



December 2021

Dear Friends,

A Christmas message from our new team Kate and Dixon

“Firstly, we’d like to wish a very Merry Christmas to all of you who have supported and continued to help the school over the years. Your help and kindness makes a huge difference to the lives of the children of St Joseph’s and its wider community. Thank you for all you do!

With the continuing uncertainty around coronavirus, it’s hard to plan ahead - whether that’s organising fundraising events, or setting up new projects for the school. But despite all these challenges, with your support we will continue to help the school in whatever ways we can. I really hope that Dixon and I can build on the amazing work of Linda, Chris and the Friends - we’ve seen firsthand the difference it makes to the children and the running of the school. Personally, I’m really impressed with the very efficient arrival of a new school vehicle during a global pandemic! I can only promise we will do our very best to continue their work.

As you know, the Friends is run entirely by a small number of committed volunteers, so time is always a struggle - if you’d like to get involved or help out we’d love to hear from you!

I recently spoke to Bobson, a former pupil who works at the tailoring workshop at the school, and he gave me a few snapshots of news - the football team beating a



nearby boy’s high school 2-0, continuing exam success for the students and the Irish ambassador’s visit. As the children head home for the holidays, the staff and pupils will have a well deserved short break”.

Visit of the Irish Ambassador

Sister Amala sent photos of the visit on 1 November of the Irish Ambassador, Claire Buckley. As she only took up her role in Sierra Leone in August this year St Joseph's was pleased and honoured that she visited so soon after her appointment.



The search for an administrator continues!

As we reported in the last newsletter an application was made to Misean Cara 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. Funding has been agreed and Viatores Christi, another Irish NGO (www.vcvolunteers.ie) have been advertising for a suitable person to become Sister Amala's assistant. The recruitment process is still open and the job description with details of how to apply are attached to this mailing so if any of you are interested or know someone who may be interested in applying for this role please contact Viatores Christi.

Christmas Greetings from Sister Amala

"I wish you a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year in 2022. May the heavenly riches of the newborn Child Jesus bless you and fill your hearts and minds with peace and pleasure. I hope and pray that the blessings and gifts of Christmas will enrich your life for the rest of your days.

Christmas is about giving rather than receiving." You, the Friends of St Joseph's School have been giving to the school and the children for so many years and have never considered receiving. May God richly bless you all.

Dear friends, I'd like to take this occasion to share some happy news from the last few weeks with you.

13 students took the NPSE (National Primary School Examination) this year, and 11 of them passed. All eight students who took the BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination) also passed. Some of them went on to complete their secondary education, while others chose to pursue vocational training. Four students took the WASSCE (West African Senior School Certificate Examination) and are awaiting their results. Five University (UNIMAK) students have completed their first year of university and have begun their second year. Four of them work in IT, while one works in public health. Another of our students is pursuing a Business Management degree at Ernest B Koroma University (Government University), while another is pursuing a Physiotherapy Diploma Course in Masanga Hospital in his final year.

On the 17th of December 15 students (2 sets) completed and graduated in Carpentry, Plumbing, Masonry, Sewing, and other trades (see below).



In the coming Academic School Year 21 students have enrolled in vocational training in carpentry, automobile mechanics, electrical work, sewing, catering, and hair dressing in three different institutions (the Ada Copson Hairdressing Institute, MADAM , a national NGO providing training for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised young people with a specific focus on the northern region of Sierra Leone, and the OIC, the Opportunities Industrialisation Centre).

Our Honourable Minister of Education, Dr David Moinina Sengeh (MBSSE), paid a visit to our school and we owe him our appreciation. He praised the work we are doing and thanked us profusely. He was ecstatic to see the students as well as the many departments. He also told the students that just because they can't hear doesn't mean they aren't like him. He made them happy by telling them that we're all the same and vowing to visit them again.

We owe a huge thank you to our wonderful benefactor Caritas Germany, who assisted us in erecting two new chicken houses on the farm and provided invaluable assistance in repairing the fence

around them. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude. We pray that God's blessings and presence will continue to be with them.

Thanks also to our wonderful Joe Manning, Honorary Consul for Sierra Leone in Ireland, for helping us to find funds for a much needed administrator for the school. We are eagerly waiting for the end of the recruitment process (please see the attachment to this newsletter for further details- LF).

New Year's Prayer

We thank you, Lord, for giving us life and another year to experience your unconditional Love, care and protection. We pray that the year 2022 brings peace, joy, love, and happiness to our families. Lord, keep us under the shadow of your wings as the apple of your sight. Protect us, God, for we seek sanctuary in you. You are everything to us. Amen”.

Sister Amala December 2021

Amazing Donors

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:

<http://www.justgiving.com/friendsofstjosephsmakeni>

Thank you so much to all of you who contribute to this amazing school. As you can see by the success stories of the students in Sister Amala's report you are making a huge difference. And a big thank you to all of you who have taken the time to move your regular financial support to Just Giving, our new fundraising platform.

With all good wishes for a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year from Linda Freestone on behalf of Kate and Stephen Dixon and all the Trustees.

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