

Newsletter 112 in English from Föreningen Kisumu, October 2023

The autumn is here, the trees have almost lost their leaves and the migrating birds are leaving for warmer latitudes. Christmas is soon here.

Coming activities: Christmas markets in Farsta gård, November 25-26th, Prinsvillan, Lilla Tyresö, December 2-3rd, Park Folket Hus in Liseberg, December 10th. For addresses go to the newsletter in Swedish.

Föreningen Kisumu sells handicraft made by members and friends. Handknitted and handsewn mittens, socks, childrens hats, quilted bags and duvets, cuddly toys, christmas decorations, jam, marmalade etc. All earnings are used for the benefit of the children of St Christine school.

Latest news from the school

Between the 12th and 23rd of September seven members of Föreningen Kisumu went to Kenya, to visit St Christine school. Four of the participants also went on safari to Masai Mara.

Here is a report from Ulla Sturæus:

After a day in Nairobi with the whole group, Håkan and I, together with Yulia Fatkullina, went to Kisumu and later to the school in Kabondo. Yulia is a member of the board for Handelsbankens fadderbarnsfond, the main sponsor of the school. Upon arrival we were greeted by James, the headmaster, and Paul, the deputy headmaster, as well as by Odada. We immediately started to plan the coming days, and they proved to be full of exiting events.

A visit to Equity Bank, together with Judy Ojwang and Odada, resulted in Judy now being the so called Second Signatory for the bank account belonging to St Christine Foundation. Judy is also a member of the board of the foundation. Judy's role is to initiate payments from the account of the foundation to the operating account of the school, after a written request from the headmaster. After that I, the undersigned, will transfer the sum to the school's operating account. This means that all payments from Sweden to the school are now in order and our auditors will be satisfied.

During the week we were visited for a few hours by the Minister for education in Homa Bay County, whom we met in Sweden in April. In his company were others from the administration in Homa Bay, as well as the headmaster for Homa Bay University, who lives in Kabondo. The purpose of meeting these persons was to find out in which way Homa Bay County could support St Christine school. Homa Bay County is responsible for all pre-schools and therefore also PP1 and PP2, the equivalent to förskoleklasser in Sweden. We were given a half promise of support to our pre-school teachers in the form of education and also an extra resource. The meeting was held in Kenyan style with time for everyone to have a say.

The atmosphere was very positive and there is a favourable view of the school and of cooperating. In particular the headmaster of the University, who lives in the vicinity, saw great opportunities for St Christine becoming a role model school, depending on the positive development one can see, from the fantastic school results and the successful music and dance activities, as well as the school's own growing of maize and vegetables in order to serve breakfast and lunch to the pupils. The meeting ended with the children performing and we were served a solid lunch prepared by the school's kitchen.

Another day of the week the guardians of the pupils were invited to meet us Swedes, and to see the fine results of the exams that all pupils had taken part in the week before. Again the students of class

eight achieve top results and all of them can probably look forward to be eligible to apply for Secondary school, i.e. have more than 250 points in the final exam at the end of October. The present class eight is the last in our school that sits this exam, the KPCE, since the Kenyan school system is now changing.

The guardians stated that they very much would like St Christine to have so called JSS-classes (Junior Secondary school), classes 7-9. Then the students would not have to change school for these three years, they want to stay in St Christine. We will bring the question with us as to what type of school that we should register in the future, PP - year 6, or PP - year 9. A lot more resources are needed in order to start JSS-classes: a new classroom and a laboratory. Even the teachers in our school wishes to have classes 7-9 in St Christine.

A number of stationary computers have now been purchased for the teaching, and also a projector for showing pictures and films. The computers are sponsored by Handelsbankens fadderbarnsfond. A company in Norrköping has donated six laptops to the school administration. They function very well according to the users. What is now missing is WIFI and access to internet. At the moment there are no resources to allow this. The headmaster will look into the costs.

All pupils were treated to a party by Yulia. They got their favourite food, rice and beans, a soda each, biscuits and some Swedish sweets. The rice was the most appreciated!

Our visit to the school ended with a party where we Swedes received fine handicraft presents and a fantastic cake baked by one of the teachers.

An eventful week we all thought, especially those that visited Kenya and the school for the first time.

/Ulla Anderson Sturaeus