



Mukuru Promotion Centre
Empowerment Step By Step
Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy
www.mercymukuru.co.ke

Newsletter

October 2021

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Skills Therapy Block Building

Dear Partners, Supporters and Friends,

I spent part of the first two weeks of October in England. The Sisters of the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy hosted me for which I am very grateful. I was very happy to meet Sr Assumpta, who worked with us for years for Mukuru children, in Bermondsey Convent. Bermondsey was one of the ten Foundations established by the Foundress Catherine McAuley. It was a time of reflection, of remembering those early sisters, their splendid work among poor immigrants and feeling their presence and mission still alive among us.

After two negative PCR tests I travelled to Newcastle under Lyme where I stayed in Coolock Pastoral Centre with Sisters Betty and Bridie. Again, I found myself embraced by the spirit of Mercy in prayer, in pictures and practice. I was renewed and inspired. I met Salvatore and his wife Carmel, who had asked to meet me before giving a big donation. It was a very moving meeting, as Salvatore and Carmel are a couple of great faith.

Carmel.



Sr Betty, Sr Bridie, Salvatore and Carmel.

They desired to enable very poor children access health care and education. We spoke for two hours and then prayed the Rosary together in English and Italian. It was a very moving experience.

I returned to Kenya through Madrid where another man of great faith Javier, had collected catechetical books and material for Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre. I was able to collect them and also visit a very original and inspiring educational Centre and meet the founder and staff. I was hosted by the Missionaries of Africa and met Stella and Pedro Urieta and their daughter Stella and her friend, Donato, who had volunteered with us a few years ago and had dinner with them. I was glad to get a chance to meet them all again.

The events and activities continued in October on the 5 different sites at MPC outreaching to thousands each day. We are grateful to the many generous people around the world who make them possible. I am truly proud and happy to be your partner in the various events in MPC.

May God bless and protect you and fill you with peace.

Sr Mary Killeen
Director

Education

The Month of October marked the beginning of Term Two 2021 academic year. Due to the condensed school calendar year the schools had a 5-day break in between terms which is normally 4 weeks. The temporary academic calendar year has placed many people, including the pupils under extra pressure to meet various deadlines set by the Ministry of Education. The challenges posed by the extra demands are an even greater issue for schools in the slums. We still experience teacher shortage for our four primary schools as the Government is transferring teachers without replacement. St Elizabeth Primary has been hit the hardest with 4 teachers transferred. The Head Teacher is trying to manage big enrolments against inadequate teacher numbers.

The current enrolments for the 4 MPC primary schools are:

Primary School	Boys	Girls	Total
St Bakhita	525	536	1,061
St Catherine	628	647	1,275
St Elizabeth	852	935	1,787
Sancta Maria Kayaaba	794	859	1,653
<i>Gender Percentage MPC Primary Schools</i>	<i>48.46%</i>	<i>51.54%</i>	<i>100%</i>
Total	2,799	2,977	5,776

Although the teacher / pupil ratio is very high MPC is looking at other ways to develop the skills of young minds. The Mercy Education Office organized a Pupils and Students Council Leadership training at the Passionists Retreat Centre in Karen. The pupils and students from Mercy associated schools were trained on the different types of leadership and communication skills and how they can bring peace and harmony to students at their schools.



The various MPC schools continue to offer faith formation and spiritual development through the sacramental curriculum and catechism programs. Mass is celebrated each month; catechism classes are held 2 days a week; and Government curricula classes are conducted each day.

Generally, Kenyans are very religious and 85.5% of the country identify themselves as Christian and 11% as Muslim and the other 2% consist of Hindus, Sikhs, Baha'is.

The Magharibi Rotary Club visited St Bakhita Primary and held a hand washing event where they demonstrated the correct hand washing steps and encouraged the pupils to wash hands regularly to reduce any form of illness especially CoVid19. The Club also planted 50 trees in the compound and promised to plant different fruit trees as well.



President of the Rotary Club displaying hand washing steps



Tree seedlings

We are still lobbying the Government about the Feeding Program. To offer one meal each day to over 6,000 pupils and students amounts to nearly US\$7,000 per month. We are very grateful to the Pankaj Team and all his donors for providing the bulk of the meals for the children.



St Catherine's Boys enjoying their lunch



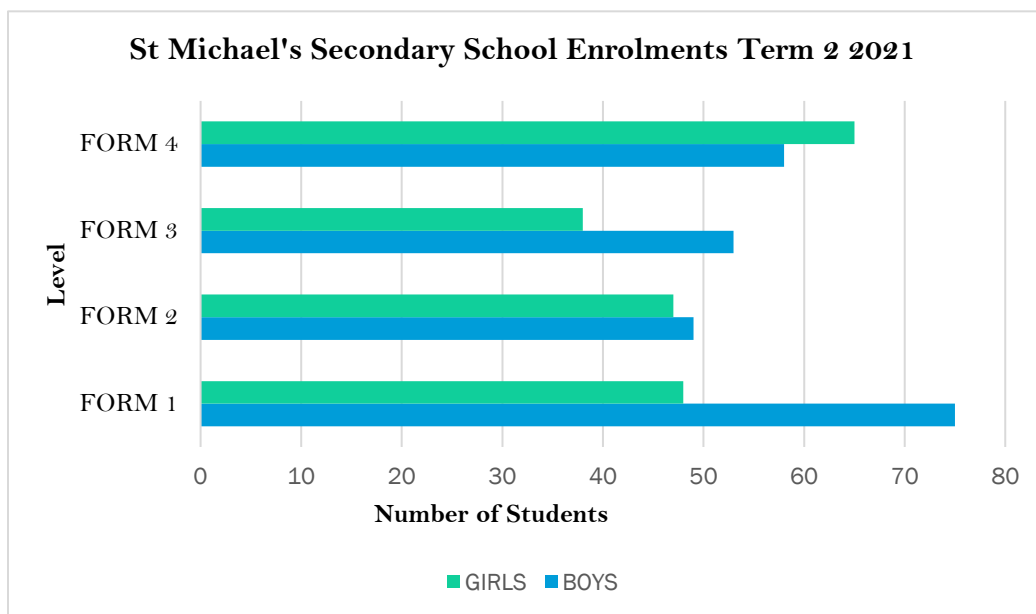
Year 2 St Catherine's Pupil focused on her lunch

Sancta Maria Kayaaba Primary School pupils received donations of shoes from Hon. Jaguar (Area MP)



St Michael's Secondary School

Term 2 commenced in October and is shorter than normal with 11 teaching weeks that will conclude on 23rd December 2021. Only 278 students attended the first day even though there are 434 enrolled students. The rescheduling of terms is proving an issue for many students.



St Michael's has two science laboratories which places it among the top 10% well-resourced schools in Kenya. Additionally, the new computer laboratory was established in 2018 with a completely new installation of cabling to maximize the number of functional computers to 38. Like all things electronic it has a finite life. Absa Bank, through its Computers for Schools (CFS), upgraded the laboratory and provided 20 new computers for the students. The upgrade provided the Form 4 candidates to undertake their KNEC examinations with ease.



Upgraded computer laboratory

Nothing is left to waste and the pre—used computers which had been upgraded several times have made their way to the E-Waste project operating from the Vocational Training Centre.



The new 2021 Student Council were commissioned after the student elections. The new Student Council received further training at the Passionists Retreat Centre in Karen, courtesy of Mercy Education Office. The student leaders had an opportunity to interact with other student leaders from Mercy associated schools.



St Michael's Senior Student Council 2021

Back Row: Paul Okumu, Evelyne Akoth, Simon Mwangi, Calvin Odera, Joy Gertrude, Purity Mukei.
 Second Row: Lucy Wanjiku, Evelyne Amatika, Bectone Morang'a, Abigail Mutheu, Hillary Anyango, Rachel Mwende, Teresa Kerubo.
 Front Row: Ann Kemunto, Newton Muthii, Emmanuel Wekesa, Jackline Mwende, Brian Onsoti.
 Principal Jasper Obiri.

Mentoring is a strong value at St Michael's and the various programs continued throughout the term. The focus for the term is on integrity, ethics, performance and discipline. Stathmore University's Macheo program also continued with a more academic focus.

The social worker supported a number of students after some had lost their parents during October. There were also 8 students who required medical attention with minor ailments. It is very fortunate for our students who can be treated at the Clinic without charge. Other students were supported with uniform aid and home visits.



Full Student Leadership Team

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

Since the CoVid19 infections had fallen President Kenyatta cancelled the nationwide curfew on October 20 that has been in place since March 2020, as less than 5% of tests each day turning out positive. Although this was cause for celebration for many, the President urged Kenyans to continue observing the CoVid19 containment measures.

The Vocational training Centre through its teachers, continued to impart knowledge and skills through demonstration, lectures and library visits. The Front Office class for example visited Alliance Française Library situated in Nairobi Central Business District. The Alliance Française was founded in 1949. Over the past six decades, the institute has evolved becoming one of the largest in the African continent with 4,000 students learning the French language in Nairobi. The Front Office students have been taking French as support subject and so the visit to Alliance Française was a thrill. The students were lucky to get the opportunity to interact with staff from the Institute and experience the French tradition, cuisine, art and approach to life. They also spent time in the library and had a lecture from one of the best teachers in the institute. The Alliance Française Institutes are known to be leaders of authentic, quality training in French language, hence the exposure was indeed very helpful and stimulated the interest of the students.



Front Office students interact with staff at Alliance Française

Currently there are 241 students enrolled in one of the 8 vocational training courses at the Centre. The gender equation is 56% female and 44% male with the computer packages course the most popular, followed by Hairdressing and Beauty.

Clothing is an important part of our society that helps people keep warm and survive extreme weather. People practice self-expression by the clothes they wear. The Dressmaking and tailoring students have been producing clothing that is either fitted to the individual customer or designed for different purposes. The students started to train on pattern drafting, cutting and now they have mastered the art of sewing fabrics and turning them into blouses, dresses, skirts and shorts. Since their admission this year, the students have managed to develop fine motor skills, improved on concentration, patience, self-control and speed.

Earlier this month, the students received a sewing machine from Sr Bridie Stephens RSM from the United Kingdom. The machine will be very useful as it has multiple functions including automatic buttonholes. Students could hardly hold their joy after receiving the machine.



Dressmaking students try out the donated sewing machine



Food Production as the name suggests, is all about preparing food. Food Production is a major course in hospitality industry where candidates learn various aspects such as preparation techniques, cooking methods, kitchen management, food cost control etc. The Catering class has covered both the theoretical and practical aspects of Food and Beverage Production. They started with hot starters and their accompaniment then moved to cold starters. The class has also covered various proteins and starches.

Evelyne Kithaka the class teacher has been teaching Food Production for over three years at the Centre and her aim has always been to develop a range of knowledge and understanding, skills and techniques, personal qualities and attributes essential for successful performances in the hospitality industry. She works alongside the Food and Beverage service instructor, Winfred, who is also the Front Office Management instructor. The course is suitable for both self-employment and salaried jobs, hence students are told how to put up a business, promote and monitor their product. We also teach these students life skills in order to help them develop basic living skills. This will help them find new ways of thinking and develop problem solving skills.

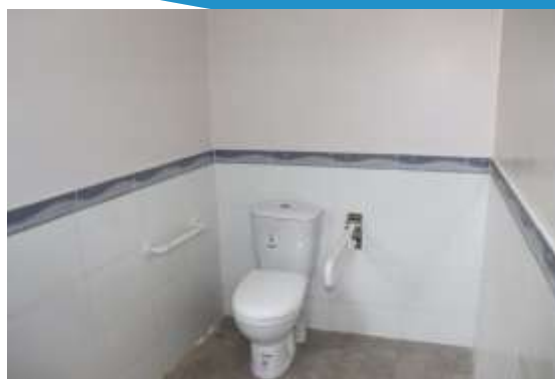


Catering Class in action

Skills Therapy Facility



Classroom



Disability Toilet



Corridor view



Ramp



Therapy Room



Sensory Room

Social Services

The summary of the social outreach services is listed below and as you can ascertain October has been quite an active month with over 1,400 interventions.

Social and Health Services Statistics											
For the Month of October 2021											
NO	Case type / Activities	Education						Health	Welfare		Total
		St Bakhita	Sancta Maria Kayaaba	St Elizabeth	St Catherine	St Michael's Secondary	Vocational Training Centre SKILLS	MPC Clinic	Songa Mbele na Masomo	MPC Rehabilitation Centre	
1	Abuse Cases	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
2	Amaranth Clients	0	0	0	94	0	0	0	0	0	94
3	Behavior and Discipline Cases	3	3	6	4	0	1	0	0	2	19
4	Counseling and Guidance sessions	2	3	10	7	3	1	0	0	5	31
5	CoVid19 Hygiene Material Resources	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	38
6	Donation Issued	0	3	1	37	2	0	0	4	1	48
7	Donation Received	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	10	12	28
8	Fire and Floods Disaster assistance	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	Food Distribution	0	115	0	51	0	0	0	1	1	168
10	Home Visits	2	6	6	8	4	9	2	12	0	49
11	Hospital Visits	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	2	9
12	Malnourished Babies	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	40
13	Medical Cases	6	8	7	66	8	4	372	3	5	479
14	Meetings and Trainings	0	2	2	1	2	3	1	5	2	18
15	Mentorship Sessions	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	6
16	Mobilization of Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Needy Families Support (Community)	0	0	3	21	0	2	0	0	0	26
18	Needy Primary and Secondary Students	16	3	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	26
19	Networking	0	3	5	4	0	5	0	1	0	18
20	New Admissions to MPC Institutions	0	2	20	2	0	0	0	2	6	32
21	New Teenage Pregnancies cases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	Nutritional Support	3	0	0	28	0	2	0	0	0	33
23	Pregnancy Support Packages	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Provision of Sanitary Towels	4	0	15	10	1	0	0	0	0	30
25	Referrals	6	3	9	6	7	0	9	4	0	44
26	Safeguarding Follow Ups	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
27	School Absenteeism/Truancy	3	31	5	53	26	0	0	0	0	118
28	Schools Profiles	24	0	12	15	39	0	0	5	0	95
29	School Visits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	Songa Mbele Therapy Sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	0	58
31	Sponsorship Follow-ups	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	0	10
32	Uniform Aid	0	9	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	14
Totals		69	194	117	500	95	29	391	111	36	1,542

The social workers across the five sites followed up many needy cases and what we are seeing is an increase in the number of malnourished babies.



Needy pupils receive new school uniforms

During the months we have on average 20 to 30 malnourished babies. This particular 1 year old cannot sit up or stand due to his malnourishment. The St Catherine's Social Office will be keeping a close eye on this baby as well as supporting the family with food parcels.



The symptoms of the pandemic are everywhere in the slums. It is heart breaking to see mothers and fathers trying to provide for their children. We are grateful to the many well-wishes who provide the basics to MPC for distribution to the hundreds who need help everyday.



A needy single mother assisted with baby clothes

Another pupil from St Elizabeth Primary receives clothes donation for her family. The Rehabilitation Centre also received donations from well-wishers.





R.T.I. Students donate provisions to the Rehabilitation Centre



MPC Distributes donations

A number of departments received training on the use of Fire Extinguishing equipment. It is mandatory to have all sorts of fire fighting equipment in the different departments. We were grateful to Bob Paterson who conducted the training across the Centre.



Fire Extinguishing Training

The demolition of hundreds of homes continued to make way for the new roads through the slums. The latest village is Sinai which is near the airport side of Mukuru slum.



Health Services

The number of patients attending the Clinic has remained constant over the last month. There were two major trainings during October. Firstly, following the acceptance of the Ministry of Health's invitation to attend a HIV 'Dolutegravir' training, the Clinic sent one nurse to attend. We hope that the training will better aid our service delivery to the Comprehensive Care Clinic in regard to ARV administration. At another time all the Clinic staff were taken through the fire equipment training at the Rehabilitation Centre.



Demonstration on fire extinguisher use

The Ministry of Health provided feedback on the TB Clinic that is carried out at the Clinic. On one level they were pleased that the number of TB and HIV patients have increased and the follow up has been commended. There were 5 new cases diagnosed and the good aspect is that they will receive treatment and follow up.

The numbers from the maternal and child health clinic are very pleasing. There were 162 children under the age of 5 and another 48 expectant mothers attended the Antenatal care clinic. It is great to see so many children and mothers being assisted.

The Clinic statistics for the month are listed below

The Laboratory Tests For October

	Type	Cases		Type	Cases
1	Stool analysis	129	10	Pregnancy Test	11
2	Full Hemogram	118	11	Rheumatoid Factor	10
3	Blood slide for Malaria	116	12	VDRL / Syphilis	9
4	Urinalysis	88	13	High vaginal swab	8
5	Haemoglobin check	44	14	Brucella antigen test	5
6	Helicobacter Pylori	42	15	Anti-Streptolysin O Test (ASOT)	2
7	Blood Sugar	17	16	Blood Grouping	1
8	Antenatal Profile	14	17	Lipid Profile	1
9	Salmonella antigen test	14			
	Total				629

Average 31 tests per day

Patients Treated in October 2021

Category	Gender	0-5 Years	6-12 Years	13-17 Years	18-35 Years	36-49 Years	50-64 Years	>65 Years	Total
New Cases	Female	110	75	35	191	56	24	5	496
	Male	94	42	24	80	33	10	2	285
		204	117	59	271	89	34	7	781
Revisits	Female	127	20	6	101	48	20	1	323
	Male	125	25	19	42	32	28	4	275
		252	45	25	143	80	48	5	598
Total		456	162	84	414	169	82	12	1,379
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>51.97</i>	<i>58.64</i>	<i>48.81</i>	<i>70.53</i>	<i>61.54</i>	<i>53.66</i>	<i>50.00</i>	<i>59.39</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>48.03</i>	<i>41.36</i>	<i>51.19</i>	<i>29.47</i>	<i>38.46</i>	<i>46.34</i>	<i>50.00</i>	<i>44.87</i>

The Top Ten Treated Ailments in October by Age Group

Disease	0-5 Years	6-12 Years	13-17 Years	18-35 Years	36-49 Years	50-64 Years	>65 Years	Total
Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	139	31	19	76	25	5	3	298
Lower Respiratory Tract Infection	27	17	6	10	7	3	0	70
Diarrhoea	9	16	3	16	7	1	0	52
Urinary Tract Infection	5	3	4	21	6	4	0	43
Gastritis	5	8	1	18	6	2	2	42
Febrile Illness	10	8	5	8	6	4	0	41
Gastroenteritis	13	6	3	10	3	0	0	35
Helminthiasis	0	0	6	5	8	7	0	26
Myalgia	0	0	3	13	1	8	0	25
Diabetes and Hypertension	0	0	0	2	7	9	2	20
Other Diseases	45	38	14	84	27	5	0	213
Total	253	127	64	263	103	48	7	865

Welfare Services

Songa Mbele na Masomo

The Kenyan Child Foundation representatives visited the new facility and met with the staff, children, consultants as well as the contractor. They were very pleased with all the wonderful work that happens each day. The new facility makes it an absolute delight as the children's smiles are so big when they arrive in the mornings that everyday is such a blessing. The children performed a number of skits for the visitors. The official opening will be held in 2022 so that more of the donors can attend.



Kenyan Child Foundation representatives with some Songa staff

During any month Songa Mbele receives many visitors. Representatives from Liliane Fonds and Cheshire Disability Kenya, who sponsor a number of children with disabilities throughout Kenya, came to conduct a number of interviews and home visits. Through its sponsorship program MPC manages over 50 children who live with disabilities. Liliane Fonds and Cheshire Disability normally carry out two field trips to assess how well their children are progressing.

The other visitors were from British Oxygen Company (BOC) Kamani Foundation and Ecobank. These companies chose Songa Mbele to conduct their Corporate Social Responsibility program. Food provisions, hygiene materials, stationery, and therapeutic resources were donated by them.



Donations from Kamani Foundation



BOC members serving lunch to the children

Also, children received volumes of inspiring motivational books as well as catechism videos from a Spanish donor, Javier and supporters. The small Christian community, St Michael's from Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, also visited the Centre during the month.



On the operational side, October demonstrated lots of good learning and plenty of activities. Many of the children have shown great improvement in different areas. The attendance which does make a big impact on the children's achievements has been stable, as the parents have been supportive in meeting the children's individual learning goals.



Parents learning new therapy techniques

The enrolments continue to progress steadily and the ratio between boys and girls 58% : 42% respectively with the majority of children living with cerebral palsy. Over 55 therapy sessions were conducted during the month across all classes. Improvement has been noted with one child now able to stand with supports and her fine motor skills expanded.

One of the secrets to the children's successful improvements is based upon the program but more importantly with the help of volunteers. Songa welcomed 11 volunteers who assisted in the classrooms under the supervision of the teachers.

As you would expect Songa held a number of meetings for staff, parents and outside agencies. The staff also received training on fire safety and equipment. One of the more significant meetings was with the staff on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for each child so that further achievements can be measured and improved.

MPC Rehabilitation Centre For Former Street Boys

There are 52 boys in residence at the Rehabilitation Centre.

Class	Education Level	No.
Accelerated Learning Year I MIRC	Standard 2	4
	Standard 3	4
	Standard 4	4
		12
Accelerated Learning Year I St Catherine's Primary	Standard 2	1
	Standard 4	1
		2
Accelerated Learning Year II MIRC	Standard 5	2
	Standard 6	3
	Standard 7	7
		12
Accelerated Learning Year II St Catherine's Primary	Standard 5	1
	Standard 7	2
	Standard 8	7
		10
Carpentry Year I	Grade III	4
New Recruits	Grade III	7
Year II	Grade II	1
		12
St Michael's Secondary School	Form 1	1
Total		52

With the recruitment exercise concluded, all the boys have settled in well and are showing pleasing signs of adjustments. The social worker and welfare officer will commence the follow ups on verifying stories and finding their families.



One of the key areas that help with rehabilitation is education. The new recruits have been placed into different classes according to their abilities. They have been introduced to concepts, methods of learning, and examination procedures. The learning was easy for those who have some learning experience while the concepts are different for those who do not have any learning experience. There are 8 boys, who registered for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) at St Catherine's who are also under accelerated learning. They have shown some tremendous improvement both in their ability to do exams and knowledge attainment.



Washington T Booker

Many schools in Kenya do not have a library but the Rehabilitation Centre has a spacious one fully equipped with computers, books, and other resources, thanks to the generous donors. Called the “Washington T Booker” library, it is named after the African American educator, author, orator and adviser to several US presidents. His story provides great encouragement.



Reading in the library

The Rehabilitation Centre always promotes the freedom of expression. The boys are given opportunities to be heard, to listen and to respond each fortnight. This kind of forum helps them air their concerns responsibly and it boosts their behaviour, particularly on how to express themselves.



The boy's forum with Sr Mary.

The creative and physical arts continue at the Centre through artwork and games and are really appreciated by the boys.



Art instructor, Sam with the class

Sport is used as a character building and teamwork exercise. The rugby team took part in the National Safari Sevens Rugby tournament for juniors at Nyayo National Stadium. The tournament gave the team the opportunity to see how they had really developed in their rugby skills as they played with other teams from other parts of the country.



MPC Rugby Team



MPC Rugby Team at Nyayo National Stadium

We are very grateful to Paula Cullen and the Leinster Rugby Club for the donation of tops, shorts and boots for the team. They looked really impressive on the pitch!

Sponsorship

With the changes in the academic year in Kenya, October was the Opening of Term Two 2021. The office ensured that all the sponsored students had their fees ready. For those students joining secondary school, for the first time, there were many activities carried out to process their applications while the other students returned back to school after a week's break.

There has been a persistent record of poor grades with our sponsored students, which has been a consistent trend. As a result, we realized that owing to the present economic situation in the country, many poor parents in the slums are forced by circumstances to saddle the young ones with chores like hawking wares and other menial jobs around the house before and after school. Domestic chores like these no doubt help to train the children and make them realize that they can and should contribute their own quota to the general upkeep of the family but what a responsibility on such young shoulders. Sadly, this has impacted negatively on their performances and we called meetings for both parents and students. The two most vital subjects are Maths and English. To boost their overall performance, students were given exercise books for revision, to practice Maths on a daily basis. The students have a private study period after lunch to complete the exercises.



Sponsored students meeting

English being a major subject used in all other subjects except for Kiswahili it is important for students to read and speak English well to ensure a higher level of achievement.



Parents meeting

The students were also taken through the sponsorship agreement that outlined the conditions. Students will receive every support possible from the Sponsorship Office however, they are the ones who need to demonstrate their seriousness in wanting to achieve. The CoVid19 pandemic created many extra challenges for the students. Like you, we want them to succeed.

At the end of each term, the sponsored students carry out some community service as a sign of appreciation for the support they received. It is also a way of helping them be responsible as well as keeping them occupied to avoid idleness in the slums.



Students engaging in community service

We are appreciative of our donors who continuously sacrifice to contribute towards educating the needy. For this we understand that the only motivation they would require is for the students to behave well and perform exemplary in school.

The Sponsorship database is now ready for use. Sponsors will receive their password via email along with the instructions. This means that you will be able to look at the progress of your sponsored student at your convenience. The academic reports, appreciation letters, profiles and other communications will be there at the press of button via the www.mercymukuru.co.ke website.

Announcements

- **Sponsorship Database**

After some delay the Sponsorship database is now ready for use via the www.mercymukuru.co.ke website. If you would like to sponsor a primary school child or secondary student the costs are \$60 US to \$260 respectively. Please contact the Sponsorship Officer, Stellah on stellahm@mercymukuru.co.ke for further details.

- **St Catherine's Land Update**

The St Catherine's Land High Court Case was again adjourned. The new date is yet to be communicated.

- **On-line Donations**

As Christmas is approaching and if you would like to 'Wish a Gift' to a family at MPC please go to our website, look at the options available. All donations are incredibly important to vulnerable lives.



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Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy
Email: info@mercymukuru.co.ke

Director: maryk@mercymukuru.co.ke
Website: www.mercymukuru.co.ke
Tel: +254 (0) 722 505 904
Tel: +254 (0) 733 588 068