“In Tanzania, most boarding students don’t really get the chance to practise cooking until they move on to university or start living on their own, which is quite unfortunate because cooking is such an essential skill to have,” says Bertha, one of the founders and mentors of the Cooking Club. “With the Cooking Club, students can still improve their cooking skills while keeping up with their studies,” she adds.

As a mentor of the club, Bertha aspires to equip students to do more than just prepare food. She prepares them to be resourceful in their next phase of life.

“At the club, we teach our students about kitchen hygiene, organisation, sourcing and purchasing, and even management skills,” says Bertha. “These are important life skills that go all the way into their future lives,” she adds.

When students learn how to cook, they gain a new appreciation of where food comes from and how to prepare simple, healthy meals and snacks.



What's Cooking: The Cooking Club at St Jude's Girl's Secondary School in one of their cooking sessions.

The Cooking Club is one of the 41 clubs at The School of St Jude which equips students with valuable extracurricular and co-curricular skills. With the resources St Jude's supplies, and mentors like Bertha, students like Amina are acquiring valuable practical knowledge for a healthy, happy future.



In Their Element : Bertha second from left with some of the Cooking Club students.

Your support provides our students with resources and mentors to impart them with practical life skills. **Donate today!**



Going the Extra Mile

St Jude's alumni are extending their impact through the Alternative Pathways Program (APP).



Showing the Ropes: Hamisi equips government school teachers with computer programs to simplify their work.

At least once a week, Hamisi, a college student pursuing a Diploma in Computer Science and Technology, sets out from his college in downtown Arusha to a government school on the fringe of the city. Once at the school, he leads training sessions for teachers in the use of computer programs such as Microsoft Excel and Word.

“Our school has close to 5,000 students,” explains Ms Dorothea, a teacher at the school. “Updating, managing, and tracking all students’ data is not an easy task,” she adds.

Initially, Ms Dorothea and her team would manually fill the students’ data one by one into their school’s system, an arduous process that took days and sometimes weeks to complete.

“Thankfully, a young man showed up for a volunteering spell at our school and showed us the powerful automation of computers,” says Dorothea excitedly. “With Excel, for instance, we could compile and grade examination results within a day or two – a task that used to take us at least a week of exhausting work,” she explains.

Hamisi first arrived at the government school as one of the 35 volunteers sent to assist under-resourced government schools around Arusha as part of the Alternative Pathways Program (APP) for Form 4 graduates of St Jude’s.

In Tanzania, the first four years of secondary school are called Ordinary Level (O Level) studies; from Form 1 to Form 4. These are typically followed by the final two years of secondary education which are called Advanced Level (A Level); Form 5 and 6. The APP allows Form 4 graduates (O Level) to pursue a diploma or certificate at college in place of the traditional St Jude’s A Level pathway through secondary school after a semester of community service.

“During my time at St Jude’s, I developed a deep interest in computer studies,” explains Hamisi. “By the time I graduated Form 4, I was confident in my future career path and promptly opted for APP,” he adds.



Learning Practical Skills: Dorothea (right) learning how to use computer programs from Hamisi (far left).

His sentiments are echoed by Avity, who coordinates community service for Beyond St Jude's (BSJ) scholars.

"Although APP was launched rather recently," explains Avity, "It has become quite popular among Form 4 (O Level) graduates looking for an accelerated route to a career. We started with six students in 2020, and since then more students have been opting for APP," he adds.

As part of the program, APP scholars volunteer for a semester of community service at a government school ahead of their college studies. They typically assist with administrative tasks, exam marking, tutoring, and other areas of need within the schools.

"Studying at St Jude's instilled in me the spirit of giving and community service," says Hamisi. "So, I was very excited at the opportunity to volunteer," he adds.

This is demonstrated by Hamisi's willingness to continue volunteering even after completing his Community Service Semester (CSS) and starting college.

In 2023, 29 Form 4 graduates joined the APP, the highest number yet! They are currently volunteering in various placements around government schools in Arusha, and like Hamisi, are beginning to making an impact in the community.



Catching Up: Hamisi catches up with fellow CSS volunteers stationed at the school.



Your support enables us to expand and enhance our core mission through ground-breaking programs like the APP.
Sponsor today.

What happens in a health check?

During February, all St Jude's students receive comprehensive health checks from a team of volunteer health professionals and assistants, to ensure they're growing up healthy and happy. So, what are they checking for?



First, a student's height and weight are measured and compared to their heights and weights from previous years to ensure they're meeting World Health Organisation guidelines.



An eye doctor tests students' vision and refers them on to a local specialist if they might need glasses or other treatment.



An audiologist tests students hearing. Ear health is especially important to help students hear, understand and engage in class!



A doctor observes each student's mouth and teeth.



A doctor listens to the student's heart and lungs.

After health checks, students who need further care, like glasses, dentistry or additional examination, are referred on to local specialists.



A St Jude's scholarship provides a student with health checks, and everything else they need for a successful education.

Sponsor a scholarship today!