

Mukuru Promotion Centre

MARCH NEWSLETTER

VOL 10 ISSUE NO. 3, 2025

JOURNEYING 40 YEARS WITH THE MUKURU COMMUNITY

MPC DIRECTOR

Dear Partners, Supporters, Family and Friends,

Several months ago, we requested that you keep Emelda Wairimu in your prayers. She is a bright Form 2 student who was diagnosed with facial cancer last June. Despite undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy, the cancer has unfortunately persisted and spread to her lungs. Although she experiences considerable pain at times, the medical staff at Texas Cancer Centre have been managing her symptoms. While she is currently at home, she returns to the centre as needed for palliative care. We are encouraged by the advancements in cancer treatment in Nairobi over the past few years.

Our medical and social services continue to support the residents of Mukuru and the local students. I am often reminded of the early Sisters of Mercy and their efforts in the Dublin slums, which share similarities with our work in Mukuru. We are grateful to the staff, volunteers, and all of you who contribute to these vital services for the underprivileged. Due to the doctors' strike, it has become common to see patients transferred from government hospitals to our clinic rather than vice versa.

Unfortunately, as unemployment and poverty rise, so does cruelty and abuse toward children. There is a pressing need to develop our child protection office further and enhance our social services. We are very thankful to the Sisters of Mercy Solidarity Fund for supporting primary school staff salaries, which enables schools to function and helps keep vulnerable children in school.

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We face significant environmental challenges. Four of our schools and centres are located near the banks of the Ngong River. Last year, we experienced damage from floods and land erosion from soil dumping on the opposite bank. St. Bakhita Primary, St. Elizabeth's Primary, St. Michael's Secondary, and the Songa Mbele Centre are all at risk. With help from the Irish Embassy, we have taken remedial action by placing gabions to support the riverbank. However, we still need to assist the other centres. The erosion from soil dumping has also posed a threat to the safety of our students and staff. We suffer greatly from a large illegal dumping site opposite our head office. We have joined with other affected parties to lobby to end the dumping. We pray for success as children are impacted by the toxic fumes, odours, and insects emanating from the site.

St. Bakhita, St. Michael's, and the Rehabilitation Centre received water tanks from the Three Musketeers Foundation, Western Australia. The staff and students were amazed at how quickly and efficiently Brian O'Shea and his companions worked. Many jobs related to water, sanitation, and climate change protection await them on their next visit, which we hope won't be delayed for long. Brian also brought much-needed hearing aids for those in desperate need who cannot afford them. Our thanks go to Dr Maria O'Shea and all those Norwegians and Australians who support the O'Shea's in their outstanding work.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to empowering students through mentorship and by providing basic necessities. We are pleased with the improved training and opportunities for our catering students. Special thanks to KWAL, Tamarind, and the Hilton Hotel groups for their generous mentoring and support. The students will never forget their lunch at the Hilton Garden Hotel and the educational trip there. We also appreciate Rion Teegan transporting an Our Lady statue from Herold Mercy School in Cork to Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre.

Services continue at Songa Mbele for children living with disabilities in Mukuru. We need significant improvements in areas like speech therapy, better assessments for children to match them with appropriate classes, and enhanced teaching skills for educators. Although it is a slow, uphill journey for most children, some are making remarkable progress, particularly in physiotherapy.

We celebrate the developments in the Rehabilitation Centre, as it brings us great joy to hear the music and see the boys' growing skills. This year marks 40 years of work with the Mukuru non-formal settlements by the Mukuru Promotion Centre, celebrated with Paula Cullen and her team. Her Excellency, the Irish Ambassador, Caitriona Ingoldsby, honoured us with her presence. We are also grateful to Mandy Ruben for donating her parents' piano to the Mukuru Promotion Centre, an excellent addition to Calary Hall. The progress in the Rehabilitation Centre encourages a brighter future for the boys. Thank you to all who have helped in any way over the past month. Your contributions, whether big or small, have made a significant impact on the lives of the Mukuru community. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and commitment to MPC.

Asanteni Sana, for creating the **possibilities for change**.

Sr Mary Killeen
Director

Archival Corner

“Leo Katika Historia – Today in History”



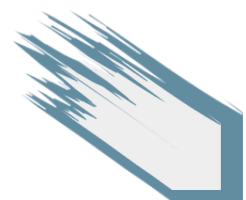
Destruction of Thousands of Weapons in March 2003

After 24 years of reign by the former President of Kenya, the late Daniel Moi, the country transitioned to leadership under the late Mwai Kibaki. This change brought a wave of optimism among Kenyans, especially those living in the Mukuru slums of Nairobi, who hoped that democracy would create endless economic opportunities. The transition followed a highly publicised dictatorship that had contributed to a stark socioeconomic divide. Notably, the former politician and Nyandarua Member of Parliament, Hon. JM Kariuki, lamented that "Kenya had become a nation of ten millionaires and ten million beggars" before his assassination in 1975. Poverty, joblessness, and hopelessness led to a rise in crime, particularly in Nairobi's slums, including Mukuru.

In March 2003, following extensive lobbying, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Kenyan government, and other stakeholders held a symbolic torching ceremony at Uhuru Gardens in Nairobi to destroy thousands of weapons. These weapons had primarily been recovered from the slums of Nairobi, including Mukuru.

Although the subsequent opportunities contributed to a decrease in crime rates within Mukuru, the post-election violence in 2007, triggered by a highly divisive referendum in 2005, governance changes, corruption, and high taxation levels resulted in joblessness, an unaffordable education system, and a surge in crime once again in Mukuru.

In response to this security challenge, MPC, with support from various donors, initiated several strategies to address these issues. These include a sponsorship program for students from low-income backgrounds who cannot afford education, a mentorship program for students, and hiring effective social workers in all MPC schools to maintain connections with the Mukuru community, identifying vulnerable individuals and providing them with the necessary support. Additionally, we have introduced subsidised medical services to ensure that the Mukuru community has access to healthcare and an ex-convict program that offers opportunities for former inmates from Mukuru slums to earn a living and reintegrate into society. We greatly appreciate your continued support as we work to serve the underprivileged in Mukuru.



Social and Health Services

Activities In March

MPC's dedicated social workers, stationed across the nine community centres, have tirelessly devoted themselves to uplifting the vulnerable residents of Mukuru and carrying out 2,828 interventions in March. They assessed individual needs and provided essential resources such as clothing to keep families warm, nutritional support to promote health, and, in cases of extreme hardship, financial assistance to those who qualify for aid and made 41 home visits and 22 hospital visits.

The Amaranth program, skilfully coordinated by Sr. Barbara Dooley at St. Catherine's social office, shines as a beacon of hope for 85 sick clients and malnourished children. The distribution of amaranth supplements every two weeks has made a tangible difference, significantly boosting the immune systems of these children. As the schools prepare for the much-anticipated first term break, social workers remain steadfast in supporting vulnerable students, ensuring they have the necessary resources to study comfortably in challenging circumstances.



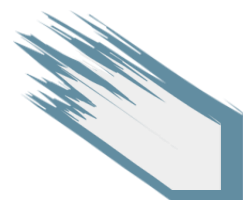
The highest number of needy pupils in March came from 340 pupils at St Elizabeth Primary School. Also, over 660 girls attending the MPC schools have received menstrual hygiene products, a critical support that many struggle to access at home due to financial limitations.

St Bakhita JSS Student (Grade 9)

The supplementary monthly nutritional support program, generously funded by the Pablo Horstmann Foundation, serves as a lifeline for sickly children, expectant mothers, and those who have recently given birth (three months postpartum).



Vulnerable parents of sickly children receiving food support courtesy of the Pablo Horstman Foundation funds



The Child Protection Office collaborates closely with social workers to uphold the safety and well-being of our students. This office conducts mentorship initiatives through weekly sessions at all centres, fostering resilience and personal growth. The psychosocial support offered to students and staff manifests as a nurturing presence provided through one-on-one interactions and group sessions, thanks to the unwavering dedication of staff members and volunteer counsellors. In their proactive stance, the office has also responded to cases of abuse, successfully rescuing three children from situations of parental neglect and physical violence. Given the alarming rise in physical abuse cases, we are prioritising education for parents on constructive conflict resolution techniques to help reduce instances of domestic violence directed at children.

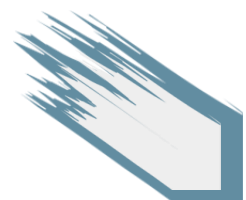


Mentorship session at Sancta Maria Kayaaba Primary

The Clinic stands as a cornerstone of affordable healthcare for the Mukuru community, particularly in light of the ongoing doctors' strike that severely limited public hospital services. With many unable to seek treatment in private hospitals due to prohibitive costs, the Clinic has experienced a substantial influx of patients seeking care. The Clinic treated a record 2,929 patients in March, averaging 139 per day. The social workers referred 317 students to the Clinic in March, with the largest cohort from Sancta Maria Kayaaba. Supported by skilled paediatricians and backed by the resources of the Pablo Horstmann Foundation, the Clinic addresses the urgent healthcare needs of the community. The medical social office operates diligently to ensure that only the most vulnerable clients from the community and students from our institutions benefit from treatment waivers, showcasing our commitment to health equity and community welfare.



A MIC doctor visits a patient at a hospital MPC networks with



Mary Immaculate Clinic

Activities In March

March was marked by significant progress in patient care, infrastructure improvements, and staff development. The Clinic has continued to improve the quality of care provided, especially for vulnerable populations, such as children in the slums and mothers in need. The total number of patients treated in March is a record 2,929, with 61% female and 39% male. There were 1,634 paediatric cases, with a 54:46 ratio of girls to boys accounting for 58% of the overall patients in March. The number of laboratory tests conducted was 1,317 with nearly 40% of the tests for paediatrics. The full-time paediatrician is making an enormous difference to the Clinic. There were 97 ultrasounds conducted on pregnant women and seven others, and the Pablo Horstmann Foundation sponsors the services. The Child Wellness Clinic immunised 116 children in March, and the MoH provided the vaccines.

Respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases continue to be a significant challenge, particularly among children aged 0-5 years in slum areas. The poor living conditions in these areas contribute to the high incidence of these diseases. The Clinic aims to carry out health campaigns and community outreach programs through community health promoters to raise awareness of these health risks and encourage preventive measures like better sanitation and hygiene practices.

The deworming program continues throughout the year, and in March, a clinician and a nurse visited St. Catherine's and MIRC Rehabilitation Centre as part of the school health program, where 1,452 children received deworming treatment. Additionally, 193 students were provided with Vitamin A supplementation. Vitamin A supports immunity and promotes healthy vision, growth, and development. Deworming reduces the risk of parasitic infections, improves nutritional absorption, and enhances overall health in children.

The Clinic received several equipment items thanks to the Pablo Horstmann Foundation, such as the Combilyzer, which allows for faster and more efficient urinalysis testing, which is crucial in diagnosing various conditions. This addition has streamlined laboratory processes, improved turnaround times, and enhanced the Clinic's capacity to provide timely care.



Urine analyzer

Another important piece of equipment got was the Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR) test is a valuable diagnostic tool that assists healthcare providers in the early identification of conditions such as inflammation and infections. By measuring the rate at which red blood cells settle at the bottom of a test tube, this test provides important insights into the presence of underlying health issues. Early detection is crucial, as it allows for swift intervention and treatment, ultimately enhancing patient care. By addressing health concerns promptly, the ESR test can reduce the need for expensive medications and improve overall outcomes, ensuring a better quality of life for patients.



ESR Machine



Lab technician at work

The Clinic's pharmacy has undergone minor upgrades to enhance operational efficiency. The installation of modern shelving has improved the organisation of medications, significantly reducing the time spent searching through cupboards. The cupboards were built by the carpentry boys from the Rehabilitation Centre. With a bright and user-friendly structure, medication dispensing is now more efficient. Additionally, the pharmaceutical fridge ensures that temperature-sensitive medications are stored correctly, maintaining their efficacy and preventing spoilage, which in turn helps reduce waste.

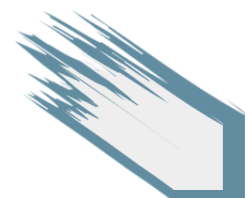


New shelving in the Pharmacy



Medical fridge

Two other important improvements are the Critical Room and Emergency Equipment. The Critical Room will be fully equipped with essential tools for critical care. A patient monitoring device will continuously track patients' vital signs, providing early warnings for staff to intervene quickly. The ECG machine will also assess heart function and help detect potential issues early on. The Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Board ensures a patient is firmly anchored on the bed and helps in proper chest compressions and easier to perform additional life-saving procedures all thanks to Pablo Horstmann Foundation.





The engineer and Dr Claudia trains nurses on the new monitor, ECG and CPR Board

The new equipment will enable improved management of critically ill patients, decreasing the need for costly and time-consuming referrals. With the unique capability to monitor vital signs in real-time and evaluate heart function, we can detect life-threatening conditions earlier, potentially saving lives that might otherwise be lost during the waiting and referral process.

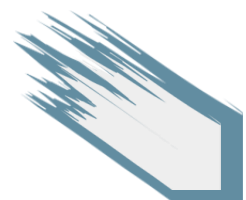
As part of the Clinic's ongoing commitment to capacity building, we have continued our efforts in Continuous Medical Education (CME). In March, the Clinic conducted two essential training sessions to improve the management of critical care situations and enhance staff preparedness.

Staff members were trained to assess critical care patients effectively, particularly in cardiac arrest scenarios. They learned how to conduct RCP (Rescue Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and organise the critical care environment, including correctly setting up the emergency trolley and RCP box. This training will significantly enhance our preparedness in a slum setting, where patients often arrive in critical condition. It equips staff to recognise early signs of deterioration, ensuring they can act swiftly even in high-pressure situations. Ultimately, this will increase preparedness, reduce response times, and potentially save lives. The second session focused on diagnosing, managing, and treating severe bronchospasm in children—a common and serious condition, especially in slum areas where environmental factors exacerbate respiratory issues. Doctors were trained on when to refer patients and how to use the ABCDE approach to manage the airway in critically ill patients. This training is crucial, particularly in a setting where patients, especially children, often arrive at the Clinic in a deteriorated state. Staff are now better equipped to handle cases of severe bronchospasm and can intervene quickly to prevent complications. Early and effective management of respiratory distress can be the difference between life and death.

One of the nurses attended a Vitamin A Microplanning meeting organised by the Subcounty Nutrition Coordinator at the STC Casino. The meeting aimed to strategise ways to enhance the coverage of routine Vitamin A supplementation (VAS), ensuring that eligible children have continuous access to services while increasing the uptake of VAS, deworming, and follow-up care for malnutrition cases through paediatric and maternal-child health services. Expanding outreach efforts, especially in slum areas, was also emphasised. The Clinic received a commendation for its excellent management of malnutrition cases and was encouraged to continue conducting outreach programs.



Sub County microplanning meeting



Primary Schools

Activities In March

All 6,862 pupils returned from the mid-term break feeling energised and ready to begin the second part of the term. March was busy with lessons, assessments, and extracurricular activities. The Ministry of Education aimed to achieve a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:50. St. Elizabeth received two new teachers, while one was transferred. St. Catherine's gained one new teacher and experienced a transfer. Sancta Maria received two new teachers, one of whom was being transferred. Ultimately, the net increase was only two teachers, despite needing more. Headteachers continue to lobby the government to reduce teachers' workloads and create a more conducive learning environment for students.

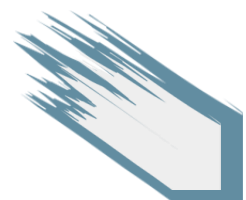
Primary School	Early Childhood			Grades 1-6			JSS Grades 7-9			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
St. Elizabeth	110	106	216	576	605	1,181	536	548	1,084	2,481
St. Catherine	58	61	119	427	377	804	269	288	557	1,480
St. Bakhita	69	66	135	272	263	535	243	299	542	1,212
Sancta Maria Kayaaba	68	63	131	466	491	957	320	281	601	1,689
TOTAL	305	296	601	1,741	1,736	3,477	1,368	1,416	2,784	6,862

The County Government Constituency Development Fund has financed the construction of the Grade 9 classrooms at Sancta Mara Primary School. These four classrooms built for the JSS, once completed by April and operational in May, will significantly improve the learning environment by reducing classroom sizes and providing more space for students.



Classroom construction at Sancta Maria

The MoE requires primary schools to have an operational Board of Management (BOM) to oversee operations, ensuring efficient and effective management. Schools can propose people to the Sub County Director of Education for approval. In March, the schools forwarded names for the BOM and await the outcome of the vetting process.



The retaining wall at St. Bakhita's was compromised when people removed soil from the MPC side of the river to create "land" for shanty dwellings on the opposite side. In 2016, the KfW Development Bank reinforced the area with multiple terraced concrete levels for the retaining wall. Currently, this erosion impacts sections of the school's perimeter wall. It increases the risk of collapse, posing a danger to the people below.

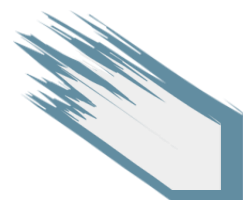
To help reduce the risk of landslides and potential loss of life, MPC has erected gabions to create an additional retaining wall to help prevent further erosion. This intervention aims to stop soil erosion and mitigate human activities destabilising the riverbanks, putting the wall at increased risk of collapse. Despite the protective legislation for riparian land, there has been little action from the authorities to enforce these laws, highlighting the urgent need for stronger enforcement measures.



Gabion retaining wall construction along the river parallel to St Bakhita Primary School

A session on SMART advocacy goals was conducted, highlighting the importance of advancing children's environmental rights. Learners were engaged through reflective questions, encouraging them to consider the meaning of a goal, its significance in advocacy, and the evaluation of existing projects. The discussion included an assessment of the goals established between the Loyola Centre for Media and Communications (LCMC) and St. Bakhita Primary School, ensuring that the schools' initiatives align with sustainable and impactful advocacy. The pupils then explored the concept of SMART goals—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound—and their practical application in environmental protection.

An online summit for pupils was held under the theme "Children's Perspectives on Environmental Rights." The event aimed to create a platform for children to engage with government officials, educators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Church, and the community on the importance of upholding children's rights to a clean and safe environment. The desired outcome was to empower young environmental advocates to lead discussions with policymakers and stakeholders on climate action and sustainability. Teachers also participated in sessions focused on environmental sustainability, themed "Shaping Ethical Citizens for a Sustainable World." The online training aimed to achieve the following outcomes: The success of a project should not be measured by its duration but by how well those empowered can continue the mission long after the project ends. Empowering children to identify and address environmental issues in their communities right from the classroom is essential. Children deserve well-equipped mentors in ecological matters to guide their voices and structure their ideas and actions—and that's where teachers come in.



Recently, a transformative donation from The Musketeers Foundation, from Perth Australia, significantly impacted the environment and schools at the Head Office campus. Brian O'Shea and his team introduced an innovative type of water tank, distinct from the standard models typically seen in Kenya. Instead of relying on the black poly tanks, they assembled two impressive 50,000-litre tanks on-site. These remarkable tanks have been donated to MPC and were installed at St. Bakhita Primary School and St. Michael's Secondary School where over 1,800 people come each day.

Sadly, the county government occasionally disrupts the water supply creating significant challenges for the students and staff alike. The lack of reliable water sources can complicate daily activities, stressing an already demanding educational environment. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Brian and his Foundation for delivering this vital asset which is crucial in addressing the schools' persistent water shortage. The size and capacity of the school's roofs during the rainy season can collect an astonishing 2.5 million litres of rainwater. Unfortunately, much of this precious resource flows into the river, highlighting the urgent need for effective systems to capture and utilise this water to benefit the students and the surrounding community.



St Bakhita Tank



The Crew

The Sub-County school athletics and basketball competitions took place at Cannon Apollo Primary School, where 6 pupils from each school were selected to participate at the Zone levels for athletics and basketball. St. Bakhita Primary defended its championship in basketball, and 1 from St. Catherine qualified to proceed to the regional level for the 100m race. Sancta Maria Kayaaba and St. Catherine primary schools did not make it to the regional level in athletics. In a modern dance competition, St. Catherine Primary School made it to the National level.

MPC's primary schools celebrated Mass on Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the Lenten season. The atmosphere was filled with reverence and reflection as students participated in the service. In addition, the pupils have enthusiastically engaged in catechism classes, deepening their understanding of their faith and embracing the spirit of Lent with dedication and enthusiasm.

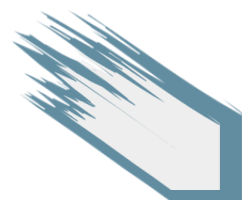


Ash Wednesday Mass at St Elizabeth Primary



Teachers and support staff at the Resurrection Garden Retreat Centre

The Mercy Education Office held a retreat for teachers and support staff from Mercy Associated schools on March 22, 2025, themed "Serving with Dignity." Representatives from each primary school attended and gained spiritual insights from the teachings and pilgrimage.



St Michael's Secondary School

Activities In March

In addition to their academic classes in March, the students were introduced to various social justice issues that will have a lasting impact on their lives. Those who live in slums face numerous injustices, which provides them with deeper insights into the practical aspects of social issues. By equipping students with the language and tools to understand and navigate these issues, we are helping them build positive strategies for respectful dialogue and resilience.

Students and staff participated in The March For Life with the theme: “Mercy and Hope amidst Threats to Life. The March was organised by the Kenya Christian Professionals Forum (KCPF) and aimed to raise awareness and advocate against various threats to human life, including femicide, abortion, child sexualisation, abductions, religious persecution, and corruption in Nairobi’s CBD. Members of different religious organisations, community leaders, university students, and concerned citizens are all united in their commitment to advocating for the sanctity of life. Students engaged in discussions with fellow participants, gaining insights into the issues being addressed.

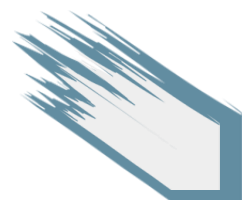
The passionate speeches and presentations delivered during the event particularly impacted the students. They witnessed the emotional testimonies regarding the devastating effects of femicide and the importance of protecting vulnerable children. The discussions surrounding abortion and the sanctity of life sparked thoughtful reflections among the students, prompting them to consider the ethical and moral dimensions of these issues. The March for Life 2025 provided a valuable educational experience for the students, extending beyond the traditional classroom setting.



March for life 2025 at Nairobi CBD



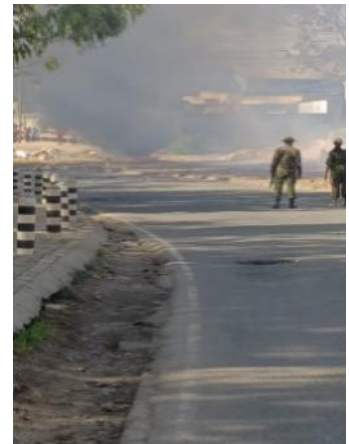
Teachers and 98 students attended the Sky Girl Fest at Kasarani Grounds. The Fest had seven thousands girls in attendance from the various schools all over the country. Sky Girls is a pan African empowerment program for teenage girls with the aim to support them to stay true to their values and steer clear of vices. Sky Girl also help them to follow their passions and say no to the things they know they’re good without.



MPC has raised concerns with the authorities about the dump site across the road from the Head Office, which is impacting the health of people in the area. When the burning of rubbish occurs, toxic fumes drift across the road and fill the air with harmful pollutants, causing medical problems for the children. The administration police took charge of the area and tried to evict the people involved. What came next was a distressing turn of events. In the afternoon, security forces used teargas to disperse the crowd who were protesting at the dump site, causing a sudden and severe health risk within the school premises. The affected students and teachers experienced coughing, eye irritation, and difficulty breathing. The impact of the incident caused huge anxiety, nausea, vomiting and breathing difficulties. The school administration quickly evacuated affected individuals and provided first aid where necessary. Emergency services were provided, and the affected students were taken to the MIC Clinic.



St Michael's students receive first aid



Police on Likoni Road

The entire school participated in the monthly student mentorship program, which featured three probation officers from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) as facilitators. They conducted an interactive forum, sharing valuable information about children's rights. The officers also informed students about criminal offences committed by minors and their legal consequences. They strongly condemned issues such as drug and substance abuse, emphasising that children can face legal repercussions for involvement in drugs. Additionally, they discussed the importance of academic success and encouraged students to work hard in their studies. The session was highly informative, and the students gained much knowledge.



Mentorship session with JKIA probation officers



The students participated in an educational field study at Karura Forest, which enhanced their understanding of physical geography. Accompanied by their Geography teacher, 22 students explored the forest located in Nairobi. They gained practical fieldwork skills, learned about environmental challenges, differentiated between forestry fundamentals, and understood the geological processes shaping the landscape. The field study provided valuable educational experiences that significantly improved the students' comprehension of environmental science and practical fieldwork. Spending a day in the forest was a wonderful opportunity to appreciate this natural resource on Nairobi's doorstep.



Students enjoy
the view at
Karura Forest
waterfall



Father Paulinhos celebrated a combined Ash Wednesday Mass for St. Michael's, St. Bakhita, Skills, and the Head Office. In his homily, He reminded everyone about the essence of the Lenten season and encouraged them to change their hearts through Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving.



Ash Wednesday Mass



St. Michael's expresses its heartfelt gratitude to The Three Musketeers Foundation for donating a water tank. This contribution aims to improve hygiene standards by supplying water for cooking, cleaning, and handwashing. As a result, students will spend less time fetching water.



Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

Activities In March

In March, classes continued smoothly for the 171 enrolled students, with no adverse effects from absenteeism, illness, heavy rains, or the new National Identity Card requirements. The Centre completed the mandated Food Handler's certification for all Food and Beverage students. Additionally, the 68 students preparing for their Industrial Placement received insurance coverage from Gabest Insurance, which includes medical treatment, accidental injuries, death, or disability that may occur during both the training and industrial attachment periods. Furthermore, 40 students were provided with uniforms for their hospitality placements, ensuring they presented a professional image in their workplace.

The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) team has inspected and assessed the Centre for accreditation for the National Skills Certificate (NSC). While it will take a couple of weeks to determine the outcome, a successful accreditation will significantly enhance student access and allow the Centre to expand the number of courses offered. This potential expansion will provide more opportunities for students and strengthen our position in the hospitality industry, fostering a sense of optimism among stakeholders.

Field attachment is a crucial requirement for students following their national exams. NITA assessed two Front Office students during their attachment, and the feedback from their supervisors was encouraging and a source of pride for the Centre. It's a testament to the quality of our education and the dedication of our students, making us all proud of their achievements.

Housekeeping and laundry play a significant role in the hospitality industry. Students from the Food and Beverage class visited Hilton Garden Inn, which mainly provides accommodation services. The Kwetu-Hilton Garden Inn is one of our partners for Housekeeping and Reception placements and a potential employer. The students' visit provided them with hands-on experience managing self-contained rooms and laundry services, which will be invaluable in their future careers.

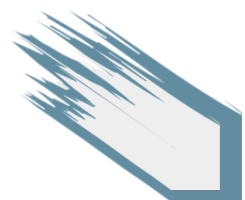


Visit to the Hilton Garden Inn



The Centre received a visit from Eric Githu, the Head of Policy and Regulatory Affairs at KWAL, who spent time with catering cohort 11, getting to know their expectations, confidence, self-expression, and responsibilities. This visit assisted Erick in identifying some of the gaps and developing further mentorship sessions.

Kenya Wine Agencies Ltd (KWAL) interacting with catering students.



OLMVTC voted for the student leadership body according to the institution's regulations. The students elected a male president and a female deputy president, along with two game captains. This elected body serves as a voice for the students in discussions with management. In March, the student body took the initiative to organise a sports day featuring various events, including a walking race, relays, 400-meter sprints, 100-meter sprints, egg races, an eating competition, and soccer. This event showcased their initiative and organisational skills.



OLMVTC Sports Day

MPC is a faith-based, not-for-profit institution. At the vocational training centre, known as Skills, we installed a statue of Mary, Our Lady, mother of God. Mount Mercy College, Cork Ireland, donated the statue through the kindness of Noreen and Noel O'Brien. Rion Teegan carefully hand-carried it and safely delivered it to its new home at the Skills Centre.



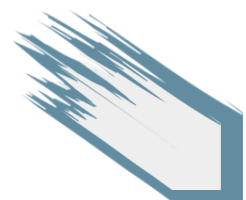
Installation



Fr Liam Durant MHM and OLMVTC students at the installation

The Centre extends its heartfelt appreciation to the numerous visitors who contribute valuable resources each month, greatly enhancing the learning experience across our diverse courses. These generous donations play a crucial role; without them, we would face the challenge of securing additional funds to provide our students with high-quality, practical sessions that help them hone their skills effectively.

In March, the Centre was fortunate to receive a variety of donations, including vibrant sewing materials, an array of professional hairdressing supplies, and an assortment of beauty products. These thoughtful gifts arrived at a pivotal moment, coinciding with the students' preparations for their necessary assessments, ensuring they had the tools they needed to excel. The Centre is sincerely grateful to the many visitors who donate monthly resources to support the learning of our various courses. Without these generous donations, we would need to find additional funding to ensure that our students receive quality practical experiences to refine their skills. In March, the Centre received sewing materials, hairdressing supplies, and beauty products. These donations arrived just in time as students prepared for their upcoming assessments.



The photographs vividly capture the daily learning across the Centre in various courses. We are deeply grateful to the donors who have championed the introduction of new classes over the past few years, particularly the Welding and Fabrication course funded by the Whitford Parish Overseas Mission Group, Perth, Western Australia. Their generous contributions have not only brought success and hope to many individuals from the slums but have also significantly expanded our educational offerings.



Deejaying



Plumbing and Masonry



Donations



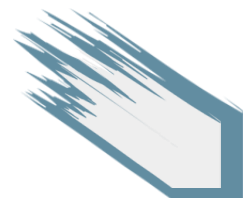
Heavy duty sewing machines for industry production



Welding



Welding and Fabrication



Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre

Activities In March

The education program at Songa is dedicated to providing high-quality early learning opportunities for 103 children with disabilities. The Centre strongly emphasise play-based learning and holistic development, recognising that these approaches foster cognitive and social growth in young learners. The commitment to early intervention services is paramount; and prioritising resource provision and active community engagement to create inclusive and accessible learning environments. To further support the children's therapeutic services, including 405 physiotherapy sessions and 122 speech therapy sessions are offered, ensuring that each child receives tailored support for their specific needs.

Songa is committed to empowering every child with the essential tools they need to flourish. The stage-based curriculum is thoughtfully designed to cater to the diverse learning requirements of children with disabilities, allowing them to thrive academically and socially within the classroom setting. Through these comprehensive approaches the Centre aims to nurture each child's unique potential and foster a strong foundation for their future.

Families with children with special needs face numerous challenges in their daily lives and more especially in the slums. They often struggle to find adequate resources, services, and support tailored to their children's requirements. Additionally, these families typically experience higher levels of financial hardship than others. Recognising this, the Centre found it necessary to support and empower these families by helping them establish income-generating activities for self-reliance and economic independence. As a result, three families were assisted in starting businesses of their choice in different locations within Mukuru slums. Betty Achiro was supported in launching a business selling omena (sardines) in the Kayaaba area. Her family had been severely affected by floods, and she was in great need. After being impacted by floods, Susan Nyachae started a grocery business in the Fuata Nyayo area last year. The third parent, Natasha Mueni, was also supported in starting a grocery business after her family became homeless due to her job loss, which made them unable to pay rent. Natasha's business is located in the Mariguini area.



Mama Michael Mwendwa



Mama Elizabeth Moraa



Mama Betty Achiro

One business follow-up was done with Farel Ochieng's guardian. In November 2024, the guardian was supported with vegetables and Samaki. The business was found to be doing well. Though she had stopped selling fish due to the massive price hike, the rest were selling well.



The social worker conducted follow-up home visits for several children who were still unwell. These children receive treatment at the Mary Immaculate Clinic (MIC) and are referred to hospitals as needed. Two of the children were urgently referred to St. Mary's and Kenyatta National Hospital due to serious cases of meningitis and a blood infection. Another 13 children in March were referred to MIC and treated.



Stephen Otiato at St. Mary's Hospital



Harel Mungai at Kenyatta Hospital

The Centre coordinated a training on disability inclusion for the Songa Mbele parents. Liz Ombati from the Kenya Network of Women with Disability and Alice Mundia from United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK) facilitated the training. A total of 38 parents attended. The areas discussed were the introduction of government facilities where people with disabilities can access services, the formation and maintenance of social wellness groups for parents or caregivers of children with disabilities, child protection rights, and organisations that can support people with disabilities.

A staff member from the Social office attended the Multi-Annual Program Plan (MAPP) project, which CDSK organised and facilitated. Eighteen representatives from various organisations were present. The 3-day meeting aimed at discussing achievements, gaps, and recommendations in 2024, the CDSK strategic direction, data verification, review of AKVO online reporting and an overview of 2025 plans majoring in the implementation methodologies and target plans for 2025. Other matters were also discussed during the training, including areas that need more attention, such as advocacy, empowerment, and livelihoods. The 3-year MAPP project (2023-2025) at the training aimed at building effective networks, community-based rehabilitation and inclusion was also raised.



Disability Inclusion Training Day

The office organised a parent meeting for Unit 2, which was attended by 14 parents. During the meeting, the parents actively participated in discussions about important issues related to their children's development. Topics included absenteeism, registration for the Social Health Authority (SHA), cleanliness, the therapy home program, documentation in children's files, assessments, school uniforms, and adherence to the Centre's rules and regulations.



Unit 2 Parents Meeting

The Centre continues collaborating with other agencies to enhance its mission of providing the best advocacy for children. With St. Paul's Assessment Centre (EARC) support, 18 children were taken through various exercises to determine their abilities and identify the appropriate classes. This process aims to maximise each child's potential.

Mary Immaculate Rehabilitation Centre

Activities In March

The Centre continued its recruitment drive while the social office prepared for the upcoming home-tracing exercise. At the same time, the rehabilitation program took shape for the new cohort. There are 59 boys in residence and 36 graduates participating in the MPC sponsorship program.

Providing essential education, health, and transformative services for the boys became routine as they became more familiar with expectations. Significant efforts were made to realign the boys to appropriate academic grades based on their previous schooling and age. Teachers, interns, and house parents conducted one-on-one teaching sessions and remedial classes. Additionally, boys in Grade 3 and Grade 9 were successfully registered in the examination portal before the deadline. Some enrolled at St. Catherine's Primary School, while others returned to their home schools to ensure they would not miss their main exams.



Tom Brus shares mentorship tips

Counsellors conducted 15 group sessions and individual counselling, which proved beneficial in helping the boys settle in and embrace rehabilitation. While most boys were receptive, some were reluctant to share their past experiences.

Extracurricular activities at the Centre are not just about skill development but also about providing unique opportunities. Many boys, who might not have had the chance otherwise, are now experiencing what children worldwide can take for granted. This expansion of opportunities is a testament to the Centre's mission. We are deeply grateful to Team Paula Cullen for the hope they bring to the boys through their visits and interactions. Their generosity, experienced by the new cohort in March, was truly special as they celebrated the 40th anniversary of MPC.

Music remains an integral and ongoing part of life at the Centre. The boys continue their training at the Reuben Centre every Saturday. Collins conducts classes three times per week, showing discipline and commitment. The younger boys also keenly follow in the footsteps of their older peers. They are eager to refine their skills and participate in upcoming Music competitions. We are proud to report that some of our boys have started composing their music, and others are very gifted in dancing, which is a milestone worth celebrating. Galway Co. Council, Ireland, and the Irish National Symphony Orchestra proudly sponsored the music activities.



Collins conducts his music class with boys



Catechism class ongoing

Spiritual faith formation and catechism classes have officially begun, marking an essential journey for the boys as they dive into the teachings of Christianity. The catechists from Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Parish provide weekly engaging sessions as they explore and embrace Christian values that will guide them. As they eagerly await their baptism later this year, the boys are filled with anticipation and a deeper understanding of their faith.

Under the guidance of Samuel Waweru, the boys diligently worked to complete the bracelets requested by Paula in preparation for the 40th-anniversary celebrations. They also participated in a drawing and painting contest, where Team Paula selected and awarded the best artwork. This initiative has significantly boosted the boys' creativity and confidence, with several already showing great promise in the visual arts.



MIRC friendly football match with St Michael's Secondary

The football team trained rigorously at the Centre and played friendly matches against teams from St. Michael, St. Catherine, and a local high school. For some boys, it was their first experience playing against an opponent, which brought excitement and determination. The team secured two wins and suffered only one loss. The dedication and teamwork displayed by our boys have set a solid foundation for future competitions.



The old and new greenhouse



The poultry and rabbit projects are doing well, with the boys responsible for feeding the animals and collecting eggs. Thanks to Teresa Heeran's unwavering support, a new secure house for the chickens and rabbits is being constructed to protect them from theft and predators like mongooses. This project has instilled a sense of responsibility in the boys as they learn the importance of animal husbandry.



Boys helping mother rabbits to breastfeed

Reinhardt and his team complete the chicken/rabbit coop

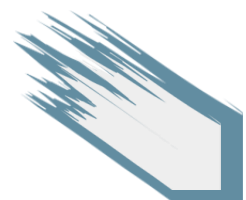
Team Paula actively engaged in various activities at the Centre during their visit. They assisted with library supervision, ensuring that the boys could easily access resources and enjoy a fun space for learning. The team also organised exciting excursions, enabling the boys to explore new places and learn through hands-on experiences. Team Paula implemented several thoughtful projects to enhance the overall flow of services, making the Centre more efficient and user-friendly for everyone involved. Their contribution made a noticeable difference, bringing joy and improvement to the Centre's operations.



Mr Charles and the carpentry boys in the workshop made the Clinic's pharmacy drugs cabinets



Team Paula also organised a surprise event to celebrate MPC's 40th anniversary, as they could not attend the official celebrations in May. Owen Cullen from Cullen Communications arranged and provided blue polo shirts for all the boys and staff to commemorate this milestone. The boys performed a thank-you song written by Irene Plunket, dedicated to MPC's founder and director, Sr. Mary Killeen. Former graduates James Kamau, Joshua Atandi, and Peter Kamau shared testimonials about how MIRC shaped their lives and helped them become more purposeful.



Samuel Waweru, a beneficiary of the MPC program, has transformed his passion for art into a sustainable livelihood. He presented Sr. Mary with a meticulously hand-drawn collage that beautifully captured the contrast between the old and new facilities of the MIRC. The artwork's vibrant colours and intricate details spoke volumes, illustrating the progress and hope within the community. As Sr. Mary gazed at the collage, she was deeply touched as she reflected on the challenges she had faced while advocating for the children and the people of Mukuru. The artwork served as a reminder of all the boys' journey to a brighter future as they strive to build together.



Samuel Waweru and Cornelius Kiprotich
presenting his painting to Sr Mary, together with Paula Cullen



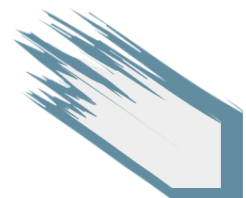
nnChris, Sr Mary, Rion, Sr Barbara
and Sr Patricia



Irish Ambassador, Caitriona
Ingoldsby and special guests
enjoy the boys' presentation



Irish Ambassador Catriona Ingolsby, Sr Mary, Joseph Mwangi, John Irungu and
Goodluck Mungai cut the cake





Sr Mary with Team Paula



The boys presented skits



Collins the music teacher with the violin.



Teacher Benta leads boys to perform for our visitors



James Mwangi giving his testimonial



Claire Chambers presents Sr Mary a cheque from the Calary Church, Ireland.



Boys very engaged with the entertainment



Team Paula with the staff and boys

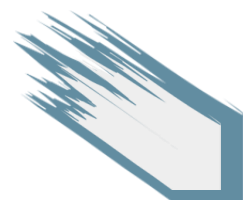


The boys surprised Chris by singing him Happy Birthday

Team Paula repainted The Irish Garda Room, a multi-purpose space for art classes and catechism lessons. Originally painted in 2018 with a light sage colour, the walls had deteriorated from frequent use, so the fresh coat of paint revitalized the room's appearance.



Team Paula painting the Irish Garda Room



Team Paula facilitated a structured learning session in the library. The boys were divided into small groups to enhance their reading skills, improve their numerical proficiency, and engage in creative thinking. The session included interactive activities like reading exercises, number mastery drills, and cognitive development games like puzzles and Jenga. These activities were designed to stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.



Adrienne, Teresa and Paula play educational games with the boys in the library

To change the pace a little, Teresa Heeran organised a swimming trip for the boys at Bellevue Primary in South C, providing them with a fun and refreshing activity. The boys thoroughly enjoyed the experience and found the outdoor engagement a great way to bond and enhance their well-being. The Centre is especially grateful to Teresa Heeran for sponsoring this event. Later in the evening, Teresa treated the boys to a special dinner, purchasing sausages and 100 kg of Irish potatoes for a delicious chips-and-sausage meal, which the boys prepared and thoroughly enjoyed.



Teacher Benta giving swimming instructions to the boys

The bigger boys show their swimming skills.



Boys prepare chips for dinner courtesy of Team Paula

Serving the sumptuous sausage and chips

Through Team Paula, St. Gerard's School in Bray, Co. Wicklow, provided new school uniforms, including blue shirts, grey trousers, jumpers, and tracksuits for the boys. Multimetals, a recycling company in Wicklow Ireland, purchased 40 pairs of new school shoes, ensuring that all the new boys received shoes and uniforms while replacing worn-out items. This made sure they were well-equipped for school. Vera and Adrienne cared for the young carpenters by purchasing safety equipment and tools, prioritising their safety as they learned and worked in the workshop and later during their industrial attachment.



Adrienne and Vera donate tools and equipment, safety boots, hammers, tape measures, ruler, bags, overalls to the carpentry boys



Teresa Heeran donated Crocs to the boys courtesy of Magic Beauty in Ireland.

Team Paula introduced hockey as a new sport and taught the boys how to play. The boys thoroughly enjoyed the game, enthusiastic and determined, as they excitedly took to the field.



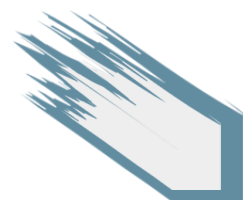
MIRC Hockey Team

Team Paula created an exciting sports day to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, featuring a lively mix of football, basketball, and volleyball. The atmosphere buzzed with energy as the boys enthusiastically showcased their athletic skills, competing fiercely while embodying the spirit of true sportsmanship. Their dedication and teamwork were evident in every play, creating a memorable day filled with friendly competition.



After the thrilling matches, an awards ceremony took place, adding to the day's excitement. Players gathered eagerly to see who would be recognised for their outstanding performances. The best teams were honoured with shiny trophies, colourful medals, delicious candies, and other treats, making the event a perfect celebration of talent and camaraderie.

Paula presents the trophies and medals to the best teams after sports day





Happy recipients the boys receive their medals and trophies

During their visit, Team Paula travelled from Nairobi to St. Teresa Kilungu Academy in Makueni to meet the 12 boarders sponsored by Team Paula, Team Chrissie, and Team Kristina Nwazota. They assessed the students' progress and discussed their findings with the management.

St. Teresa boys receiving chess table and balls from Team Paula during their visit



After all the excitement and drama of the day, the houseparents led the boys to a time of reflection and prayer. During this time, the boys have the opportunity to share their experiences from the day and discuss how they responded to various situations. There are no right or wrong answers; sharing and listening to one another matters.

Evening reflection with the house parents.

The Mercy Education Office invited the boys to attend a recollection day at the Resurrection Gardens. It was a wonderful experience for the boys and the staff, as they had the opportunity to spend time with God and reinforce their faith in the Lenten season.



MIRC boys at the Resurrection Gardens

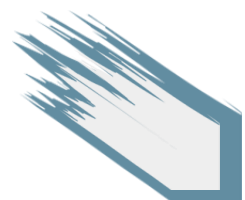
The centre extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the generous donors who have supported the boys this month. Your kindness and contributions have played a pivotal role in improving their lives. A special shout-out goes to Team Paula, whose unwavering support has made a significant impact, along with other partners whose thoughtful contributions have filled the boys' days with joy and renewed hope for the future. Your efforts are truly appreciated and have made a positive difference in their lives.



Tom Brus Self Help group donations to the Centre



Japanese students from USIU University and Mr Nakamura spent time at the Centre and donated sporting equipment and tins of Milo



Sponsorship Office

Activities In March

The Sponsorship Office is dedicated to facilitating partner engagements and ensuring smooth financial and academic transitions for students. Our focus on providing seamless service delivery is a lifeline for underprivileged students, creating access to education that they might not otherwise have. The office is currently processing school fees for 650 students, updating their profiles, and collecting letters of appreciation from beneficiaries in preparation for the upcoming April holiday.

Our sponsors play a crucial role in the success of our students. They occasionally visit their students to spend time together, gaining insight into their academic progress and the impact of their support. Recently, a representative of Sharlet Too, who sponsors a Form 3 student at St. Michael's, visited the school to check on the student's performance and understand how their assistance changes lives. By facilitating these interactions, the Sponsorship Office ensures that donors and students witness the tangible impact of their partnership, fostering a cycle of generosity, gratitude, and academic excellence.



Infinity Foundation Founder, Sharlet Too, visited St Michael's to connect with the sponsored students and Sr Mary Killeen

By supporting financially needy students, we provide them with more than just financial assistance. We provide them with hope for completing their education and a brighter future. This support helps them envision a future that is not limited by their financial circumstances, allowing beneficiaries to focus on their studies without the burden of outstanding fees. The office continues to update the profiles of sponsored students. We also follow up with those facing challenges during the term, providing [specific details about the support and assistance provided]. Donors can log onto the website conveniently to read student reports and letters.

Recently, the sponsored pupils from St. Catherine's Primary School gathered to write appreciation letters to their donors while secondary students prepared for their end-of-term examinations and the April holiday. These heartfelt thank-you notes from our pupils genuinely express their experiences and the importance of this support.



Sharlet Too with Irene Adhiambo



St Catherine's Pupils write appreciation letters

Announcements

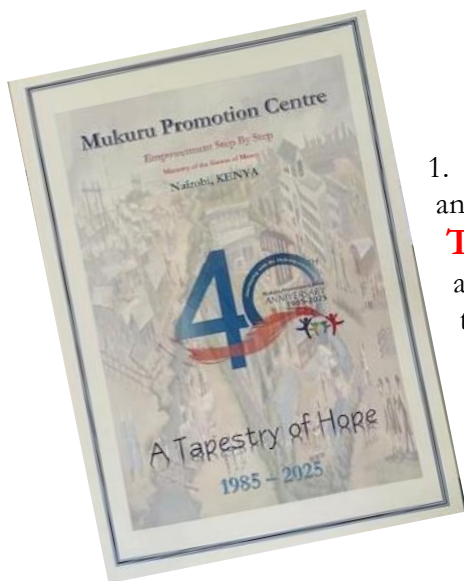
Activities Outside the Department

While the various MPC Departments provide an overview of the month's events, the Head Office works behind the scenes to facilitate many activities that support and align with departmental objectives and targets. Amid all these activities, there are also other events and developments to note.

1. The Three Musketeers, Founder, Brian O'Shea, Western Australia came to the Centre with a donation of water tanks for St Bakhita and St Michael's schools. This contribution will not only provide the school with a more sustainable water source but will also support the kitchen's needs, enhancing overall facilities for students and staff alike.

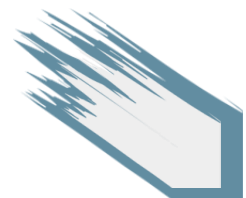


Water tank that was assembled adjacent to St. Michael's with some imported products



1. After much research, interviews, and follow ups on many reports and photographs from the MPC archives, a Commemorative Book, **Tapestry of Hope**, was put together for our partners, supporters, and friends! We are deeply grateful for your incredible support over the years. MPC will launch the book at its 40th Anniversary celebrations in May. We cordially invite you to join us on this significant occasion. We also want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the anonymous donor whose generous support made the book possible.

2. As part of our celebration, we have also created a short 8 minute video that encapsulates the journey of the last forty years. The video, titled **A Celebration of Mercy: Journeying with the Mukuru Community**, is readily accessible to all on the MPC website at www.mercymukuru.co.ke. We invite you to share the remarkable milestone and your involvement in the journey. We are thankful to an anonymous donor who made the video possible.
3. MPC Board meeting provided an opportunity for key discussions on strategic initiatives and organisational progress.



Mukuru Promotion Centre

Empowerment Step by Step

Ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

40 Years Anniversary

www.mercymukuru.co.ke

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