



July 2021

Dear Friends,

The Day of the African Child

Wednesday 16th June was a school holiday for the “Day of the African Child”. Apart from the exam classes and the very small children, the whole school joined in the celebrations.



Roland Entertainment Team
Inter-Primary School Competition Transcripts
On the Day of the African Child – 16th June, 2021
Saint Joseph's School of the Impaired - Maketi

Category	Score	Position
Spelling Bee	18	8 th
Math Bee	05	1 st
Hair Dressing	30	5 th
Singing & Dancing	26	4 th
African Dress	30	1 st
Drama	30	1 st
TOTAL	139	
Overall Position		4th
Cashier	Excused	
Signature:	Date:	

After 35 years this is the first time the school has entered the competition with another nine schools. St Joseph’s School for the Hearing Impaired ended in fourth position out of nine and came first in three categories.



Roland (in the white shirt) organised the competition and donated 15 bags of rice for the children. He has promised that every month he will supply another 15 half bags of rice.



Great News!

As we reported in our last newsletter we achieved our target of 50% towards the new school vehicle. And we are delighted to tell you that the Austrian NGO MIVA has confirmed they are willing to match this funding. The vehicle has now been ordered and is awaiting shipment from Antwerp on 16 July. It is scheduled to arrive in Freetown around 30 July. Once again many thanks to all of you were able to make this possible. We hope to have some photos of Sister Amala in the driving seat in our next newsletter!

More Good news!

Almost all the staff at the school had a Covid vaccination a few weeks ago and they are expecting a second jab before too long. There is always a large amount of sickness among the staff at this time of year often caused by the change of weather. Torrential rain and deafening electric storms arrive almost daily usually but not always during the night or late evening. Typhoid and malaria is a continuing problem but at the moment Covid appears to be less of a risk although the **worrying news** is that last week the Sierra Leonean government announced another lockdown for a month.

Less Good News!

The school is still having problems with power. The national power grid is less reliable than before and is frequently turned off for various reasons. It was recently off for two weeks while the hydroelectric station was being serviced. A very powerful electric storm knocked out the solar system a couple of weeks ago. The generator is old and expensive to run and is inclined to overheat after three hours so it only goes on between 7pm and 10pm when there isn't any solar power. One of the knock on effects of lack of power is difficulties in running the fridges/freezers/ and the inability to pump water from the bore hole in the grounds leading to a lack of drinking water. It also means the school loses access to the internet causing communication problems both within and outside Sierra Leone.

But – the next two pieces of **Good News** are that the Irish Embassy is giving the school the funds for a new generator. And Joe Manning, the Honorary Consul for Sierra Leone in Ireland has been in touch with the EKI Foundation, the Spanish organisation (www.fundacioneki.org) which provides solar power installations to schools and hospitals in developing countries. They have promised to revisit the situation in the light of the very poor electricity supply. They were due to visit in June and Joe has sent them a reminder. After talks with them Joe is reasonably confident they will install a system that will comfortably cope with all of the needs of the school. That would convert the news from “good” to “excellent”!

The search for an administrator goes on

An application has been made to Mísean Cara, an NGO in Ireland (www.miseancara.ie) to fund and recruit an administrator for two years to work alongside Sister Amala and to give her the support she desperately needs. Mísean Cara works closely with Viatores Christi, another Irish NGO (www.vcvolunteers.ie) whose main business is recruiting personnel for such places as St Joseph's School. This is not going to be a speedy process but we are hoping that an appointment can be made by the end of the year. We will keep you updated and let you know if the application is successful. If it is we hope to bring you information about the recruitment process.

Exams are underway

The BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination) exams finished last week. There were five girls and three boys entered and it is the first time that girls have outnumbered boys. Their ages range from about 17 to 22 years old. Several of the older girls originally attended the National School for the Deaf in Freetown and only came to Makeni to join the Junior Secondary department when they were already 17 or 18 years old. There is no special provision for secondary education for the deaf in Freetown or anywhere else in Sierra Leone.

The candidates sit the exams in St Joseph's Junior Secondary School which is adjacent to the school for the hearing impaired. The results are not normally out until late November. Because of that delay registration for the first term in the Senior Secondary School does not start until just before Christmas, with classes beginning in January to begin studying for the WASSCE (West African Senior School Certificate Examination).

It has been a very unsettling time for the candidates who have missed a great deal of teaching during the last 18 months. Some of the girls are really too old to want to start at Senior Secondary School. They are mostly looking for some kind of vocational opportunity and passing the BECE should open more opportunities. There may be only three or four of the students registering to study for the WASSCE at the Senior Secondary School. It is a very tough course for them and the majority drop out after a year or so. There are good vocational courses which are far more suitable for most of them but many parents want their children to go to the Senior School.

Currently the school has four students studying for their WASSCE. There are three boys doing a science course and one girl taking Home Economics. Their exams have been delayed this year due to the previous year's Covid disruptions and will start on 22st August.

Human Rights for Children

We are pleased to report that staff from the Justice and Peace and Human Rights Commission in Makeni recently visited the school. They distributed books to the students to promote awareness about human rights.



Our Amazing Donors

In the meantime if you have been inspired by the work of Sister Amala and all the staff at the school who work tirelessly to give the hearing impaired students a better future please consider making a donation, however small, by following this link:

www.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/friendsofstjosephs

Thank you so much to all of you who contribute to this amazing school. You are making a huge difference.

With all good wishes for a safe and peaceful summer from Linda Freestone (Chair) and the Trustees.

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