



## September Newsletter

Vol 9 Issue No. 8 2023



*Memorial Mass for Sr Therese Burke RSM*

### Inside

Sr Therese Burke ..... 3

#### *Social and Health Services*

Social Programs ..... 4  
Clinic Waivers ..... 5  
Treated Diseases ..... 6  
Medical Statistics ..... 7

#### *Welfare Services*

Irish Ambassador Ingoldsby ..... 8  
Examination Preps..... 9  
Rugby Updates ..... 10  
Cultural Developments ..... 11  
New Recruits ..... 12  
Sponsorship Visit ..... 13  
Songa Trainings / Activities ..... 14

#### *Education Services*

Mercy Day Celebrations ..... 16  
KCPE Preparations ..... 16  
Feeding Program Update ..... 17  
Pupils Safety ..... 18  
Youth Forum ..... 19  
Vocational Happenings ..... 20

#### *Announcements*

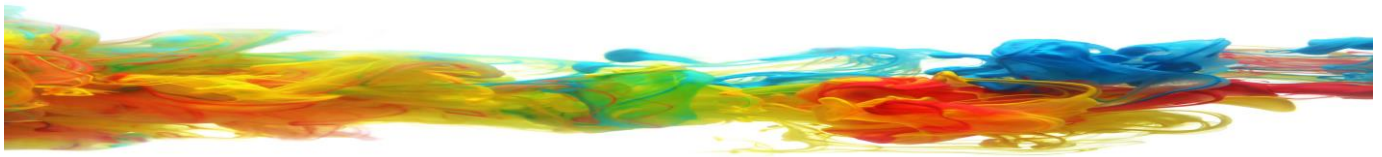
MPC ..... 21

Dear Partners, Supporters, Family and Friends,

We were delighted to meet Her Excellency Irish Ambassador Catriona Ingoldsby and her husband Colm Healy and to welcome them to our Clinic, Rehabilitation Centre, and Songa Mbele na Masomo Centre for children living with various disabilities. The visit was informal and allowed them to learn more about the work done in the Mukuru informal settlements by the Sisters of Mercy.

We recently celebrated the life of Sister Theresa Burke, and her passing was mourned by parents, headteachers and staff who had the privilege of knowing her. She was deeply committed to caring for vulnerable children. She was known for her efforts to reduce extra fee demands, organize medical camps for residents, fund treatment for those with visual impairments, and sponsor several children to attend secondary school. We are in need of a dedicated Sister of Mercy to take her place and continue her important work, and we pray for this to happen.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has generously contributed towards the needs of the increasing number of Mukuru residents who are struggling with low or no income. Your support has been crucial in preventing some families from going hungry during these difficult economic times. Unfortunately, some of our students are facing health challenges that could be attributed to the use of second-hand vapes. It seems that discarded vapes from other countries are being collected and refilled with harmful concoctions of various drugs. This has caused two students to become mentally unstable after using such substances, while others are behaving irresponsibly while under the influence. This is becoming a growing concern for schools in the area.



Some people develop bacterial infections from using previously used vapes. It is important to implement strategies to address these challenges posed by unscrupulous individuals seeking to profit from others' harm.

It is heartening to witness the participation and enjoyment of the boys in the Rehabilitation Centre in various activities. Pursuing interests such as sports, music, art, dance, carpentry, and similar areas of passion can aid in their recovery, provide them with happiness, and create opportunities for ongoing education and employment. We extend our best wishes to the newly hired rugby coach and hope that he performs well. It is truly heartbreaking to witness young boys on the streets, knowing the fate that awaits them in the absence of any form of intervention. We are glad that we can rescue some of them and facilitate their reconnection with their families and loved ones.

Ongoing training of staff and parents is crucial. After considerable effort, we've succeeded in getting a speech therapist to assess the children of Songa Mbele who cannot speak. We hope these children will receive the necessary therapy to help them communicate effectively. This has a significant impact on their quality of life, as well as on their families, friends, and teachers. I am grateful to those who have contributed towards making it possible for these children to speak. I want to extend my appreciation to everyone who has donated food and other items to our various centres, as well as to those who are unemployed. We also thank local and foreign visitors interested in assisting vulnerable children and families. By working together, we can help these children achieve their full potential.

On September 30th, we celebrated Mercy Day with representatives from all schools established by the Sisters of Mercy in the Nairobi Archdiocese. The Sisters of Mercy Education Office funded the event, and it was a beautiful occasion. My heartfelt thanks go to Sr. Mary Kanyi, the staff, and the sisters for making all the necessary arrangements. I am grateful for all of you, and I pray for you with thankfulness in my heart.

May God bless you abundantly,

Sr Mary Killeen  
*Director*



## *Sr Therese Burke RSM*

*(1952 – 2023)*



Sr Therese first arrived in Kenya in 1984 from Cork Ireland after years of full-time ministry in Ireland. A mathematics teacher, she was one of three pioneer Mercy Sisters who taught in St Cecilia's Girls Secondary School, Chepareria and then to Twome Mbee Secondary School in Masii in Machakos. In 2000, she then moved to Miguta and took up the principalship of the Sisters of Mercy Commercial School.

With her passion for education Sr Therese represented the Kenya Provincial Leadership Team in the education sector and attended all the quarterly board meetings of each of the 4 MPC primary schools, despite being legally blind. She always arrived early for meeting so that she could catch up with parents, children and staff. Her presence and diligence helped to curb corruption and raised the welfare concerns of children. She was instrumental in organizing medical camps for children and the community. Many parents appreciated her pupil-centered approach, compassion and care that made a difference to their children. Sr Therese's influence as a board member was palpable and this unassuming Sister of Mercy spent many hours promoting good teaching practices in the schools.

In early 2017, Sr Therese returned to Ireland for medical treatment for lung cancer. After effective treatment her prognosis was good but the cancer returned and went to her legs, her arms and then all of her bones. Each time the doctors treated a specific area and she thought she had beaten the disease, it appeared elsewhere.

Even though she was undergoing chemotherapy it did not stop her from thinking of the children and raising funds for sponsorships. Her passion for education in Kenya remained strong, and she desired to return to continue her dedicated service. She enjoyed reading the MPC newsletters as it kept her up to date on all the happenings. Each month she would write some feedback to Director and constantly say that the people were in her prayers. Sr Therese worked tirelessly with the Head Teachers and school boards and was greatly respected for her efforts. Unfortunately, Sr Therese passed away in January 2023 in her hometown of Cork.

After inquiring and learning about her death the parents asked for a memorial service to be held to honour her life and the impact that she had on so many. The memorial service was held at Songa Mbele on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 and tributes were given by Sr Mary Killeen, Pastor John, Mr Nyamai, Lucia Njogu, Dinah Mwendwa, Mary Muriithi, and Sr Theresia Waraga. Sr Therese was an educator who had a deep love for the poor. St Michael's School choir led the service which was attended by representatives from all the MPC institutions as well as many parents. Her heart's desire was always to return to Kenya and continue her ministry however after a 7 year battle with cancer, God called her home. May she rest in God's loving embrace.



*Sr Waraga*



*Mr Nyamai*



*Pastor John*



*Community*



## *Social and Health Services*

### Social Services

During the month, the main focus was providing support to over 3,000 people in need, as schools were on holiday. We provided nutritional aid to needy students and clients with chronic and terminal illnesses, clothing aid to those affected by fire outbreaks, educational support to students in our schools, and medical support to needy children and the Mukuru community. The generous support from donors and well-wishers made this possible, and we are grateful for their continued contributions.



*Hazina Village Fire outbreak*



*Home Assessment*

Our social workers continued identifying and supporting those in need in the MPC schools through monthly assessments and 192 home visits. We provided girls with sanitary towels and other hygiene materials to ensure they could attend classes. We also conducted mentorship sessions in schools to address negative behavior and discipline issues, especially drug abuse, which has been increasing among students. These mentorship sessions empower and guide students on the right path, as many are exposed to drugs early due to peer pressure and challenges at home.

Sadly, the number of physical abuse cases has increased due to the tough socio-economic challenges most families face. Parents often take out their stress on their children. Our Child Protection Office and social workers continue to follow-up on these cases. We also provide psycho-social support to victims of abuse, those on drugs, and members of the community to help them navigate their challenges.

The Clinic's social office has been working closely with sick patients and children to ensure they receive the necessary medical support and treatment. The office has been monitoring children with terminal illnesses as well as those on routine checkups to make sure they attend their clinic appointments on the dates scheduled for them. During the recent month, there has been an increase in medical cases for students referred for treatment at the facility, with most cases being related to flu, fever, and stomach problems. The office works closely with these patients and their families to ensure that their NHIF is up to date to help cover the expenses of those with substantial hospital bills.



In September 2023, MPC Clinic served a total of 1,866 patients with varying health needs. Notably, 352 patients were waived from the social office, highlighting the Clinic's commission to provide care for the neediest in Mukuru slum. Among these beneficiaries, 73 were individuals from the Mukuru community and street people who required medical assistance while the rest were from MPC sponsored institutions.



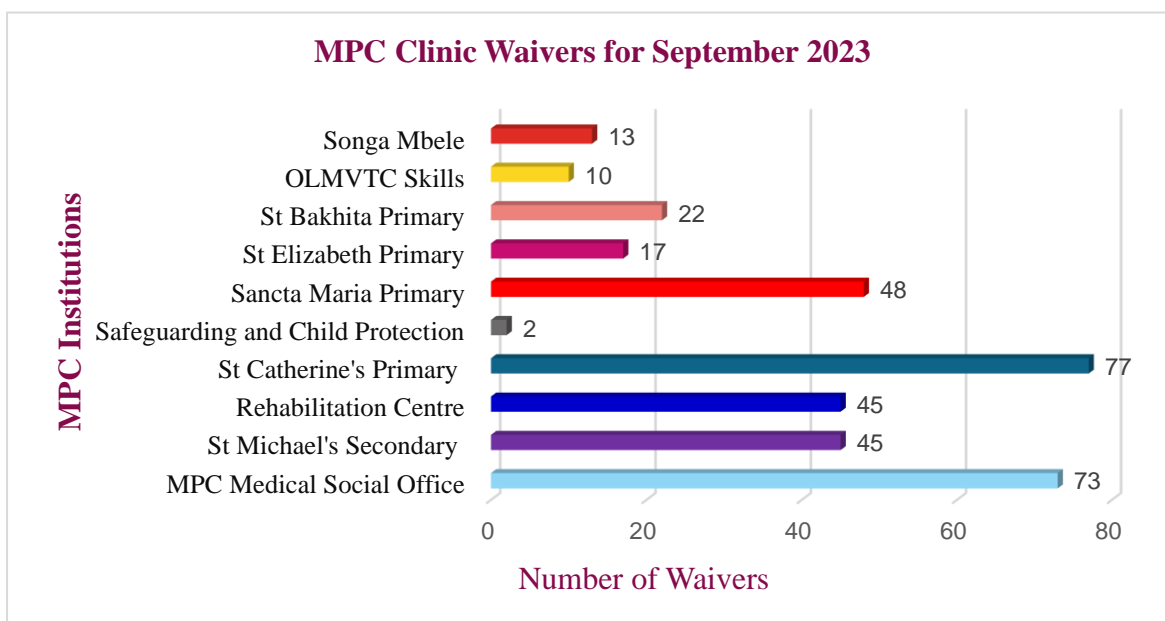
*Patients queue at Reception*



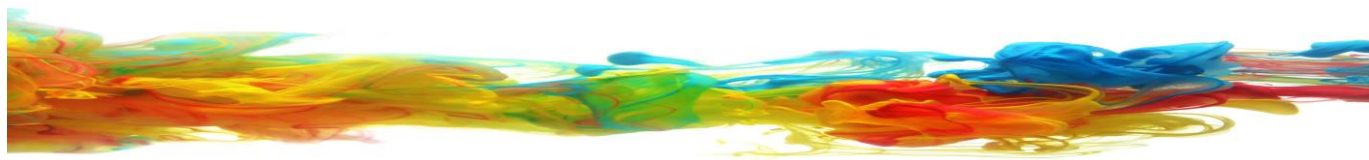
*MPC Clinic*



*Sancta Maria pupil and mother seek a waiver.*



A comparison of the prevalent diagnoses and their probable causes in the Clinic's patient data for September 2023 reveals a complex interplay of environmental and socioeconomic factors. Among the 1,866 clients treated, Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) were notably high with 329 cases primarily affecting individuals of all age groups. This surge in URTI can be attributed to the challenging living conditions in the Mukuru slum, marked by overcrowding and limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities. Gastroenteritis cases accounted for 151 diagnoses, predominantly affecting children under the age of 5, with 97 cases due to contaminated water sources and unhygienic food handling practices. Additionally, there was a concerning surge in H. Pylori-induced peptic ulcers among students aged 6-18, with a total of 37 cases, particularly prevalent in those attending MPC sponsored schools like St. Michael's Secondary School.



This surge may be attributed to unsanitary living conditions, academic stress, irregular diets, and the consumption of potentially contaminated street food. These figures underscore the urgent need for improved sanitation, health education, stress management, and collaboration with schools to address these health challenges in the Mukuru community. The distribution of diagnoses across different age groups at the Clinic for September provides valuable insights into the healthcare needs of the community. While Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) and Gastroenteritis are common among all age groups, they appear more frequently in children aged 0-5 years with 168 cases of URTI and 97 cases of Gastroenteritis in this age group. This is likely due to their still-developing immune systems and susceptibility to environmental factors.

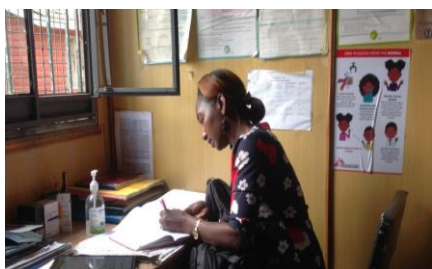
In contrast, diagnoses like Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus become more prevalent in older age groups. Hypertension was diagnosed in 36 cases, primarily affecting individuals aged 36-49 years and above 64 years, while Diabetes Mellitus was reported in 21 cases predominantly in individuals aged 36-49 years and above 64 years. These numbers emphasize the importance of preventive healthcare and lifestyle management as individuals age. The Clinic's role in addressing these diverse healthcare requirements is crucial as well as providing pediatric care and vaccinations to promoting healthy aging practices and chronic disease management.

A concerning surge in the *Helicobacter Pylori*-induced peptic ulcers has been observed among students aged 6-18 primarily from St. Michael's Secondary School. The bacteria is normally transmitted through contaminated food and water. It is also reported that academic stress, irregular eating habits, and consumption of potentially contaminated street food can weaken students' immune systems, making them more susceptible to infection. The Clinic has put in place measures to reduce the prevalence of the disease by implementing health education sessions to emphasize good hygiene practices and good dietary habits and lobbying the Ministry of Health to provide greater access to clean water and proper waste disposal within the communities. In collaboration with the MPC social workers network to provide stress management and counselling sessions to assist students to become more resilient when dealing with stress at school and at home. The other part of the jigsaw is to establish greater cooperation with the schools to enforce higher food safety standards in the cafeterias and nutritional meals.

During September the Clinic hosted a local volunteer, Lorna Awuor and Austrian nurse, Lea Holtzer. Lorna Awuor is a former MPC primary school pupil and now on attachment from the local James Munene College of Health Sciences. Lea Holtzer attends to children at the Mother Child Clinic.



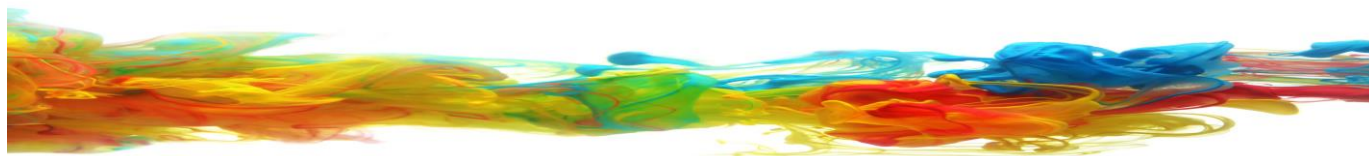
*Lorna and Lea record a patients details*



*Mary Nzilani, Starehe Sub-county TB Coordinator, checks the Clinic's registry*

In our collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Starehe Subcounty coordinators and others, the Clinic actively engages to combat tuberculosis, conducting screening, testing, and treatment, and providing guidance on prevention and early detection. The strong partnership extends to organizations like Malteser and Respiratory Society of Kenya, which play pivotal roles in coordinating tuberculosis testing and treatment, along with comprehensive care clinic coverage.





Apart from TB screening the Community Health Worker (CHW) Agnes Aluoch also delivers essential health talks on TB treatment, prevention and early detection ensuring that the community is well-informed. In addition, our collaboration extends to the Infectious Disease Surveillance Officers, such as Elphas Shiraho, who verify the Clinic's laboratory standards for malaria testing. The Starehe Sub-county TB coordinator and the Respiration Society of Kenya (ReSoK) officers conduct regular visits, aiding in data verification and the follow-up on patient drug administration. These collaborative efforts embody our commitment to providing high-quality healthcare services and fostering a healthier community in partnership with dedicated organizations and individuals.



*Agnes provides guidance on TB testing and treatment*

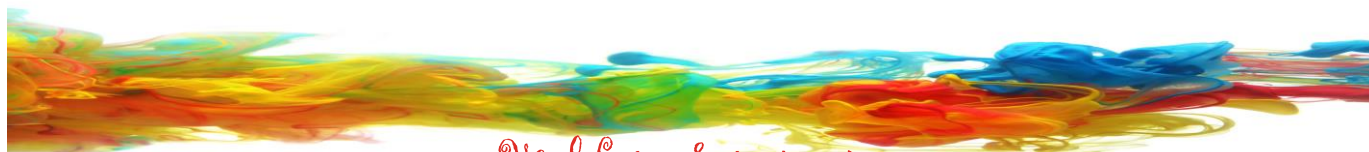


*TB Screening Tent*

The Tuberculosis Screening Initiative is an attempt to alleviate the residents' health concerns due to the poor living conditions and the added challenges of inadequate ventilation and under-nutrition that are further exacerbated by current economic hardships. To combat the spread of this highly transmissible disease, the Clinic has intensified tuberculosis screening to all patients and clients. This crucial process is led by Agnes, the CHW in collaboration with other healthcare professionals.

Summary Statistics for September 2023								
Categories	0-5 Years	6-12 Years	13-17 Years	18-35 Years	36-49 Years	50-64 Years	Above 64 Years	Total
Registrations	597	253	204	532	224	100	24	1,934
Diseases Treated	572	247	196	514	218	96	23	1,866
Clinics	242		8	54	2	1		307
Laboratory Tests	104	107	76	319	99	54	16	775

The Clinic continues to deliver vital healthcare services amid challenging environmental and socioeconomic conditions. The monthly statistics highlight the ever-present need for accessible and compassionate healthcare in this community. We are grateful to the generous donors, staff and volunteers who continually work hand in hand to ensure those in need receive good quality care. The Clinic has become a symbol and sanctuary of healing for the Mukuru community.



## Welfare Services Rehabilitation Centre

In September, the Centre was filled with excitement as numerous visitors, including dignitaries, came to experience the daily activities. One of the visitors was the new Irish Ambassador to Kenya, Caitriona Ingoldsby, who visited the Centre and even went to the Units at Songa Mbele. She was deeply impressed by the remarkable work being carried out with the diverse range of activities available for the children. The Ambassador plans to return to the Centre in November with some Irish friends. Her Excellency expressed her enjoyment at being able to spend some time at the Rehabilitation Centre meeting and greeting the boys and congratulated the staff on their resolve to help the boys reform.



*[L] Irish Ambassador Caitriona Ingoldsby, husband Colm Healy with Charles, carpentry instructor. [M] Ambassador, Teacher Josephine and Sr Mary [R] and Songa Mbele staff with the Ambassador Ingoldsby and husband Colm.*



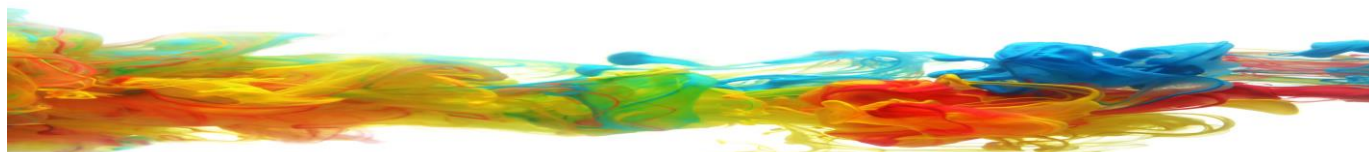
*Noel and Jason receive a tour of the Centre by Sr Mary*

Upon their visit to the Centre, Noel and Jason from Ireland were pleased to witness the dedicated efforts made behind the scenes to alleviate the plight of street boys forced to live on the harsh streets of Nairobi.

Throughout the month, social workers continued with Home Visits for eight boys to prepare them for reintegration. Several boys receiving catechetical instructions were baptized, and others were prepared for Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church in October. The Centre was fortunate to receive donations from several organizations and individuals, including Mr. Nganga, Mimshark Auto Spares, Action in Focus, British Airways crew members, and Team Shakers.

There are 62 residing at the Centre with another 20 boys sponsored in other learning institutions. There are 36 boys in the accelerated learning class, 15 attending St Catherine's primary, 12 enrolled in the vocational training course, 9 at secondary school and 10 sponsored to boarding school.





The boys are making great progress in their academic studies. The Year One class has been working hard to improve their speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills. They are now able to tell time and share stories in both English and Kiswahili. Additionally, they have a good grasp of basic mathematics. All students made significant improvements during their midterm exams. They approached the tests with seriousness and composure. Even those who had never previously attended school are keeping up with their classmates.



*Candidate Class revising past KCPE PAPER*



*Year One class literacy class*



*Library Evenings*

A total of 17 KCPE candidates have been registered for the national examinations, making it the highest number ever. Out of these candidates, 8 will be taking their exams at St. Catherine Primary School while the remaining 9 are registered as private candidates and will sit for the exams at Pangani Adult Education Centre. The boys have shown impressive dedication towards their studies as they attend group discussions over the weekend and visit the library every night to prepare for their exams.

The vocational training students are working hard to prepare for the NITA examinations, which are scheduled for the first week of December 2023. There are 6 boys who will be taking the Grade III examinations. In addition to their academic work, the boys have been assisting with woodwork repairs and have made various household furniture items, such as stools and trays. The practical experience they have gained is invaluable, and the items they have made will be sold to assist the boy's reintegration when they leave the Centre.

Recently, the boys even helped to build two picnic tables for the Centre, which were sponsored by Paula Cullen and Friends. They also built a door frame for a food storage facility at the administration. Overall, the boys have been very productive and have gained a wide range of skills during their training.



*Mr. Charles the Woodwork Instructor demonstrates how to apply designs techniques.*



The Centre has recently welcomed its new rugby coach, Denishe Ndinya. The boys at the Centre have a deep passion for rugby and are enthusiastic about practicing and participating in tournaments to improve their abilities. We would like to express our gratitude towards Paula Cullen and Friends for sponsoring the rugby program at the Centre, which significantly impacts the well-being of the boys.



*Denishe Ndinya*



*Rugby Team*



*Boys Receive the Rugby Gear*

Just in time for the next round of local fixtures the boys received Leinster gear from Bank of Ireland Third World Staff who kindly brought out the gear for Paula Cullens Group. Bank of Ireland are also sponsors of Leinster Rugby.



*Representatives from BOI Third Word Foundation*

One of the cultural developments at the Centre is music. Thanks to Brianna and Operaaffinity, 10 boys attend EF Primary every Saturday for music practice. They have learned to play various instruments such as the violin, piano, cello, and drums. Daily practice has helped them to improve their skills. Exposure to music has allowed the boys to explore and discover their talents, and they are determined to pursue a career in the music industry. MPC will help to identify a foundation who can assist with the purchase of some musical instruments.

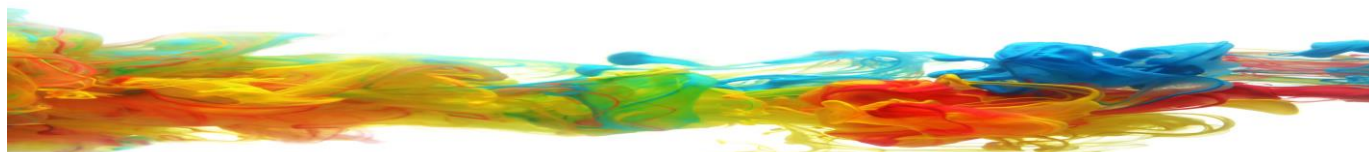


*The Rehab Band*



*Music Practice*





The boys have been actively cultivating tomatoes and other crops to supplement the Centre's daily needs in the vegetable garden, which they find relaxing and productive. The boys have also received landscaping tips from Charles, the carpentry instructor.



*Landscaping*



*Tending the vegetable garden*

The spiritual development of the boys is highly prioritized and they attend formation sessions every Tuesday and Friday, led by the catechists from Our Lady of Queen of Peace Parish. As a result of successfully completing the sessions, 10 boys received the Sacrament of Confirmation in September. Another group is also eagerly anticipating the Sacrament of Baptism, which will take place in October.

The Art and Crafts lessons take place on Tuesdays and Saturdays and are led by Samuel Waweru. Through the Art classes, the boys have found a way to express themselves creatively and develop a more holistic perspective by telling stories through their art. Their creativity is reflected in candle making, drawing, beadwork, painting, and decorating Christmas cards. The Centre is grateful to Paula Cullen's Group for sponsoring the art program, as it has provided the boys with a great deal of enjoyment.



*Art Class*



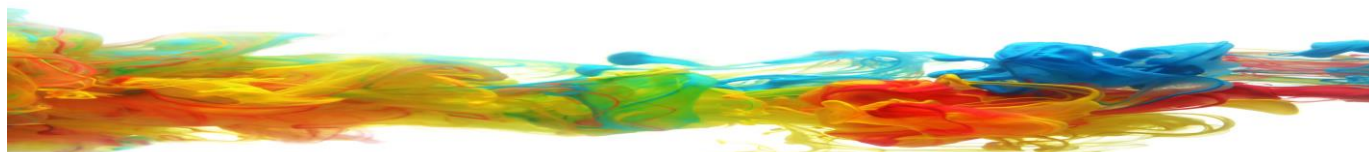
*Candle Makers*



*Gymnastics*

If rugby or art is not enticing then the boys can do gymnastics twice a week after school classes. The Centre encourages boys to engage in such activities to keep them physically fit and to learn how to socialize as they play together.





At the end of each day filled with various activities, the boys participate in evening prayers that are supervised by the House parents. Most of the boys have shown a positive attitude in their efforts to improve their lives by putting God at the centre of their lives and expressing gratitude to all the benefactors who make the programs at the Centre possible.



*Evening Prayers*

The Centre is very blessed to receive generous donations from different well-wishers each month and September was no different. We would like to acknowledge Action in Focus, Team Pankaj, Corner Bakers, Our Lady Queen of Peace social office, Team Shakers, Paula Cullen and Friends and Mimshark Autos for their donations of food provisions this month.



*Mimshark Autos Staff*



*Ibrahim Connolly, Jonathan Goodluck, Joel MacKenzie and John Irungu.*

In September, four new recruits were admitted to the Rehabilitation Centre. It's hard to believe that such young boys were found living on the streets. The reasons behind their situation are easy to explain, as harsh economic times tend to affect the poor and vulnerable first. We are grateful that the social workers discovered them early, as the probability of rehabilitation is much higher at a younger age.



## Sponsorship Office

The Sponsorship Office maintained educational support for the 476 sponsored pupils and students with an approximate overall 50% gender ratio. The largest cohort of sponsored students is at St Michael's Secondary with 257 students with a 52:48 ratio. Form 2 and 3 have the largest numbers with 60% of sponsorships followed by Form 4.

The stigma attached to anyone being released from jail can immobilize even the most charismatic personalities. One empowering aspect can be assisting the person to become financially independent as soon as possible. A former convict, David Muiruri, who has a 6 year old son, and lives on the streets, received a mkokoteni (cart / trolley) from the Ex-Convict program. Mkokotenis cost around 10,000khs (€63). Transportation costs are normally 100- 250 per trip (€3) for short distances under 1 kilometre. These guys certainly earn their money and many of them die at a young age due to the physical strain placed on their body. Arrangements were made to have his son live at the Rehabilitation Centre for the time being. David expressed his thanks to the sponsor of the program and hopes to provide a stable home for his son soon.



*David Muiruri and his new Mkokoteni*

David Safari enrolled in the DJ course at OLMVTC and after his successful completion obtained temporary employment at MPC. His absence caused concern and the social worker discovered that he had succumbed to drug and substance abuse. David was sent to the MPC Rehabilitation Centre to help him get back on track. Given the level of addiction MPC will sponsor him to the Greater Light Concern (GLC) Rehabilitation Centre for a 3-month specialized program.

MPC held a meeting with Sr Catherine Mulwa from Bakhita Partnership which supports girl's education in Kenya. She was following up on the progress of the 20 sponsored girls, where 12 completed their KCSE in 2022, while 8 are currently in Form 4 and 15 are in Form 1. She was impressed by the girls' personal development and praised MPC for its effective management.



*Sponsorship Interview*

A number of interviews were conducted to ascertain the potential sponsorship beneficiaries. The panel interviewed a total of 28 students and 20 of them met the criteria and were offered sponsorship to enable them register for NITA examinations.



*Helen, John, James and Fidel*

Occasionally, overseas sponsors visit Nairobi and spend time talking with their sponsored students. A long-term supporter, John McKenzie and his daughter, Helen from Canada had time to chat with their 2 sponsored students, James Maundu And Fidel Omondi who are now in Form 3.





## Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre

Songa Mbele continued to provide education, therapy and training services to children and parents in September. All 102 children received support and care to assist with their daily living activities and development. This month's 'Star' was Harrison Namali who has improved in different areas and is able to



*Harrison Namali*

copy numbers well and join dots to form number shapes and sound shapes. He can colour in pictures, do eye-hand coordination activities and fix blocks well. Harrison has also achieved daily living activities like feeding, dressing, toileting and teeth brushing.



*Participants during Sign Language training*

The 27 parents and children attended the Kenyan Sign Language training that has been supported by eRko Slovakia for many years and facilitated by Hezron Otieno from Our Lady Queen of Peace Church South B this year.



*Jiinue Support Group*

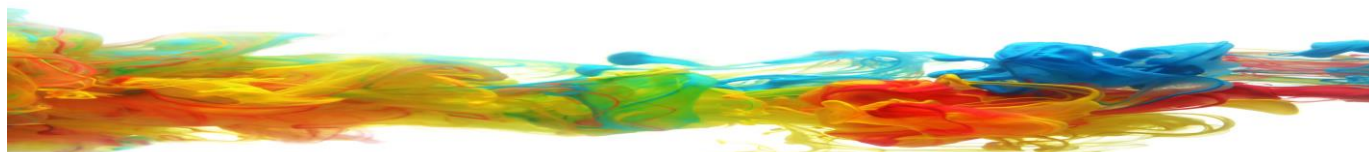
The other trainings during the month involved the social workers on 'sustainable reintegration of children living with their families'. The Mukuru Jiinue Support group of 15 parents received training on savings, lending, and managing money.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding training for parents was held during September with 32 parents in attendance. One of the featured dimensions of the training involved the rights of the beneficiaries.



*Child Protection and Safeguarding training*





The Centre received numerous food provisions, hygiene materials, resources, and other items from many visitors and well-wishers. Clearly the children enjoyed the toys the most. Thank you to Pfizer, MCA's Office, OLQP Youth Team and British airways crewmembers.



*Pfizer Company*



*MCA's office*



*OLQP YP team*



*Kiambu Deaf School*

On the functional side of the Centre the Home visits to the villages continued to follow up on children with identification issues and living conditions assessment as well as the level of vulnerability for families. Medical referrals and checkups for 13 children were carried out and one Kambui school visit was conducted to gauge the progress of the 2 children there who are doing well.

The major activity at the Centre every day apart from teaching is therapy. The speech, occupational and physiotherapy programs provide extra assistance to the children to reach their milestones. The Speech therapist assessed 32 children in September and 65% of the children received 5 or more sessions in the month.

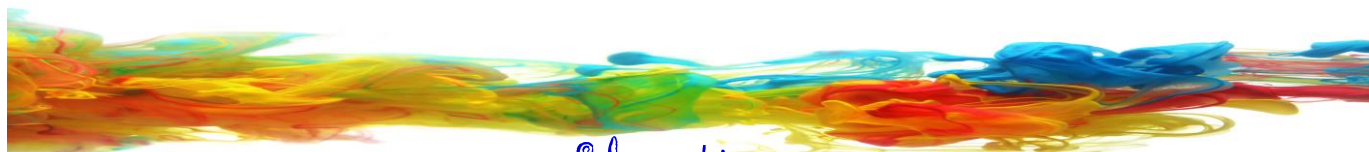
The physiotherapy and occupational conducted over 500 sessions and 77% of the children received 5 or more sessions in the month. The therapy programs make such a difference to the overall wellbeing of the children. The more sessions they participate in the greater their improvements.

Modeling to parents is critical for the children and 12 parents attended the Centre to assist with the meal preparations and afterwards can spend time with the teachers to see how their children are taught. Volunteers also assist in the different areas at the Centre.



*Brillant Kinia*

Technology is terrific. Since receiving a hearing aid Brilliant Kinia is slowly responding in class. When the class teacher used to call her name, the other children in class had to tap her on the shoulder for her to respond. When she needs something, she makes in-audible sounds and points to the objects she needs. She is gradually coming into terms with conversations among her peers in the Centre. We are grateful to Dr Maria O'Shea from Western Australia who provided hearing aids for the children at the Centre.



## Education

### Primary Schools

The Government continued to streamline the education sector further before the new reforms take effect in the schools. In the current reforms, the Government has strictly warned Head teachers not to hire unregistered teachers / persons to schools or involve them in any activities concerning children otherwise the schools will be blacklisted and jeopardize future funding. The MPC Primary Schools only employs TSC registered teachers.

Sisters of Mercy around the world celebrate the significant Feast of Our Lady of Mercy on 24<sup>th</sup> September, reminding us of the life of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Her simplicity, displacement, discipleship, compassion, listening, service, and her contribution to Jesus Mission in showing Mercy to all. Mary, a faithful servant and role model of God's mercy thought more of others than her own needs. The Foundress for the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley chose God's attribute of 'Mercy' to be the charism for her new and courageous group of women to serve God's poor.

MPC's Mercy Day Mass was held on 30<sup>th</sup> September at the MPC Central Field and facilitated by St Bakhita Primary School and representatives from the 14 Sisters of Mercy Institutions within Nairobi and its environs attended. Fr Benson presided at the Mass and his homily focused on three dimensions: Jesus, Peace and Love.



*Mercy Day Offertory Procession at  
MPC Central Field*



*Skills Staff Dee Jay Students*



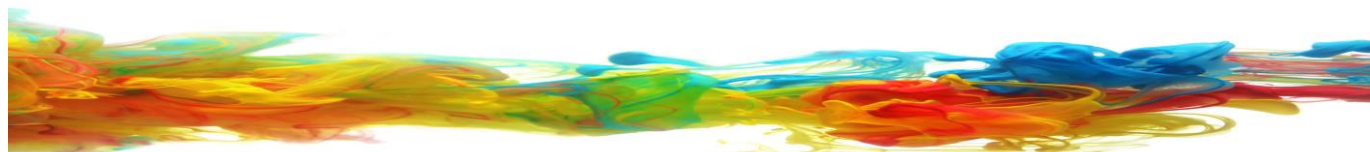
*MPC Central Field*



*St Michael's Students*

It was wonderful to have the Dee Jay students from Vocational Training to help out with the audio equipment during the Mercy Day celebrations. Thanks to their assistance, we were able to enjoy high-quality sound throughout the event. After the celebration of the Mass lots of entertainment took place for the students and invited guests.





The Ministry of Education has carried out its monitoring and evaluation exercises to ascertain the suitability of schools to hold KCPE and KPSEA exams. The 2023 National Examinations are fast approaching for the candidates and the teachers are focused on ensuring the pupils are prepared well. The 4 MPC schools have 1,568 pupils registered for the examinations.

National Examinations 2023						
Primary School	Class 8 (KCPE)			Grade 6 (KPSEA)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
St. Bakhita	83	71	154	77	62	169
St. Catherine's	95	92	187	78	93	171
St. Elizabeth's	114	123	237	127	131	258
Sancta Maria Kayaaba	101	123	224	85	83	168
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>766</b>
	49%	51%		48%	52%	

The MPC school enrolments are healthy and many more parents hope to enrol their children however with the limited number of teachers provided by TSC, it cannot oblige. Although Sancta Maria received 3, St Bakhita 1, St Elizabeth 2 while St Catherine did not receive any replacement teachers, the ratio is still unacceptably high and not conducive for a good learning environment with 50 pupils per class. Some of the replacements were for transfers that happened last year. The bonus the MPC schools have over others is the feeding program. The Government feeding program continues to have major issues whereas MPC, through its donor Team Pankaj provides a consistent hot lunch for the children. Over 6,160 children in the

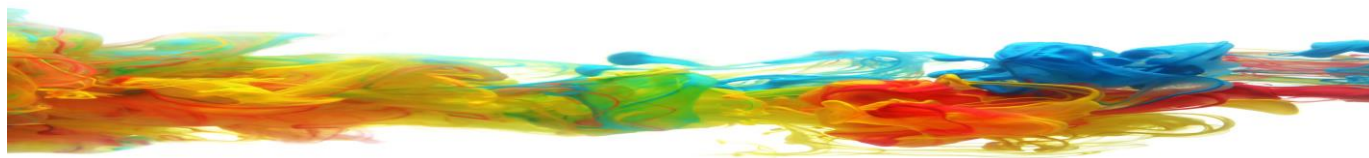


*Lunchtime*

4 primary schools receive at least 1 meal per day through its feeding program at a cost of 10.8 million Shillings (€68,000) for the year. There has been an increase close to 2 million KHS in the last year.

Apart from economic reasons there are many other challenges facing children to attend school. Peer pressure, unsupportive parents, drug and substance abuse or seeming neglect. The social workers have urged parents to keep an eye on their children and make impromptu visit to schools once they notice unusual behavior in them. Teachers are also on the lookout to ensure that all children are in class at all times. The proactive stance comes from the Discipline Committees at each school, tasked with establishing the reasons why children may be absent and not just send them away for perceived negative behaviour.





*St Catherine's Classroom*

During the month there was a destructive storm that ripped through one of the old mabati classrooms at St Catherine's site the area of the land case dispute awaiting judgement from the High Court.

The St Elizabeth Primary School playground has often been under 9 feet of water and sections of the perimeter wall collapsed. The ground was dangerous for the children as it had dozens of potholes. Thanks to the County Government and the efforts of the local MCA (Member of County Assembly) Rodney Kangara the playground was recently leveled creating a much safer playing area. The children are making good use of the more predictable bounce.

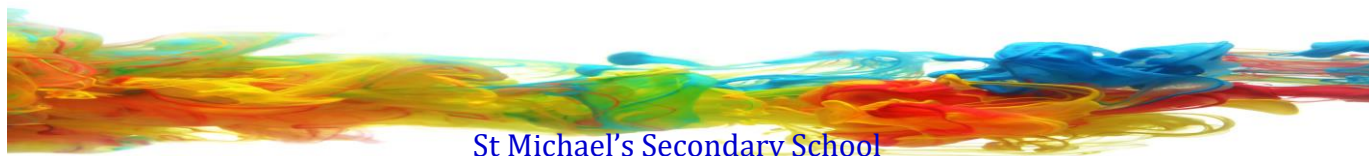


*St. Elizabeth play ground*



*Road into the Sancta Maria Kayaaba.*

During the month, another potential danger was avoided when kiosks were being constructed at Sancta Maria Kayaaba. The Head Teacher recognized the potential hazard it posed to the nearly 2,000 pupils in the school. If an evacuation was necessary there would be huge logistical issues for the safety of the children. As a result, the Chief and Education Officer were notified and arrangements were made to demolish the kiosks to ensure the safety of the pupils.



## St Michael's Secondary School

The current enrolments for St Michael's Secondary School stands at 511 which is nearing capacity at 85% which is excellent for the students who attend. The largest cohort is Form 2. As the Form 4s are preparing for the National examinations fewer activities occurred in September. The rest of the Forms continued with their classes and learning.

During September, 100 students accompanied by teachers attended the 2 day event for 'Inter-Youth' forum for Peace and the Environment at the Catholic university. The interfaith forum is an annual event that brings youths of different faiths together for dialogue on building peace through environmental initiatives. This year's forum focused on "Harmony for a green sustainable world: Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty for justice and peace". It was a good platform to showcase values for peace and care for creation.



*Interfaith Event*

St Michael's celebrated its Feast Day, St Michael the Archangel on 29<sup>th</sup> September with a reflection presided by the catechist Francis from Our Lady Queen of Peace the parish.



*Reflection Service*



## Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

The final term for the 2023 academic commenced with an increase in enrolments in the Computer Studies and Welding courses bringing the total number to 272 for the year with 39:61 gender ratio of males to females. Computer Studies continues to be the most popular short course with Hairdressing being the most popular 12 month course followed by Plumbing then Catering. Thanks to Our Lady of the Mission Parish, Whitford who sponsored the course. The new welding students are performing above expectations with distinctions and credits.



*Welding students draft and cut the metal sheets during a practical.*



*Equity Bank Workshop*

The Equity Bank Team conducted a micro enterprises entrepreneurship training workshop with 30 students in attendance. The topic covered was microbusiness, which refers to a small business that employs few people. A microenterprise usually operates with fewer than 10 people and is started with a small amount of capital advanced from a bank or other organization. They were also taken through opening joint accounts with Equity Bank.



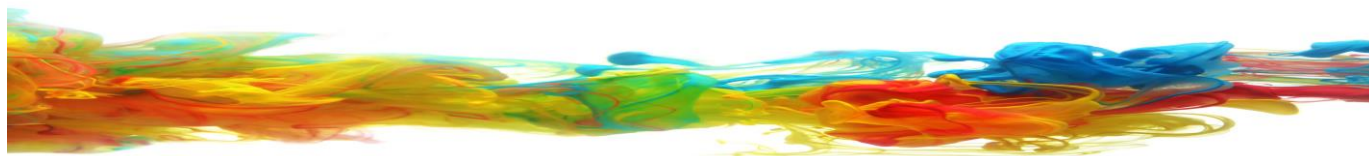
*Fr. Joseph Kietenga*

As part of the Centre's Faith Formation Mass was celebrated by Fr Joseph Kietenga MAfr. Even amongst some challenging situations the students expressed their thanks to God for the many blessings received as students at Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre.



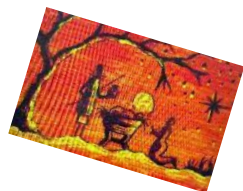
*OLMYTC Students*





# Art Program

## Christmas Cards



MPC's Christmas Cards project, featuring the artwork of talented art students, was a success a few years ago. We are thrilled to announce the return of the cards to support the art program this year. To purchase a packet of unique cards, please email your order to Skills Coordinator, Loice at [loiceao@mercymukuru.co.ke](mailto:loiceao@mercymukuru.co.ke). The artwork will showcase the Christmas scenes through heritage, landscape, culture, and people. A packet will contain a **mix of 10 cards** and envelopes for **€15**. Each card will have a simple yet heartfelt Christmas verse inside. We look forward to your support for this wonderful cause.

## Announcements

Many activities that continue throughout the month are not reported but are necessary to maintain the outreach services of MPC.

- The construction of the new food storage room to keep dry food provisions for both St Michael's and St Bakhita Schools commenced.
- Cheshire Disability Services Kenya held an evaluation meeting on its implementation activities at MPC.
- MPC had a baby shower for 2 staff as they left on maternity leave.
- A visit from British Airways crewmembers.



*British Airways Crewmembers in the Art Gallery*



*Head office staff at the baby shower*