



MUKURU PROMOTION CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Empowerment Step by Step

Monthly Newsletter
March 2019

From The Director:

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Dear Friends,

As you will read, March was a very challenging month. The great heat, the lack of rain and huge dust everywhere added to the normal challenges. It was great to see the four primary schools and the secondary hold the Annual General Meetings of parents and elect new parent representatives.

We were very happy to witness the Graduation of those who had undergone training and to hear stories of the success of many in finding employment. We are very grateful to Paula and her group, Irene, Vera, Catherine and Claire for their support of the Rehabilitation Centre and for treating the children in Rehab and those in St Marian's to a day out, which they really enjoyed. Happy memories are very important for children who have lived a life of extreme deprivation. Thanks to all who contributed to the support. We were grateful to Wolfgang Boehn a long time support and friend of MPC who provided a few days of training for our staff development.

Thanks also to the various Kenyans who supported our children in care and to all who sponsor them and our school children. You make it possible for the children to continue in education.

Wishing you best wishes for the coming winter season.

Sr Mary

Social & Health Services:

The department was teeming with activity this month as each social worker continued with the assessments of the students and also attended to clients at the different offices on the 5 MPC sites. Within the first 2 weeks of March there were six fire outbreaks in five different villages of the Mukuru slums. The weather has been unusually hot, dry and very dusty. There have been no rains since October last year. There is a drought in the north of the country and hundreds have died as a result. In our area the fires affected more than 100 pupils and students in the Mukuru schools. There were some tragic stories where students were sent home to get 'extra school fees' and perished in the fires. We received donations of bedding, food and school items for the families that were affected and the social workers helped distribute them to the affected families. We are very grateful to the Followers of Lord Mahavir Swami and the Friends of Mukuru Western Australia for their generous support to the fire victims.



Fire outbreaks at Maasai and Commercial villages in Mukuru slums



Families affected by the fire outbreak receiving mattresses and other household items



Staff members organise the parcels for distribution to the fire victims

Dealing with the fallout of the fires proved extra challenging as there were the normal activities on top of a very busy month. Again our social workers outreached to over two thousand seven hundred cases. For 9 social workers that's a case of load over 300 clients each for the month. There is never any time to be idle.

Type of Activity	Number of Cases
Sexual Abuse cases	9
Drug Abuse	1
Amaranth Clients	76
Malnourished Babies	14
Truancy and Absenteeism	8
Support with clothes	18
Home visit for case assessment	67
Behavior problem	6
Moral Formation Talks	1,310
Standard 8 assessment	513
Nutritional support	133
Uniform support	324
Families affected by Fire out break	145
Lunch Boxes Distribution	36
Medical Cases	98
Missing Child	1
Total	2,759

MPC Clinic:

The focus for the month was to check to see how our pupils / students are doing within our institutions. The schools received attention from the medical staff as the nurses, clinicians and doctors went round each of them and dispensed to all pupils and students the deworming medication as part of the medical checkup and follow up procedures for the year. The cervical cancer screening program is well underway and over 30 women have availed of the free service. We are thankful to John Nugent, Dublin, who provided the funds for some of the pathology expenses.

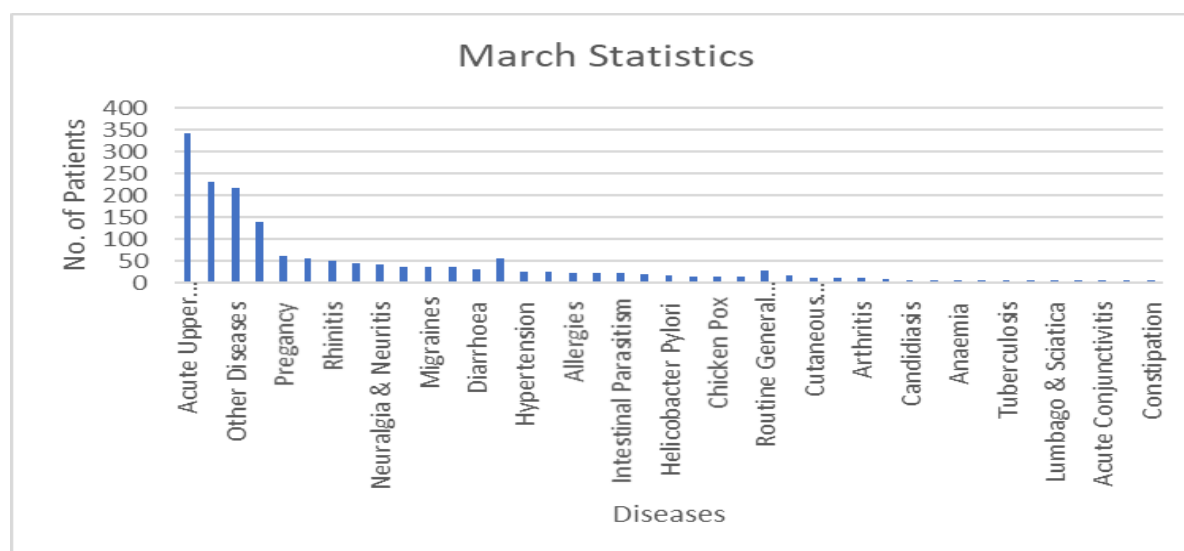


Clinic HOD Agnes Chebet shows the new signage around the St Catherine's site.

The numbers who attended the Clinic increased by 189 from the February statistics. We are happy that people from Mukuru slums are able to access health care. Unfortunately, over 30% of the cases are babies and very young children. From the 30% total treatments over 54% of that figure were revisits. It would seem that the under 5s are taking longer to heal. We need to work out how we can reduce these figures for under 5s. We suspect that nutrition plays a big part in most of these cases.

Patients Treated in March 2019

Patients		Under 5	Under 13	Above 13	Total
New cases	Male	107	63	186	356
	Female	124	81	327	532
Revisits	Male	138	32	130	300
	Female	143	32	309	484
Total		512	208	952	1,672



During the previous month we had a visit from Klaus Zeugner, a photographer, who was preparing some material for DKA Austria. DKA Austria is a long time partner of MPC. Klaus, who is also a part-time lecturer, when he returned to Vienna he shared his experiences with his students. The students rallied around and provided some funds for the roof repairs of the Clinic waiting area. This is an area that was in desperate need of repair. Now the patients can sit in the waiting bay safe in the knowledge that they won't get wet.



The Old Roof



Exposed beams

New Sheeting



There are hundreds of people each day coming to the St Catherine's site so it was necessary for security reasons to place signage around the site. The three major centres on this site are primary school, clinic and rehabilitation centre. The signage helps direct the foot traffic.



MPC Rehabilitation Centre

The 2019 recruitment program ended this month. Paula Cullen and her group, who were visiting this month, took a few of the 2018 group with them into the streets to show them where they were 12 months ago. Accompanied also by staff they returned with 5 new boys. All new recruits undergo medical check-ups. Many of the boys were found with amoeba parasites, skin infections, wounds and stomach ulcers to name a few diseases as you would expect living in dumpsites and slums.

Interviews are conducted to help build a brief case history of the boys that are then presented to the Children's Office for committals so that the boys can reside at the Centre for the program. The boys had their first family meeting and during this time all participants had the chance to express their issues, living experiences, the things they would like changed and vote for their own leaders.

Paula, Vera, Catherine and Clare spent much time with the boys and brought donations for them in the form of uniforms, shoes, clothes, and football shoes among other things. Decking out the boys for the year has made a terrific impact on the boys. The uniform is worn with pride by the boys.



Uniforms and shoes given by Paula, Clare and her friends



2018 boys (in blue T-shirts) with the five boys they recruited

There were other treats for the boys during the month as a group from Winners Fellowship came and brought fruits for the boys. A woman named Bella came and celebrated her birthday and shared snacks with the boys.

Primary Schools:

The enrollment in the four schools continued with St. Elizabeth having the highest number of pupils enrolled. St. Elizabeth held a 'Ring a Bell' event which seeks to sensitize the children, community and larger public on the importance of inclusion for children living with disabilities in schools and in different activities. All schools continued with the various learnings. The biggest challenge was the feeding program. We are still waiting on the Government to provide the maize and beans for the 5,916 children. Fortunately, our donor has provide porridge for each student during March.

Primary School	No. of Teachers	Enrolment	Teacher: Pupil Ratio
St. Bakhita	24	1,010	1:42
St. Elizabeth	33	1,938	1:58
Mukuru Kayaba	29	1,665	1:57
St. Catherine	29	1,303	1:45
Overall	115	5,916	1:51

During the month, the four schools held their Annual General meetings. At this time, the old Board of Management teams were disbanded and new teams selected. We have co-sponsored schools which means that under the Education Act, the sponsors have representations on the Boards. Once the schools select their respective Boards they then must go to the Ministry of Education for final evaluations and approvals. The process may take up to 4 weeks but it is to ensure that all the stakeholders have representation. The composition for each school board is as shown below.

Board of Management Members		Representation Number
Parents		6
Sponsors	Mukuru Promotion Centre	1
	Sisters of Mercy	1
	Catholic Church	1
Special Needs		1
Special Interest		1
Student Council		1 represented by school president
County Education Board		1
School principal		1
Teacher (represents teachers)		1
Total		15

St. Michael's Mixed Day Secondary

St Michael's held its AGM that was attended by over 200 parents. It was good to see so many parents attend the meeting as it demonstrated a keen interest by them. Many issues were discussed and statements made that we hope will be realized throughout the year as the parents get more involved in their children's development. As the parents are doing their part, the school is doing its part by ensuring that the teachers become more skilled in their disciplines. Some of the teachers went for a training and capacity building session at Strathmore University under the MACHEO program. The principal attended a County meeting by KNEC (*Kenya National Examination Council*) where nation wide exam registration irregularities were discussed and how to reduce the practice. St Michael's has 108 students registered for 2019 KCSE examination.

We are well into the school term. As a school we celebrated Ash Wednesday and started our Lent observances. We acknowledged our students who performed well at the County games and athletics competitions. Winfred Mwende, qualified for the National Walking Competitions which will be held in Mombasa during the April holidays. We wish her well. The football and basketball teams qualified for the Regionals. All participants received certificates of merit.

The Sisters of Mercy Education Office organized the 'March for Life' event that promotes the importance of life where 30 students attended. There were 5 outbreaks in the Kayaba, Kingstone and Commercial, villages in Mukuru which impacted on 15 students and their families. Our social workers and counsellors assisted them with counseling and basic items from donors.



Ash Wednesday



Winfred Mwende



Basketball Team



St Michael's AGM



Athletics Team

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

The two major activities at Skills in March were the release of the 2018 NITA exam results and the Class of 2018 Graduation. We were delighted to know that all students passed their NITA exams except for one student.

The 2018 Graduation was attended by 77 students out of the 142 who sat the exams and qualified. Clearly not everyone attended because many of them had already gained employment which we are delighted about.

The ceremony was held in the multipurpose hall with great fanfare. The sense of achievement ran high for the day. Most of the students have already found employment in different places. We wish those who are still trying to find employment all the best for the coming year. There were invited guests and past students who provided inspirational and motivational talks to the new learners.



Some of the graduands at the graduation ceremony

Sponsorship:

MICATO Safaris came on board to sponsor pupils with outstanding performances to go to secondary school. A percentage of the profits from the safari company goes each year to educating students in the Reuben Kwa Jenga area. This was actually one of the schools that was under the umbrella of Mukuru Promotion Centre but was handed over to the Marianist Congregation in late 1990s. Micato visited St. Elizabeth Primary School and gave 300 pupils full school uniform (dresses, shorts & shirts, sweaters, socks and shoes).

As the term rolls on it is important to start visiting the various schools who have sponsored students. The Donor Relations Officer began the visits to over 20 counties and met with the different principals. He had a chance to see to assess the school environments, meet one on one with the teachers of the students and get reports on the students academic and overall conduct in school. It was a good opportunity to interact with the students and know how they are doing and if they have any challenges. These visits are also aimed at encouraging the students and reminding them that they have people who care.



Some of the students who received uniforms from Micato Safaris



Some of the sponsored students in the different counties

Songa Mbele Na Masomo

The staff and children had a memorial prayer service for the late Danica Olexova at the Centre. It was upsetting for the staff who had been part of her journey at Songa. Most of the staff attended the service at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish on Ngong Road, Nairobi.

The therapy sessions continued and this month there was improved consistency in attendance which has led to improvement of the children. Unfortunately, one child in the special daycare was very ill and did not survive the illness.

The special daycare has 20 children, the special coaching class has 25 and the coaching class has 34 children. The Star Kids Initiative and Vitabu Vyetu group came for their monthly and weekly sessions with the children.

We are thankful for the visitors and volunteers who help us each day. They provide that little bit of extra care for the children.



The children received sweaters as part of their uniforms to differentiate the coaching and special coaching classes

The wall is slowly progressing. The Construction Committee has been meeting since the tender was awarded. The finer details and materials are being put into place before the commencement of the wall proper.



Happenings around MPC



A group called Concern Worldwide visited St Bakhita during the month and provided school bags, resource materials for students and sanitary pads for the girls.



The final touches were applied to the new library at the Rehab Centre. Tiling is now completed, the outside sheets are in place and the shelving will be completed in April. The water tank platform is finally up so now we just have to put the 2 x 10,000lt tanks for water harvesting.



DKA Austria provided MPC with some funds to help improve the educational resources. With the multipurpose hall we needed to maximise the venue with some audio visual equipment. Each year group can enjoy the benefits of digital resources. We received great catechetical resources from our friends in Spain. The multimedia set up will provide lots of opportunities for students as well as staff, community and parents gatherings. We also needed to put up the curtains to reduce the light and glare.



Speakers are mounted on the wall



Curtains are hanging



Wolfgang Bohm with some MPC staff members



t Happened....

Today in History:

History Behind Saint Josephine Bakhita

She was born in Sudan, in the region of Darfur, in the city of Olgossa, Africa by a loving, and prosperous family around 1869. At the age of nine, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery, where a series of owners humiliated, tortured and mutilated her. She was often beaten and kicked and whipped. Her trauma was so great that she forgot her birth name and her kidnappers gave her the name Bakhita which means fortunate.

At the age of 13 she was sold to a Turkish General and every day his mistresses' punished her with whips and beatings. Bakhita underwent the excruciating ordeal of tattooing. By the miracle of God, she didn't succumb since she was destined to better things.

In 1883, Bakhita was sold to an Italian family who treated her with kindness and respect. They brought her back to Italy to work as a maid and care giver to their baby, Mimmina. Bakhita became devoted to the child. When Mimmina was old enough to be sent to a boarding school in Venice, Bakhita accompanied her. The school was run by the Canossian Sisters. It was there that Bakhita first heard the gospel and believed that it was God's will that she be free. Slavery was illegal in Italy so Bakhita was able to leave her Italian owners and follow God's calling for her.

Bakhita was baptized in January 1890 and took the name Josephine. She was also known as "Mother Moretta". She then remained in the catechumenate for four more years. She said, "during that time I could hear more and more clearly the gentle voice of the Lord, urging me to consecrate myself to God."

After prayer and discernment, Josephine joined the religious order, pronouncing her religious vows on 8 December 1896 at the age of 41. The next fifty years of her life were marked by simplicity, witnessing to God's love through cooking, sewing, embroidery and attending to the door. When she was on door duty, she would gently lay her hands on the heads of the children who attended the nearby school. Her voice was pleasing to the little ones, comforting to the poor and suffering. She was a source of encouragement and her constant smile, humility and simplicity won people's hearts. As she grew older she experienced long, painful years of sickness, but she continued to persevere in hope, constantly choosing the good. When visited and asked how she was, she'd respond: 'As the Master desires'.

Surrounded by her religious Sisters, she died at age 78 on 8 February 1947 in the country of Italy, in the city of Vincenza. She lay in state for three days, and mourners noticed that her limbs remained flexible. Mothers lifted her hands and placed them on the heads of their children, praying for her blessing. Large crowds followed the hearse to the cemetery. She was a woman of immense faith and forgiveness. She was beatified on 17 May 1992 and canonized on 1 October 2000. She is the only saint originally from Sudan and she is now the patron saint of Sudan. She is also a patron saint for victims of slavery and trafficked persons.

When St. Bakhita Primary School one of MPC schools was founded in February 1995 which parents intended to call it after Cardinal Maurice Otunga, he declined the offer and requested them to call it after Blessed Josephine Bakhita for giving an example of great patience, love, humility and understanding hence the origin of the name St. Bakhita Primary School.



Mukuru Promotion Centre

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Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy

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each day.

