



Erokamano!



Winter 2022 | Friends of KMMA-CAITHS | www.kmma-caiths.org | kmmakenya@gmail.com

Renewal and Growth

It's been more than a year since our last newsletter, with the pandemic impacting even the smallest functions of everyday life. In that time, KMMA has continued to grow and thrive; her parent organization, CAITHS, has stepped into a leadership role in Western Kenya, promoting and advocating for health and safety. We are excited to renew acquaintances with our long-time supporters, and to grow our network of friends, as we share here some of the changes – and challenges – since our last update. Most importantly, the KMMA students are healthy, active, and learning. Their cheerful dedication, supported by an amazing staff, has not been dimmed during these days of upheaval. As always, we thank you for your generosity of wealth and spirit, and we hope that you too find inspiration in these new stories of our progress and promise. *Erokamano* (thank you)!

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(Left) Building a new kitchen prep area to make room for Grade 4. (Center) Nurse Mercy Omolo in the St. Patrick Clinic @ KMMA. (Right) Food distribution to KMMA students and caretaker families during the Christmas holiday break.

Updates to KMMA and CAITHS in the last year and a half

A lot has changed in the last year or two, but the mission of Friends of KMMA-CAITHS and the dedication of our Kenyan partners has not! As a result, students and staff at the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy have been able to weather the challenges of the pandemic and the associated difficulties.

A shift in Kenya's educational guidelines forced KMMA into a difficult choice: add a new grade to complete the lower sequence or cut two grades to educate only the youngest students. Despite spatial and financial challenges, school leadership and FoKC chose to add Grade Four. Doing so meant building a new shelter for kitchen prep and storage, and a large canvas canopy serves as an outdoor dining hall/flexible learning area. This freed up the last of the indoor space to become a new classroom. The pandemic has taught us that creativity solves many problems, especially with insight and

innovation from our outstanding local community. We are so pleased to welcome Ann Apondi as the new Grade Four teacher. KMMA now serves 165 students between ages 3-11.

St. Patrick Clinic @ KMMA is flourishing under the direction of Nurse Mercy Omolo. Hundreds of people are treated every month: many of them KMMA students and their families. Thanks to leadership from the CAITHS Executive Committee, the diligence of KMMA faculty, and efforts of our clinic staff, the impact of covid-19 has been minimal. Read below about another important upgrade at the St. Patrick Clinic.

Friends of KMMA-CAITHS continues to provide new families with water treatment containers for their homes: similar to those used at school. Students receive free uniforms, and we recently implemented a program to ensure that uniforms are replaced as they become too small or worn. Like everywhere, food prices in Kenya have gone way up, but KMMA is still able to provide twice-daily school meals and even distribute essential food and cleaning items to students' caretaker families over school breaks. And, as we look to the future, it has been exciting to see KMMA students planting trees and crops on the recently purchased land. These plants, combined with the determined spirit of KMMA faculty and students and the generous support of our donors, will, over time, transform this mostly barren plot of land into a beautiful new space for teaching and learning.



FRIENDS OF KMMA-CAITHS MISSION: working together to save lives and improve the prospects of the men, women, and children of Rusinga Island, Kenya, by supporting sustainable and safe solutions for education, health, nutrition, and sanitation through our partnership with the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy (KMMA) and the community-based organization Centre for Advocacy and Interventions on Talent, Healthcare, and Sanitation (CAITHS).



(Left) Kieran McNulty and Nurse Mercy Omolo in St. Patrick Clinic @ KMMA. (Right) New medical equipment sterilizer to support pre- and peri-natal care at the clinic.

Healthcare for the future

We are thrilled to report that St. Patrick Clinic now has certification to offer pre- and peri-natal care for expectant mothers. Previously, the cost and distance of similar services made it difficult for many women to receive care. Now, with additional staff training and the purchase of some basic equipment, Kenya's Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council has certified that St. Patrick Clinic can support the health of Rusinga's mothers and new children.

Currently, fifty-one expectant mothers have been seen at the clinic. Services include physical assessments and examinations for both mother and child, hemoglobin tests, prescription and preventative medications, such as malaria prophylaxis and multi-vitamins, as well as tetanus shots.

While this new capacity will certainly improve the wellbeing of mothers and babies, there are still many needs. Providing mosquito nets to expectant mothers can greatly reduce incidence of malaria, which puts infants and mothers at risk. Additionally, simple supplies such as kidney dishes, episiotomy scissors, and artery forceps would expand the delivery services and capabilities of the clinic. Post-delivery supplies such as beds, blankets, bedsheets, pillows, and a heater would improve and expand services otherwise unavailable in the community. Other needs include a refrigerator for storing medications and a fetal ultrasound device.

Serving expectant mothers is yet another way the St. Patrick clinic is serving the people and the needs of Rusinga Island. General health care for community members continues to be affordable and accessible through this clinic for community members and free for KMMA students.

Sulwe: a story of diversity and self-esteem

A major challenge in educating underprivileged students is the lack of role models and images they can identify with. *Sulwe*, written by Oscar-winning actor Lupita Nyong'o (*Black Panther*, *The 355*) is a beautifully written, lushly illustrated, children's book that directly addresses appearance, self-worth, and diversity from the perspective of its young black protagonist. As the book relates, "Real beauty comes from your mind and your heart. It begins with how you see yourself not how others see you." Nyong'o herself is a Kenyan of Luo descent – like people on Rusinga – and published her book not only in English but in the local Luo language. In 2021, six copies of *Sulwe*, three in English and three in Luo, plus boxes of school supplies were donated to KMMA by long-time supported Zana Sims. Zana has visited Rusinga multiple times and wanted to bring Nyong'o's message of strength and beauty to the students at KMMA. Thank you, Zana, for your support and dedication.



KMMA Student Spotlight: Andrew Hamisi

In this edition of *Erokamano*, we recognize and honor Andrew Hamisi for his hard work and ingenuity. Andrew stands out for many accomplishments, including building a special “tip tap” hand-wash station for students to use in school. The water reservoir has an attached pedal, allowing people to wash without touching the container – a huge advantage during the pandemic! Andrew also takes a leading role in helping other students remember to observe health guidelines and encouraging them to find creative solutions to improve health and sanitation. Andrew is an active member of the KMMA Scouting Club as well as a budding architect. He and his friends designed and constructed a model house using pieces of old cartons. Congratulations Andrew and keep up the great work!



**Friends of KMMA-CAITHS
has a new address**

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Connect and support education, health, and sustainable development on Rusinga Island, Kenya

A+

100% of your gift goes directly to Kenya to fund programming through CAITHS and KMMA!



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CAITHS (Centre for Advocacy and Interventions on Talent, Healthcare, and Sanitation) is a Kenyan grassroots organization dedicated to improving lives in impoverished and disease-ravaged communities on Rusinga Island. Started in 2013 by a handful of volunteers, CAITHS began conducting small acts of charity, educational outreach, and sanitation programs in local villages where they were most needed.

In 2016, CAITHS initiated their flagship program, the **Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy** (KMMA), to provide free education, food, and medical care to the orphaned and needy children in the area. With the help of U.S.-based **Friends of KMMA-CAITHS**, both Kenyan organizations are working to break the cycle of poverty on Rusinga Island through broad-based interventions and education.

