

## October Newsletter

Vol 9 Issue No. 10 2023



*Dr George and his family with Sr Mary*

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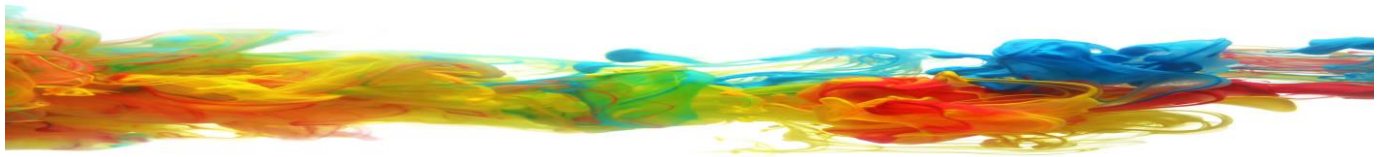
Dear Partners, Supporters, Family, Friends and Sisters,

I was delighted to welcome John Mc Carrick Junior to Songa Mbele. It was great to show him the wonderful achievements of his parents, John and Ciara and his brother Con, fellow board members Helen and Gerard Kelly, their family, friends, clients, school children and colleagues. People who knew Songa Mbele before the development of the new building are astonished at the change for the better for the children. John had a short window of time. It was great that he saw the marvellous building and the surrounding community served by the facility. He also met Fred Matara, the present co-ordinator of Songa and the Sisters of Mercy.

We were shocked to get the diagnosis of our star pupil, Emelda Wairimu, with a rare form of cancer. She was referred to Kenyatta National Hospital, and due to the enormous crowd of patients, there was a lot of delay between appointments and the results and analysis of tests and biopsies. The facial tumour was growing rapidly. She was finding it almost impossible to talk and to swallow. We asked people for prayer for her and took her to a private facility where she had her first treatment. This has shrunk the tumour a little. She is now more comfortable. Thank you for your prayers.

I had an emotional reunion with Dr. George from Slovakia, who volunteered at our clinic several times and provided dedicated service.





He worked with Dr Bucek, RIP, the pioneer doctor who planned the present Mary Immaculate Clinic, which is semi-permanent and has served us for thirty years. Friends of Mukuru are now seeking ways to build a permanent facility. The clinic serves an average of one hundred patients per day. It is invaluable to us as the 7,000 MPC pupils, students and centres are treated free of charge.

Breana Stillman and Ghetto Classics visited and performed for us. Breana has a mission to promote opera and classical music among those who usually would not get the opportunity to participate and hear such music. Ten of our boys from the rehabilitation centre joined Ghetto Classics classes in Ruben Centre and are learning various musical instruments. Thanks to the people who have donated the instruments, Paula Cullen and friends, British Airways (BA) crewmembers through Marie McGree, among others. One day, our centre may have its own homegrown band.

We had tragic news of the suicide of the mother of Martin Mutua and sister of Cornelius Wathe, who were both at the time preparing for their KCPE exams. She had complained about the pressure of demands for funds from some staff in the school. Many parents are not able to meet the constant demands for money. Thanks to those who sponsor primary and secondary students and ease their burden. One of our past students, George Mungai, was murdered by a watchman in South C, a neighbouring housing estate. He had the talent to be an excellent artist. He was addicted to substance abuse from his childhood. He dropped out of school. Later, he was taught art by a volunteer called Joan Wren and still later by Sr Loreta Burns. For many years, he sustained himself by his art. Unfortunately, he could not overcome his addiction. May he rest in peace.

There is enormous pressure to integrate special needs children into regular school by the Ministry of Education. In the schools, there are high enrolment numbers. The teachers cannot cope with the workload. Sadly, many slow academics never learn to read and leave school illiterate. They are often mocked, humiliated and bullied. I attended a conference on integrating the visually impaired. The schools need specially trained teachers and specific materials and equipment. Parents often need to provide their children with computers and unique apps that can assist them in learning in a regular school. Integration is possible in well-staffed and resourced schools in better-off areas and in some private schools. However, integration in public schools within the informal catchment area would be unjust for all concerned.

Chrissie, a BA crewmember who helps a lot with toys and equipment for Songa and other items, volunteered for a few days with her friend Abbie. They spent time between the rehabilitation centre and Songa Mbele, interacting with staff and assisting children. Mrs Satwant Thatthi, my deputy in my former school and a friend of more than forty years, invites me once a term for lunch and donates. Such constant support is very moving. Frank and Paula Cullen arrived at the of October. Their family and friends have supported MPC since Paula first visited in 2013. They have contributed hugely to the improved facilities in the rehabilitation centre, sponsorship and the general well-being of the boys. Thanks to them and to all who enable the services for the poor in Mukuru's informal sector to continue.

We remember you often in prayer.

Sr Mary Killeen  
*Director*





## Social and Health Services

### Social Services

The school year ended last month, and learning institutions closed for the long holiday with Class Eight candidates sitting their KCPE national exams. Despite this, the department continued with its routine activities, focusing on supporting learners as they prepared for the break. Among the main tasks were nutritional support, mentorship sessions, counselling, and medical follow-up of cases. The school social workers ensured that all students could sit for their exams, determining their transition to the next class. This was done by following up on chronic absenteeism cases in the school and supporting those who faced financial challenges that deterred them from taking exams through sponsorship. Candidates were also fully supported during the examination period, including those who were unwell.

During these harsh economic times, many of our clients living in slums struggle to buy food provisions as they are unemployed. Some families rely solely on the little meals their children bring home from our Centre in the evening. We are grateful for the continuous support of our donors and well-wishers, enabling us to provide this assistance. We conducted mentorship sessions in schools to guide students, particularly in light of the rampant issues of drug abuse and teenage pregnancy. The Child Protection Office (CPO) has partnered with school administrators to curb these problems by providing counselling services to students and closely monitoring their behaviour. Reported cases of abuse have also been on the rise, and the CPO is dedicating more resources to follow-up on these cases, as many of them are related to socio-economic issues.

Mary Immaculate Clinic is dedicated to providing affordable healthcare services to the community. The Government is going to introduce a new Social Hospital Insurance Fund, SHIF, where everyone in formal employment will have 2.75% of their monthly salary deducted and remitted to the Kenya Revenue Authority; self-employed and non-Kenyan residents will have to contribute 500/-khs per month (€3) to the same fund; otherwise, they will not be able to access government services. This new policy will exclude tens of thousands of people in the informal settlement areas.



One case that came to the Clinic's attention is Emelda Wairimu, the 13-year-old girl who attends St Bakhita Primary School. Emelda topped her Class and bravely sat her national exams at the end of October. She started feeling unwell in June 2023 and was experiencing severe pain in her left ear. A few days later, the left side of her face became very swollen. She was given pain relief, but the swelling did not subside. Her parents took her to Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya (KNH), for a biopsy, with the initial results indicating that everything was normal. Later, the doctor ordered a CT scan of her neck, which resulted in Nasopharyngeal being diagnosed. Next, Emelda's eye started closing, and she found it hard to swallow. The results of the second biopsy stated that the tumour was benign, and she was given some painkillers. A few days later, things were not improving, and a further 5 biopsies were taken from the mass on her face for histology analysis. However, just four days before her KCPE exams, Emelda was diagnosed with a rare malignant embryonal tumour, Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma. Her greatest desire was to complete her examinations. Each day, she was wheeled to school and placed in a separate room from her classmates to sit for her exams. Her mother was sitting just outside the room in attendance in case the pain became too much. On one of the days, she requested to sit inside the room with the other pupils to feel a part of her Class of 2023. Emelda has strength in her character and a bright personality. She believes in the gifts God has given her, as evidenced in her school results. She is very keen to continue learning and becoming a teacher. Her parents can't afford the treatment, and prayers were asked for Emelda. We will keep you posted on her prognosis.





In October, The Clinic provided medical attention to a total of 1,925 patients, who belonged to different age groups. The majority of the patients were aged between 18 to 35 years, with 468 cases reflecting the Clinic's importance in serving the young adult population. Children under the age of 5 years also made up a significant portion of the patients, with 481 cases. The most common conditions among them were respiratory and urinary tract infections and gastrointestinal issues. To ensure prevention and early treatment of these diseases, The Clinic provides counseling services, advocates for vaccinations and good hygiene practices, and conducts continuous medical education for its staff. Collaborations with community health volunteers and staff at other healthcare centers further facilitate community health education, reinforcing the Clinic's vital role in promoting overall community well-being.

| Summary Statistics for October 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                       | 499       | 217        | 142         | 473         | 239         | 130         | 23             | 1,723 |
| Diseases Treated                    | 481       | 214        | 140         | 468         | 236         | 129         | 23             | 1,691 |
| Clinics                             | 204       | 1          | 5           | 22          | 2           |             |                | 234   |
| Laboratory Tests                    | 116       | 139        | 87          | 378         | 160         | 67          | 23             | 970   |

Agnes Aluoch, a Community Health Promoter (CHP) conducts patient education on the importance of early Tuberculosis screening and treatment in St. Joseph's waiting area and addresses the ANC mothers as well.



*Boys wait their turn at the Clinic*



*St Joseph's Waiting Area*



*ANC Mothers*

Some of the boys from the Rehabilitation Centre, suspected of having dysentery, visited the Clinic and received treatment for various ailments. Although there is no evidence of an outbreak, it is reassuring to have the Clinic nearby as thousands of people would go without medical care for months, or until a simple preventable case develops into a more serious problem. It is remarkable how simple hygiene practices, along with access to safe drinking water, contribute significantly to good health. There were 103 pupils and students who received a waiver during October.





The Clinic highly values collaboration with the Starehe sub-county health ministry. Recently, Emma Kimani, the Sub-County Health Promotion Coordinator, and Mary Munene, the Sub-County Disease Surveillance Coordinator, visited the Clinic. During their visit, they discussed different aspects related to immunization, compliance with vaccine arrangement criteria, transportation of vaccines, data review frequency, viral hemorrhagic fevers, and collaboration with the Sub-County Strategy Coordinator. This exchange of information was incredibly beneficial for both parties involved.



*Emma Mary and Boniface Njoroge*



*Mary (seated) with Immaculate*

The Respiratory Society of Kenya and the Sub-county Tuberculosis Coordinator, Mary Nzamalu, conduct regular visits to ensure data accuracy and effective patient drug administration follow-up at the Clinic.



*Lucky Wanjiru, MIC Administrator, with Dr George, Clara and Victoria.*

The Clinic had a special guest in October - Dr. Juraj Benca George, along with his wife and their two children. Dr. George had previously volunteered at the Clinic from 2002 to 2007, and he noticed significant improvements during his recent visit. He shared his reminiscences about how different the Clinic looked compared to his last visit and appreciated the various enhancements made to the Clinic.

We express our deepest gratitude to our generous donors, staff and volunteers who continuously support the Clinic, enabling us to make a tangible difference in the lives of the poor. Together, we remain committed to fostering healthier environments within our community. With your help, the Clinic continues to be a healing sanctuary, providing essential services and working diligently to promote a healthier Mukuru community.





## Welfare Services

### Rehabilitation Centre

The 63 boys residing at the Centre participated in many activities in October, and 21 of them prepared and sat for the last year of the national examinations for primary school children known as KCPE, as the new education system KEPSEA examinations replaced the previous system. The KCSE candidates' number 4 and will sit for the secondary education examinations in November which will conclude their secondary education. The boys have been supported well throughout the year by their sponsors via MPC. The boys in the lower primary classes also sat the KNEC examinations.



*KCPE and KEPSEA Candidates*



*Instructor Charles with the carpentry students*



*Varnishing picnic tables*

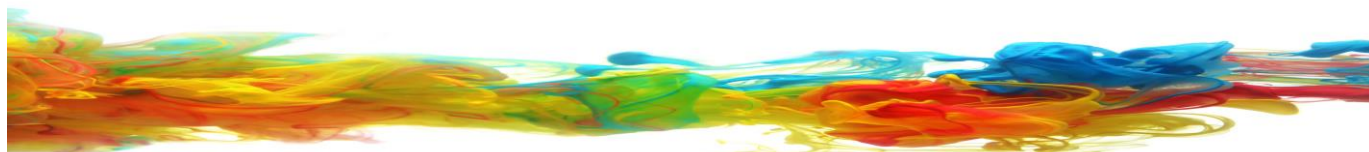
Despite the low enrollment this year, the teacher has been able to dedicate enough time to individually tailor each student's classes to prepare them for the NITA vocational exams in December. Thanks to Vera Smith and Andrienne Burke for their continuous support with the carpentry workshop as they keep it well-resourced with raw materials. The boys have continued to amaze us with the variety of woodworking products that they make as part of their practice and learning experience, all under the guidance of their capable teacher.

The MIRC rugby players are being put through their paces by their new coach who happens to be a Kenya Rugby 7s player. The boys are showing a great understanding and appreciation of the game, now that they know their coach's background. They are eager to learn and are well-positioned to gain valuable insights into the game and apply them on the field. Based on the coach's assessments, the boys' mastery of the game's techniques and rules has significantly improved.



*MIRC rugby team in Action during a training session*





The music program at the Centre is gaining momentum as the boys discover the joys of playing music. What initially started as a small group of 10 boys messing around with instruments has now transformed into a full-fledged movement to create a band and learn different instruments. The boys practice every day, and three of them have demonstrated exceptional skills on the violin, while two others prefer playing the piano, inspiring the rest to take music seriously. The Centre has now formed a choir to practice singing spiritual songs and Christmas carols together.



*Band practice in Reuben*

Food insecurity is becoming a significant contributing factor to the high rate of boys living on the streets. It is essential to stress the value of acquiring practical skills, particularly in gardening, and agriculture's vital role in providing security to their families. The boys are enthusiastic about gardening, as they reap the benefits of their hard work. In October, we sowed extra kale, spinach, and onions after harvesting the tomatoes last month.



*Vegetable garden*



*Newly Baptized Boys at OLQP Parish*

Twenty-six boys have completed several months of catechism classes and received the Sacrament of Baptism. As October is observed as the month of the Holy Rosary in the Catholic Church, the boys prayed the Rosary together before receiving their Sacrament of Baptism. They pray the Rosary every day and requested to pray it before their baptism as it holds great significance for them. The boys have devoted themselves to Mary, the Mother of God, to become better individuals and serve God in all aspects of their daily lives.



The art classes have been active in October as they prepare for the Paula Cullen Group's arrival in November. The young artists have been working hard on making necklaces, candles, key holders, and drawings. They also created beautiful postcards expressing gratitude to all the donors and sponsors of the Centre as their first-time project. As the festive season approaches, they are developing completed candles and Christmas cards to sell at their annual art exhibition at the Capital Centre in South B, a local shopping centre.



*Art Class*

Engaging with visitors is one of the most pleasant activities at the Centre. This month, some Bank of Ireland staff members visited the Centre after contributing funds to the Hekima building. They were highly impressed to see the boys wearing “Bank of Ireland” shirts and taking good care of the facility. Visitors from Slovakia who had come decades ago also returned. Jonas and Daris from St. Elizabeth's University were amazed by the improvements since they volunteered at the clinic 20 years ago. Towards the end of the month, Frank and Paula Cullen visited, and the other members of Paula's group are expected to arrive in November. British Airways crewmembers also visited throughout October, spent time with the boys in their various classes, and treated them to pizza!



*BA Crewmembers, Abby and Chrissie with a few of the boys*



*Jonas and Daris with some of the Art Class*




The boys greeted Frank and Paula Cullen at the Centre with joyful songs and heartwarming messages. Paula Cullen's group sponsored the picnic table project, and the boy's enjoyed pizza for lunch.

*Paula and Frank with some of the Rehab Boys*







The Centre expresses immense gratitude towards its generous donors who provide monthly food provisions, clothing, materials, and resources. Their contributions make a significant difference to everyone. We would like to specifically acknowledge the following donors: Team Pankaj, Frank and Paula Cullen, the British Airways crew members, Catholic University, Corner Bakers, and Team Shakers.



*Frank Cullen, some of the boys and Pizza*



*Corner Bakers*



*Paula Cullen's Group Donations*



*Tom Buckley addresses the class*



*Team Pankaj*

Tom Buckley from BOI was very kind to bring out some donations from Paula Cullen's group. When he spoke to the boys he encouraged them to work hard with their studies and wish them success in their forthcoming exams.





Without the generosity of individuals and groups, many people living in the slums would remain in poverty. The Office is responsible for identifying and managing needy cases for potential sponsorship. Moreover, to provide additional support to individuals, various activities and events are organized to promote their academic, social, and personal success and development.

Agnes Akinyi, who overcame the challenges of living in the slums and pursued her education through the MPC sponsorship, achieved 315 marks out of 500 in her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in 2013 at Mukuru Reuben Primary School. After completing four years of high school, she scored a B- in her Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2017 at St. Michael's Secondary School. Agnes enrolled in Kirinyaga University and pursued a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, which she completed and graduated on 13th October 2023. Her story is an inspiration to many young people and serves as living proof that with hard work, determination, and support, any obstacle can be overcome and goals can be achieved. Agnes wishes to express her gratitude to her sponsors.



*Agnes Akinyi*



*St Catherine's Pupils*

Before ending the academic year the sponsored pupils were busy writing their appreciation letters to their sponsors. The children convey their hopes and aspirations for the future. Please check the database for your sponsored child. If you are unsure about the process please send an email to Stellah at [stellahm@mercymukuru.co.ke](mailto:stellahm@mercymukuru.co.ke).

The collection of report cards was another exciting moment for us. It was the time when children's performances were evaluated and judged. The Sponsorship Office closely inspects the report cards to identify students who require extra support or guidance. If such students are identified, counselling sessions are arranged for them.



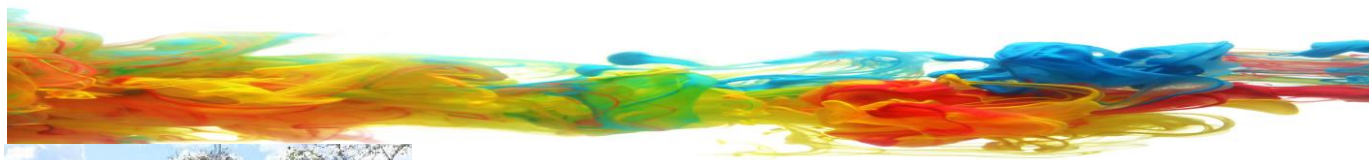
*Reports Cards*



A Sensitization Day was organized for sponsored students at the MPC multipurpose hall. Approximately 100 secondary school students attended the event. The guest speaker was Eric Oyamo, a Red Cross facilitator and a former beneficiary of the MPC sponsorship program. As a child, he attended St. Bakhita Primary School. Eric talked about the effects of drug and substance abuse, peer influence, and indiscipline. He encouraged the students to make 'good choices and avoid such things as

drugs and negative peer pressure and focus on their goals and education. Eric's personal experience made the day interactive and informative, and the students appreciated the speaker and the impact of the event.





*Community Service Projects*



At the end of the school term, the sponsored students participated in a community service program. They were assigned to different departments at MPC and performed tasks such as cleaning, gardening, tree planting and filing. The students worked in teams, learned new skills and interacted with the MPC staff. The program promotes teamwork and cooperation among the students and staff.

During the term, several significant challenges were reported to be affecting the students, including teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. To address these issues, meetings were held with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Education Coordinator and Child Protection Officer. They worked together to come up with a preventative resolution and post-supportive approaches to help the senior students deal with these challenges.



*Class of 2023 Sponsored Students at St Michael's*

Form 4 sponsored students at St Michael's Secondary who will take their final examination Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in November. We hope they do well in their exams.

We express our gratitude to their sponsors: Airtel, Association of Sisterhood Kenya (AOSK), OLA Energy, Irish Aid, Bob Patterson's group, Alan Donohoe, Collete Murphy, Frank and Joan Hughes and Mukuru Alumni.





## Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre

The Centre has experienced an increase in enrolments, with 103 children now attending, comprising 60% boys and 40% girls. This is excellent news for the community, as more parents are building trusting relationships with Songa. In October, the therapy sessions at the Centre and the home therapy programs were successful, as parents became more consistent with their involvement in their children's milestones. The Centre is currently staffed with 23 members and 12 volunteers and visitors during the month.

The various Units at the Centre have carried out various activities to encourage children to reach their developmental milestones. As a result, many children have shown improvement in learning and communication skills. Additionally, the donating of new large classroom televisions by 'Whistle' and 'Kenyan Child Foundation' has contributed to improved outcomes in digital literacy.

The therapists conducted 674 sessions with the children in the Units, with 180 speech therapy sessions and 494 occupational and physiotherapy sessions. These numbers ensure that 79% of the children receive multiple sessions, essential for their consistent development, and 53% receive multiple speech therapy sessions. After receiving continuous therapy, Mercy Meingashu, a 10-year-old with cerebral palsy from Unit 2, has improved in strength. She is now able to independently sit, stand, and walk 200 meters using both hands.



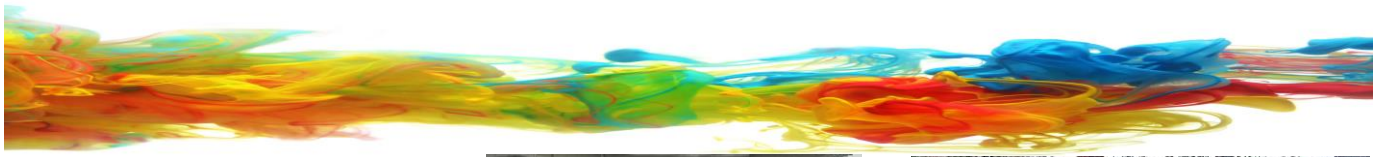
*October Star Mercy Meingashu*

The Nairobi County Health Office vaccinated children under 5 years at the Centre with Polio vaccine and Vitamin A shots. The vaccinations were carried out over 2 dates by health coordinators.



Amidst the hustle and bustle of their daily routine, the children at the Centre feel thrilled to meet new visitors. In October, the kids had the privilege of spending time with John McCarrick, a member of a UN delegation and the son of Ciara and John McCarrick, who played a significant role in building the new facility. The visitors included British Airways crew members Callum Goodwin, Robyn Colwill, and Estelle Carver, representatives from BOC gases, Elim Pentecostal Church, and Jonaron Foundation.





*John, Fred and Sr Mary*



*Lucky, Sr Patricia, Sr Barbara, Fred, Sr Mary with John*



*BA Crewmembers and children enjoying the swings*



*Parents at the Start Up Training Session*

The Cheshire Disability Kenya agency organized a program called 'Start-up Businesses' at Songa Mbele to help parents with socio-economic needs. In October, MPC organized other training sessions including Child Protection and Safeguarding, Community Dialogues, and Caregivers. They also conducted home visits, made 19 hospital referrals, and followed up with 2 schools for children who were transferred to other specialized learning institutions.

The Centre received many donations of food provisions, hygiene materials, clothes and shoes from well-wishers and supporters. The Social Office distributed 57 uniforms to children at the Centre.



*Sofi Consults Ltd*



*New Uniforms*



## Education

### Primary Schools

The pupils were eager to sit their Term 3 assessments and other national examinations before the schools closed for the long holiday break for Christmas. The Government reduced the number of examination centres by merging public and private schools with less than 30 candidates at the nearby public primary schools. For the very last time, Class 8 pupils for 3 days sat the final KCPE exams after 39 years of existence. The new assessment system, Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA) exams, also took place.

The examinations were not without drama at the schools, as a few children had to sit their exams under special attention. One boy sat his exams alone in a room as his brother was close by to watch over him. He is a suspected schizophrenic case. After being discharged from the hospital the day before, 1 girl underwent her exams in a wheelchair, another girl was diagnosed with leukemia and an enlarged heart, and 1 girl had given birth a few days prior. It was an extraordinary effort by all the pupils who had to contend with unusual medical situations for their age.

There were more pupils who sat exams in 2023 than 2022.

| Primary School       | Class 8 KCPE |            |            | Grade 6 KPSEA |            |            |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
|                      | Boys         | Girls      | Total      | Boys          | Girls      | Total      |
| St. Bakhita          | 83           | 71         | <b>154</b> | 77            | 62         | <b>169</b> |
| St. Catherine        | 95           | 92         | <b>187</b> | 78            | 93         | <b>171</b> |
| St. Elizabeth        | 114          | 123        | <b>237</b> | 127           | 131        | <b>258</b> |
| Sancta Maria Kayaaba | 101          | 123        | <b>224</b> | 85            | 83         | <b>168</b> |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>393</b>   | <b>409</b> | <b>802</b> | <b>367</b>    | <b>399</b> | <b>766</b> |

To conclude the academic year each primary school celebrated Mass to give thanks to God for the opportunities parents and sponsors afforded them.



*St Bakhita Primary School pupils at Mass*



Since the introduction of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), the Kenyan Government has acknowledged and embraced two years of early learning. As a result, the County Government sent teachers to ECDE Centres within primary schools to teach young children. Upon completing pre-primary learning, the children celebrated with their parents by dancing, signifying their success.



*St. Elizabeth Primary School ECDE graduation ceremony*



*Grade One pupils at lunch*

Thanks to the assistance of Team Pankaj, MPC has been able to provide well-balanced meals consisting of fruits and vegetables to all of the schools, nourishing and boosting the immunity of the children. Due to the challenging economic times and the struggle of parents to find work, many children rely on these meals for survival.

After several visits to the Government regarding the Junior School laboratories, a small sum of funds was allocated to modify a room and construct a laboratory in two MPC primary schools - St. Elizabeth and Sancta Maria Kayaaba. However, more than the allocated funds were needed to fully equip and build the laboratories. The next step is to acquire the necessary apparatus to ensure fully operational laboratories.



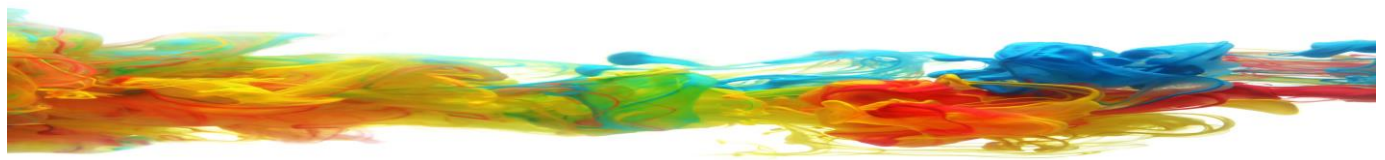
*St. Bakhita Junior School laboratory.*



*Sancta Maria Kayaaba wall*

Several years ago, the government banned the placement of kiosks along school walls. However, last month it was reported that vendors attempted to erect kiosks on a section of the wall at Sancta Maria Kayaaba, one of the MPC primary schools. Fortunately, the school administrators and parents took action, and the local authority evicted the vendors. As a result, flowers are now planted along the school fence, creating a more pleasant environment.





Australian opera singer Breana Stillman recently visited MPC along with a group named Ghetto Classics from Rueben Centre. They entertained pupils, students, and staff at MPC. Breanna's group has been working with youths from Mukuru slums, helping them learn to play different musical instruments and pieces from various operas.

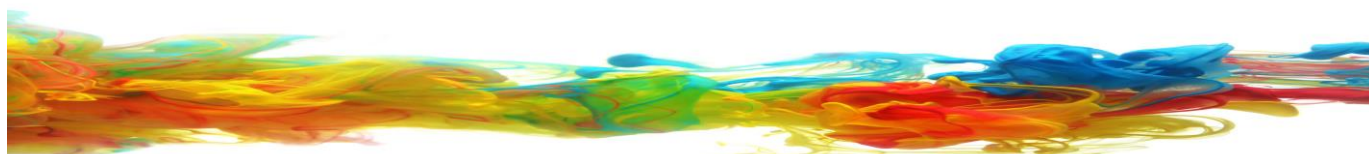


*Ghetto classic team entertaining students at the hall led by Breanna*



One of the most persistent challenges facing MPC primary schools is the teacher shortage. Numerous reports have been submitted on this issue, and MPC has been actively lobbying the Government and TSC to address it. Thankfully, the lobbying efforts have yielded some positive results this time around. One has been absorbed from the two teachers who applied to TSC. MPC plans to visit TSC officials to ensure more MPC teachers can be employed.





## St Michael's Secondary School

The enrolments at St Michael's continues to increase with a total of 511 students with a 48:52 male to female ratio. As the Form 4s prepared for their national examinations the school celebrated the Mass and Fr Binu from Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish encouraged the students to remain focused despite the daily challenges they encounter.



To assist students with managing their challenging situations the school is constantly discovering ways to help. The mentorship is a very positive method for all the students. Over the years one of the MPC Board members has given of his time each month to facilitate the program. In October, Joseph Tshibanda from the Missionaries of Africa and Dale Matano Muta, director of a community based organization, Breaking Barriers and Youth Initiative, concentrated on how to identify, set and work towards goals.



*Frank Laurence, MPC board member mentoring Form 3 boys.*

At this time of the year all the conversations for the senior students is about the national examinations, KCSE. It is the final opportunity that students have to influence their future and possibly entrance to university. Invigilators and supervisors visit the school prior to the actual examinations to ensure that the students are well versed on expectations and regulations. Failure to comply the rules and regulations would result in severe punishment and ban on the school. No one apart from students are allowed in the school during the exam timetable, not even teachers. The only people allowed on the premises are the Principal, Administration Police and Invigilators.



*Students receive briefing from invigilators*

The inaugural career day for St. Michael's Secondary school was held and its theme was "Every Career Matters" with students from Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre, Nazareth Medical College, Eastland College of Technology and Strathmore University. St Michael's students interacted with colleges present and heard about the various courses offered and their requirements. College representatives presented talks to the students in the MPC multipurpose hall. The Form 4s received further information on choices from the career counsellors who were in attendance.



*Mr. Onyango from NITA*





*Nazareth Medical College*



*OLMVTC*



*Eastlands College*

After a challenging year the individual students get to shine because of their hard work. The Awards Ceremony was held and those students who excelled were acknowledged. Showing other students at St Michael's that achievements are possible is very important as the temptations to 'give up' are all around them.



*School Dean Mr. Musa awarding the candidates and School Counsellors*

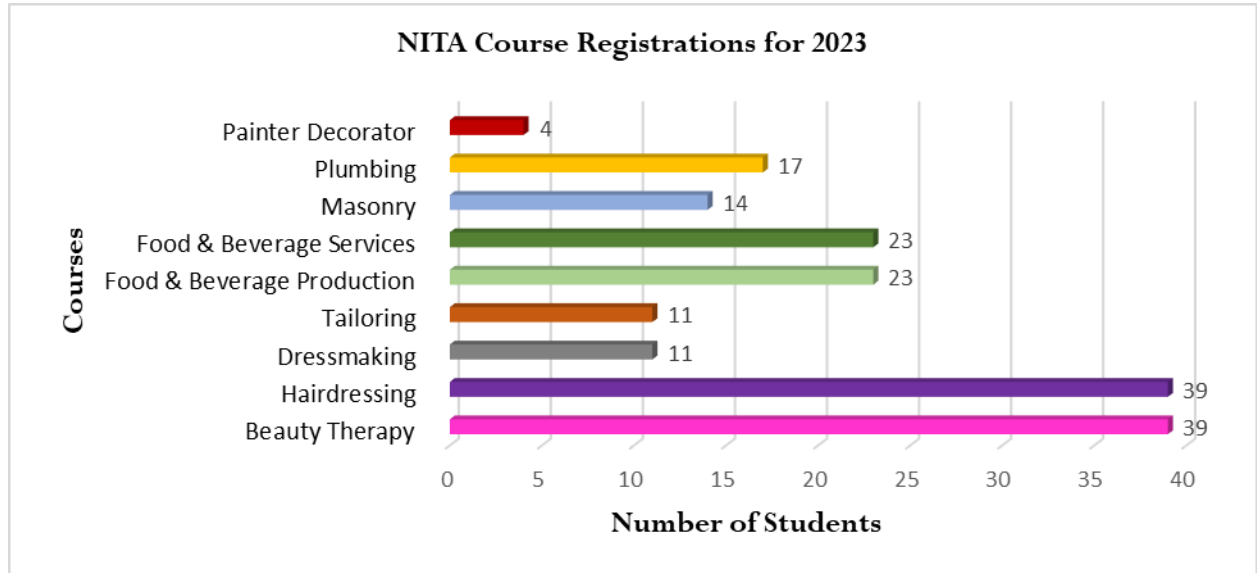
There are 97 Form 4 students for the year 2023. Among them, Computer Studies is the best-performing subject. However, those who aspire to enter university need to focus on the compulsory subjects of English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, and Chemistry. These subjects require special attention as they are crucial for the university admission process. It is hoped that 15 students will successfully pass these subjects and qualify for university admission.

| Form 4 Mock Examination Averages for 2023 |            |            |       |
|---|------------|------------|-------|
| Subject                                   | Candidates | Mean Marks | Grade |
| Computer Studies                          | 35         | 63.7       | B-    |
| History And Government                    | 51         | 54.5       | C+    |
| C.R.E.                                    | 95         | 52.3       | C     |
| Business Studies                          | 29         | 51.9       | C     |
| English                                   | 96         | 50.7       | C     |
| Kiswahili                                 | 97         | 43.4       | D+    |
| Biology                                   | 57         | 37.5       | D+    |
| Geography                                 | 35         | 40.7       | D+    |
| Agriculture                               | 31         | 41.5       | D+    |
| Physics                                   | 50         | 28.1       | D-    |
| Chemistry                                 | 97         | 28         | D-    |
| Mathematics                               | 97         | 12.1       | E     |



## Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

Over 270 students are preparing to complete their courses at the Centre with NITA registrations secured for 181 candidates for Classes of 2023 which is an increase on 2022.



The results of the Front Office Class of 2022 KNEC (Kenya National Examination Council) were very pleasing, with all 11 students passing. The other authority, TVETA (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority), visited the Centre in October to collect data on implementing recognition of prior learning (RPL). The RPL is the technical education system that allows people from the industry to get certification without being in class for the required period. This is where someone comes to the Centre with their portfolio, and the verifier compares it with the curriculum. If the portfolio matches the curriculum, they will be registered for examination according to the level of skill someone has. The Centre was one of the few institutions selected for the RPL.



*Beauty Therapy Representatives*

One of the most thrilling events of the month was the Careers Expo at St. Michael's Secondary School just before the end of the academic year. The event featured representatives from various courses who answered students' questions. The students appreciated learning about possibilities and pathways besides university to lead to future employment.



*Welding Representatives*





Child Protection and Safeguarding are of utmost importance to MPC. Our staff undergo regular updates on identification, regulations, and procedures. Recently, ten of our staff members attended a three-day workshop to learn how to interact with children in a positive and supportive way and to understand the correct guidelines to follow in case of any incidents. The facilitators were Salome Masha, MPC social worker and Catherine Karuno from Sisters of Mercy Office, Kenyan Province.

*OLMVTC Training*

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre stands out for its well-equipped resources. The Centre has received numerous donations from British Airways crew members, which has enabled it to provide its students with the latest products, thus enhancing their practical experience. For instance, the hairdressing and beauty classes are well-stocked with face masks, pedicure sets, hairbrushes, and electric tongs, while the dressmaking classes have access to magazines with dress patterns. The Centre's library also boasts a collection of books on different occupations.



*Electric Tongs in action*



*Dressmaking Patterns and Magazines*



*Make up kits*



*Donations from Krisha and friends from Strathmore University*







# 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 building of the food storage team met to discuss designs, and budgets.
- British Airways crewmembers brought an assortment of donations for MPC.



- Former volunteer doctor from 20 years ago returned with his family to MPC to see the developments.