



St Jude's News



One Big Step: St Jude's Form 6 graduates walking out in style.



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St Jude's 10th Form 6 Graduation

Celebrating students completing an important milestone in their academic journey.



Congratulations: The graduating class of 2024 at the graduation ceremony.

Attending a graduation ceremony at St Jude's is an experience like no other. It's a day of pride and celebration, representing years of hard work, dedication, and sacrifice. St Jude's hosts three graduation ceremonies a year, corresponding to the three main levels of the Tanzanian school system, and a recognition ceremony for its alumni finishing their tertiary education.

The three key stages of school in Tanzania consist of 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, Forms 5 and 6 in Advanced Level (A Level) studies. A graduation ceremony marks the end of each stage as students progress to the next phase of their academic journey.

While each graduation is a memorable occasion, the Form 6 graduation holds a special significance as it marks the transition to higher education in universities and colleges.

"It's been a wonderful journey, and we leave St Jude's with lovely memories," says Andrea, Form 6 graduate, in his farewell speech on graduation day. "The achievements we've made demonstrate how exceptional our time here has been," he adds.



All Smiles: Andrea (on the left) was all smiles while receiving his academic awards on graduation day.



Onto the Next Stage: Form 6 graduates waving goodbye during the graduation.

With 200 graduates, the 2024 Form 6 cohort was the second-largest group to graduate from St Jude's. Their outstanding accomplishments include winning several national and international sports and essay writing competitions, excelling in regional and zonal exams, and pioneering impactful initiatives that are gaining recognition in the greater community.

"We stand here today as a testament to how we've fulfilled the school's mission," says Andrea. "We hope to achieve even greater things because of what has been invested in us throughout our time at St Jude's," he adds.

Completing secondary education is a remarkable achievement for students in Tanzania. However, several socio-economic barriers still hinder many students, particularly females, from completing secondary education. Existing gender disparities in enrolment and high dropout rates means that only 27% of Tanzanian girls who start A Level, reach Form 6 graduation.

At St Jude's, however, all secondary school students receive 100% free, quality education, which includes safe boarding accommodation, nutritious meals, extracurricular programs, and more. The school's holistic approach to education and promotion of gender equality ensures girls excel academically and in other areas. As a result, the school consistently maintains a 100% completion rate for all secondary school students.

"One of our girls made it to the top 10 of the regional mock examinations, another invented a bean sorting machine that won first place on Science Day, and still another launched an initiative to support government school students with sanitary pads," Noreen proudly shared at the graduation speech.

The 2024 graduation ceremony was particularly special as it was the 10th Form 6 graduation in St Jude's history. Fittingly, it recorded the highest number of international visitors in attendance – over 90—in addition to more than 100 local guests, board members, alumni, and government officials. Among them was Mark Cubit, chairperson of the Australian board, Pat Sutliff, from our American Friends of The School of St Jude board, and David Stellar, who helped build the first three classrooms at St Jude's more than 20 years ago.

"From little things, big things grow. And as you can see all around you, St Jude's is changing lives as personified by the graduating class," says David, as he reflects on the 20+ year journey of St Jude's.

The next step for the graduates is pursuing higher education at various universities and colleges. Most opt to apply to the Beyond St Jude's Scholarship Program (BSJSP), which supports graduates with tertiary education.

As part of the BSJSP, the selected graduates will undertake Community Service placements, volunteering as teachers in understaffed government schools, or at various placements throughout St Jude's. Then they go on to access higher education supported by St Jude's sponsors and donors.

Whichever path they choose, we know our graduates will personify the school's vision of an educated community of moral and intellectual leaders, fighting poverty in Tanzania.

Fuel the next generation of Tanzanian leaders by supporting the higher education of our secondary school graduates. **Sponsor Today**



Impacting the Community, One Child at a Time

Tabitha's powerful story of resilience, passion, and leadership.

After more than 12 years at St Jude's, Tabitha was ready to embark on her next adventure – pursuing her dreams at university. So, in 2020, 22-year-old Tabitha travelled to Tabora, a town in central Tanzania, for her tertiary studies. But as she soon found, the transition wasn't easy.

"I have always been a big city girl," says Tabitha, who, until this time, had spent her entire life in Arusha, one of Tanzania's biggest cities and a vibrant tourist hub. "Tabora felt small and didn't resemble Arusha at all. My first impression of the place was a little underwhelming," she adds.



Settling In: Tabitha's love for children and education has seen her relocate and thrive in a new town.



Leading by Example: Tabitha is an entrepreneur, a university scholar, and a leading changemaker in her community.

Nevertheless, Tabitha embraced the change. Later, she realised that the town's rural, remote setting was the perfect place to put her skills and knowledge to good use.

"In retrospect, Tabora was exactly where I needed to be to make the change I wanted to see," reflects Tabitha. "I've always been passionate about helping special groups within the community; specifically those denied access because of their disabilities."

In just three years, Tabitha went from a novice university student in a new town to an inspiration in the community.

She established a reputable nursery and daycare centre that caters to children under the age of seven, including those with disabilities and learning challenges.



A Heart of Service: Tabitha (back row, second from right) volunteered as a teacher at a government school during her Community Service Year placement.

“It all started from a deep desire to help children in need, especially those with disabilities,” reflects Tabitha. “I noticed that these children were not being taken to school because their parents felt as though they were wasting money. So, I figured there needs to be a daycare in the community where these parents could see their children thriving as much as the other children that go to school,” she adds passionately.

Her business started in 2022 with just five students. Tabitha’s resolve to make the centre a vibrant and special place for children made it stand out. Her innovative approach to childcare and education, including the use of interactive games, movies, and songs, began making waves in the community. By the end of 2023, the number of children had risen to 20, 10 of whom had already progressed to primary school.

“My best highlight is seeing my students grow in character and academically,” says Tabitha proudly. “Students from the centre not only continue to thrive in their primary schools, but they are also setting the bar for academic performance and good behaviour,” she adds.

In Tanzania, there persists a negative attitude towards individuals with disabilities, resulting in parents often hiding their

children from public view. This deprives them of education and opportunities to socialise with their peers. Tabitha’s mission is to bridge this gap and extend educational opportunities to more children with disabilities.

“It’s not always easy to convince parents to take their children with disabilities to school,” says Tabitha. “But when they see children with similar circumstances at the centre happy and flourishing academically, it becomes easier to break down some of those negative notions associated with them,” she adds.

Tabitha is currently in her final year of university, pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Education in Special Needs. She is one of the many alumni from St Jude’s putting her skills to good use and impacting the community. Tabitha hopes to use her education to continue breaking down barriers and make education accessible to all children.

Your sponsorship empowers Beyond St Jude’s Scholarship Program (BSJSP) Tertiary scholars to use their skills and knowledge to give back to their communities. **Sponsor Today.**



Graduation at St Jude's: Graduation is one of the most important days on the school calendar.

Kiswahili Word of the Month

Improve your Kiswahili vocabulary with our word of the month

mahafali

[mah-hah-fah-lee] noun

Definition

“Mahafali” is a Kiswahili word that means “graduation” in English. It typically refers to a gathering of people to celebrate an achievement, often related to education.

Historical and cultural significance

“Mahafali” is of Arabic origin, derived from “Mahfal,” which means “gathering” or “assembly.” The adoption of this word into Kiswahili highlights the historical influence of Arabic on the language, particularly due to trade and cultural exchanges along the East African coast in the 8th to 19th centuries.

The use of “mahafali” in Kiswahili aligns with the cultural importance of educational milestones and the ceremonies associated with them. It signifies the completion of academic requirements and a communal celebration of achievement and progress.

Explore the rich Tanzanian culture and Kiswahili vocabulary by booking a visit to St Jude's. **We love visitors! Come visit us.**



Q & A with Maria

Get to know Maria and find out what it is like to visit St Jude's.

At St Jude's, we love visitors! This is why we have a dedicated Visitors team to ensure everyone who visits the school has the best experience. If you visit St Jude's, you'll most likely be greeted by Maria, a St Jude's alum currently working with the team. Learn what it's like to visit the school and see how we fight poverty through education.



A Welcoming Smile: Maria, a St Jude's alum, shares her experience working with the Visitors team.

How does it feel coming back to St Jude's?

It feels great to be back! I graduated from St Jude's in 2016, and it's inspiring to see how far we've come. Showing visitors around the classes and places where I used to study brings back a lot of memories and gratitude.

As an alum, some students look up to me for inspiration, so I always strive to be a good example.

What do you usually do as part of the Visitors team?

In a sentence, our work is to give our visitors a fulfilling experience of the school, the Tanzanian culture, and life in Arusha, Tanzania. We tailor each visitor's itinerary to meet their needs and expectations throughout their time with us. This involves quite a bit of planning and coordination with other teams within the school to ensure a personalised and holistic experience.

What does a typical visit to St Jude's include?

The school tour is always fun. St Jude's has a rich history, being over 20 years old, so there is a lot to explore! Other activities may include sitting in on a class with students, such as a music or art class, attending a school assembly, cooking lessons, playing sports with the students during an extracurricular activity, and much more.

Longer itineraries may include a visit to the Maasai Boma, which is a rich cultural experience, a coffee tour, and a visit to a student's home.

What is a favourite activity for visitors at St Jude's?

Home visits are usually the highlight for most visitors. This is when a visitor can experience the life of our students by visiting one of their families. It really helps visitors connect with our mission of fighting poverty through education.

Other favourite activities include tours of our on-campus art gallery and classroom sessions.

How can people visit St Jude's?

Just send us an email! We are happy to help plan your itinerary to ensure you have the best experience with us. We accept overnight, day, and even drop-in visitors. So, even if you are just passing through Arusha and only have a few hours to spare, we'd be happy to show you around!

Our Visitors team is happy to plan your next visit to St Jude's.
Book your trip today.