



The School
of St Jude

JUNE – AUG 2026

St Jude's News



Digital opportunity: Our Form 5 students recently received their own personal laptops, opening up new opportunities for learning, research and digital skills development.



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



Our American fundraising partner is registered as American Friends of The School of St Jude, Tanzania, Inc., and is responsible for all funds raised in the US.



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The power of speaking up

Improving spoken English skills and building confidence through our new Spoken English Immersion Program.

Laughter and lively discussions filled the classrooms during our first-ever two-week English Immersion Program at The School of St Jude. Led by a diverse group of international volunteers, the program brought together more than 300 newly enrolled Form 1 and Form 5 students for fun, interactive activities designed to strengthen their spoken English, improve their pronunciation and build confidence using the language in everyday situations.

This support is particularly important for our new Form 1 students, many of whom join St Jude's from government primary schools where Kiswahili is the main language of instruction and English is taught as a subject. As St Jude's is an English-medium school, the immersion program gives them valuable extra opportunities to practice spoken English and build confidence as they adjust to their new learning environment, alongside ongoing support through our English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Among the volunteers was Michael, a retired primary school principal from Australia. He arrived ready to share his teaching experience and language expertise but quickly realised he was receiving just as much as he gave.

"The students are so receptive to learning. They want to be challenged. They want us to correct them and help them improve," says Michael.

Through interactive language games, structured role-plays, debate sessions and movement-based activities, the volunteers gave students opportunities to practise speaking, listening and responding in English.

"When we first arrived, many students were very quiet," adds Michael. "But now they greet us confidently, speak louder, ask questions and are eager to practise their English. Watching that confidence grow has been incredibly rewarding."



Stronger together: English Immersion Program volunteers joined our dedicated support staff and Founder Gemma Sisia to celebrate the connections, learning and shared experiences that made this year's program so meaningful.



For Katherine, a teacher from the United States, the St Jude's classrooms were a refreshing reminder of why she became an educator.

"It's been a breath of fresh air," she says. "So many students here genuinely want to learn. They encourage one another, volunteer to participate and celebrate each other's progress."



Inspiring the next generation: International volunteers Michael and Katherine reflected on their time with the English Immersion Program while highlighting the meaningful connections and confidence built with St Jude's students.

Jasmine, a new Form 5 student at St Jude's says the supportive atmosphere made it easier to take part, try new things and speak up.

"At first, I was nervous because I was afraid of making mistakes," she says. "Now I feel much more confident. The volunteers encouraged us to speak without worrying about being perfect, and that really helped me believe in myself."

Roman, a Form 1 student, experienced a similar breakthrough.

"At the start, I was shy because I wasn't sure if my English was good enough," he says. "I can see a big difference now."

Working in groups with volunteers didn't feel like a normal lesson instead, it felt like learning with friends."

For both students, the program has changed how they think about making mistakes and stepping outside their comfort zones.

"I've learnt that making mistakes is part of learning," Jasmine reflected. Roman agreed, adding, "They've shown us that confidence grows every time you step outside your comfort zone."

Program coordinators Annette and Geoff have seen first-hand the impact of the English Immersion Program and the connections it creates between students and volunteers.

"This program is about more than learning English, it's about building friendships, sharing cultures and growing together," Geoff says.

With this year's program complete, Annette and Geoff are already looking ahead to 2027.

"We can't wait to welcome more volunteers next year and see the positive impact this journey will continue to have."



Building confidence in the classroom: Volunteers guided students through interactive speaking exercises, encouraging active participation and helping learners master new vocabulary.

Know someone who would enjoy this article? **Share with your friends and help us spread the word.**



From young readers to authors

What began with a love of reading has become a story inspiring the next generation of young authors.

When Theresia and Irene joined St Jude's as Standard 1 students in 2013, the library quickly became their favourite place.

"I didn't know a school could have so many books," Irene recalls.



Impact in action: Uzuri is available as an eBook through the international online platform Amazon.

They spent their free time reading, exchanging recommendations and sharing stories with classmates. Before long, they began writing stories of their own. Their first three books, *Next to My Mommy*, *Secret of Colors* and *I Love Spaghetti* became so popular among students that some pages went missing from being passed around so often.

By Form 3, the young writers wanted to create something with a deeper purpose. The idea for their next book, *Uzuri* (which means beauty in Kiswahili), was born: a story encouraging young girls to embrace their identity, believe in themselves and know they are enough.

The idea was strong, but after writing four pages, they became stuck. Support came through St Jude's alumni network, which connected the girls with Beyond St Jude's (BSJ) Special Programs Senior Manager Ms Vivian and Beyond St Jude's and Career Development Programs Manager Mr Mussa. Together, they reached out to one of our

supporters, Ms Cathy, who mentored the girls and helped them push through their writer's block.

In 2025, Theresia and Irene rewrote *Uzuri* from scratch. They fitted writing around classes, examinations and extracurricular activities, working in quiet library corners and empty classrooms whenever they found time.

"It took us a full year to bring all the ideas together," Irene says. "Sometimes we experienced writer's block, but we kept going."

In November 2025, the completed manuscript was submitted for editing and publication. Today, *Uzuri* is available as an eBook through the international online platform Amazon.

Currently, the pair are completing their Community Service Year (CSY) at St Jude's, with Theresia in the Marketing Department and Irene in the Alumni Office. They hope their story will inspire other students to pursue their own creative ambitions.

Uzuri is proof of what can happen when students are given access to books, encouragement and people who believe in their ideas. One day, another young St Jude's student may pick it up from the library shelf and realise that they, too, can become an author.



You can help make more dreams possible. **Sponsor a student scholarship today.**



St Jude's snapshots

In case you missed it, here's an inside look into what's been happening at St Jude's this last quarter.

1



Standard 1 Scholarship Application Day

Families gathered for our Standard 1 Scholarship Application Day. Next, our Community Relations team will conduct house checks to ensure scholarships reach families with the greatest financial need.

2



Welcoming our Form 5 students

Our new Form 5 students received a warm St Jude's welcome with a day filled with friendship, fun and celebration. From exciting sport matches and lively stage performances to a special shared lunch, the event helped students connect, build friendships and feel at home.

3



Steps that give hope

A team of dedicated international supporters recently conquered Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for St Jude's. Their incredible effort raised \$108,000, which was matched by a generous donor.

4



Upgrade loading...

Our 2026 Annual Appeal came to a close. Together, we reached our fundraising goal, bringing us one step closer to creating even more opportunities for our students.



5



Give blood, give life

Our secondary school students and staff recently came together for a blood donation drive at Smith Campus helping provide a vital resource for patients in hospitals when they need it most.

6

Form 5 Laptops

Our Form 5 students received their own personal laptops, giving them the chance to take their skills beyond the lab and into their everyday studies!



7



Pan-African Debate Championships

We recently hosted the Pan-African Speech and Debate League, where students explored the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and learned the Public Forum debate format from dedicated volunteers from Montana, USA.

8

Career Day

St Jude's Girls' Secondary School hosted its annual Career Day this week, connecting students with professionals from a range of industries and helping them explore the many pathways available for their future.





Teaching Together

We recently welcomed educators from the United States through Kufundisha Pamoja, a partnership program whose name means teaching together in Kiswahili.

Through professional development, collaborative lesson planning, co-teaching and immersion in daily school life, visiting educators and St Jude's teachers exchange skills, knowledge and experiences.

Mrs Erin, an art teacher at The Galloway School in Atlanta, Georgia, spent the program working alongside Mr Kephas, St Jude's art teacher at Girls' Secondary School. Here, they share some of the highlights from the program.

Mrs Erin – Art teacher



What has been a highlight for you during the program?

Getting to know Mr Kephas has been such a highlight. Seeing the students have so much affection for him has been so special because you can tell that they have a really good rapport and they're comfortable in the art room, which is so important in encouraging them to take creative risks.

Why is investing in teachers so important?

When you invest in a teacher, you are investing in hundreds or thousands of students' futures because every teacher touches so many students. And so, if you can make an impact with a teacher and teach them something new, and they teach that to many other students, and those students go out in the world and spread that, it's definitely making an impact on the future.

Why did you want to get involved in this program?

I teach art to middle school students, which is grades five through eight at my school. My school is called the Galloway School and we've had a partnership with the Kufundisha Pamoja program for about seven or eight years. Many of my colleagues have come and really just raved about their experience and how positive it was. And I'm really excited that it was finally my turn to come!

What have you learnt from this program?

Mr Kephas taught me how to make batik (a traditional fabric-dyeing technique), which was really exciting. I have a whole new vision for how I'm going to use that in my classroom. Mr Kephas has been so generous in sharing his teaching wisdom and his teaching time with me. It's not always easy to allow another teacher into your classroom but he's been really open to my ideas and sharing the time.



How would you describe the experience in one word?

Exceptional! This experience has added lots to my career and professional development. Erin is an exceptional teacher who I learned a lot of unique teaching techniques from. These are things that I am already bringing into the classroom.

What have you enjoyed most about working together?

I've loved sharing ideas. We plan the lesson together and think about how we can engage the students. We also look at how we can use the school's available resources such as the projector and the computers in lessons. The students also ask her a lot of questions. They really enjoyed having her in the classroom.

What have you gained from this experience?

When you get the chance to talk with another teacher from the other side of the world who is teaching the same thing, it really helps. When you have a problem, you can share it with them, and they can give you a new way to tackle it. That can be really helpful in the future. That's why we say we gained a lot from the experience, especially new skills.

Want to support the next generation of Tanzanian leaders? **Donate today.**





A legacy that lives on

A simple decision today can make a difference for generations to come.



Sue's thoughtful gift will help support St Jude's students for years to come.



For supporter Sue, leaving a gift in her Will to The School of St Jude is a natural extension of the way she has supported the school for many years.

Sue first heard about St Jude's through an article in The Sydney Morning Herald. Inspired by the school's mission to fight poverty through education, she began making regular donations. As she learnt more about St Jude's and its work, she decided to sponsor the academic scholarship of a St Jude's student.

Now, Sue has taken another step by including St Jude's in her Will.

"My parents were always an example of giving to charity," Sue says. "I've always thought that if one can, it's good to support charities in one's own country and overseas."

Sue sees a gift in her Will as an opportunity to continue supporting a cause she cares about while helping create a lasting impact for future generations.

"Many people my age have been lucky enough to benefit from close to full employment and many years of economic prosperity, and many of us will die with a significant estate. If everyone like that left even a relatively small portion of their estate to one or more charities, it could make a tremendous difference," she adds.

"A donation to a charity like St Jude's would seem to me to have an ongoing lasting effect in helping to bring children, and indirectly their families, out of poverty. That's a wonderful legacy."

You can help create a brighter future for generations of young Tanzanians by leaving a gift to St Jude's in your Will.
Leave a gift today.



Learn Kiswahili

Can you master this new word?

Tumaini

(Too-mah-ee-nee) Noun. Singular

Tumaini translates to “hope” in English. It describes the belief that something positive can happen in the future, even when circumstances are uncertain. It is the confidence that challenges can be overcome and better days lie ahead.

In everyday Kiswahili, the word is often used when talking about dreams, resilience, optimism and perseverance.

At The School of St Jude, tumaini is found everywhere. It lives in the student revising late into the evening for an exam, the teacher encouraging one more attempt, the parent believing education can transform their family’s future and the graduate taking their first steps into a career that once seemed impossible.



History

The concept of tumaini has deep roots across the Swahili Coast and East Africa. In Tanzanian culture, it is closely associated with perseverance, resilience and patience. Elders may encourage young people to kuwa na tumaini (“have hope”) when facing difficulties, reminding them that success often comes through persistence rather than immediate results.

For many Tanzanians, Tumaini is more than an emotion. It is a way of looking at life.

How to use the word:

- » Education has given St Jude’s students tumaini for a better future
- » Tumaini is the beginning of every great dream
- » St Jude’s students live with tumaini of transforming their communities.



Come visit us

Discover the many ways to experience St Jude's, connect with our community and see the impact of education in action.

Celebrate 25 years of St Jude's

 **23–31 January 2027**

Join us in January as we celebrate our 25 year journey From Hope to Impact. Reconnect with the St Jude's community, meet our students, staff and alumni, experience life across our schools and help us mark this special milestone. The week will culminate in our main anniversary celebration on Friday 29 January 2027 - the anniversary of the day St Jude's first opened its gates.

A full itinerary and event details will be shared soon. If you're interested in joining us, contact info@schoolofstjude.co.tz to let us know.

Join us for SASA 2026

 **28 November– 12 December 2026**

Looking for an adventure with purpose? The SASA Program brings volunteers together with St Jude's students through Skills, Action, Service and Adventure. Share your skills, discover Tanzania and build meaningful connections with our students, culminating in the SASA Trek. You could share a skill such as:

- » Creative writing
- » Finance and budgeting
- » Coordinating a hiking/camping experience
- » Chess
- » Self-defence
- » Field events, such as javelin and discus
- » Sports (such as badminton and basketball)
- » Or bring something completely unique!



Apply now

Not the right fit? There are plenty of other ways to visit St Jude's. **Get in touch.**

