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CMSI Link Letter

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Isabelle is a CMSIreland Mission Associate who advises the Tujisaidie Community in Kayole, Nairobi, Kenya.

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you and prayers, at the start of another year, that we may all be "Living Lights", as our current motto encourages us to be.

2022 was a year of transitions. We moved carefully out of the most severe Covid-19 phase and into a phase of cautious normality. Most members of our community have had all their Covid-19 vaccinations, and we thank God that we have had no one who caught the disease so badly that a hospital admission was necessary, nor have we suffered a death due to this disease. We also escaped an episode of cholera that affected neighbouring communities but spared Tujisaidie.

The schools in Kenya worked through their second year of squeezing four terms into each calendar year, ending with three sets of national examinations in December 2022. The new school year is properly aligned again with the calendar year, much to the relief of students and teachers alike. The new Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is edging its way upwards in the school system and has now reached the Junior Secondary level (age 12 years). There are teething problems at this juncture, but we pray that all will be solved and the student vanguards will continue on their way as before. The new CBC is a much more exciting curriculum,



more demanding on teachers and parents, but also more fulfilling, especially for the learners.

Worryingly, we also seem to be transitioning into a period ever more affected by severe climate change, with two years of drought and famine declared in various parts of the country. Food prices are spiralling in Nairobi. This affects our community in Kayole, and specifically our Tujisaidie School, where the cost of the hot lunches you help us to serve, has increased significantly. Fortunately, all food items are still available, but at a higher price.

As the risk of Covid dwindled, we were able to resume school outings and enjoyed taking the students to the Children's Traffic Park (playing with toy vehicles and being shown the rules of the road), to the Nairobi National Museum and to Wilson Airport.



On a personal level, I also teach Haiku Poetry to clubs in three secondary schools in the same area of Nairobi (Kayole), and we were able at last to resume outings for the haiku clubs last year. On this occasion, not wanting to go too far, we responded to an invitation from Tumaini African Foundation and took some 90 students to their Centre of Excellence, where we learnt more

about haiku, chose poems that we liked best, and prepared to write new poems, for which there would be prizes. An ample hot lunch was served and enjoyed. And finally Dr Charles Anangwe came to tell the students about the working life of an anaesthetist specialised in heart surgery -- following which most of the students decided that this would be an exciting career for them!

The haiku clubs in the three schools have now existed for more than 16 years and have become quite successful both in Kenya and internationally. They have received recognition at the annual prize giving ceremonies of the Mobile Arts School Kenya (MASK). They have had haiku published in print in France, Austria, Ghana and the UK, and more recently in the flagship publication for international haiku, being the English edition of the Japanese Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

A haiku poem is a short poem of just three lines, with a maximum of 5 - 7 - 5 syllables per line and a break after line 1 or line 2. The poem

should if possible make it clear to the reader what season it was written in. We have four seasons in Kenya, which is on the Equator, with Nairobi just south of the Equator by some 141km. The seasons here are (i) the hot dry season from December to mid-March, (ii) the long rains from about mid-March to the end of May, (iii) the cold dry season from June to September and (iv) the short rains in October and November. The dry seasons have recently stretched into the months meant for rain.

God bless you for all your support,

Isabelle



Haiku Club

Our most recent challenge was to write haiku about housework or the end-of-year house cleaning to start the new year in spic and span surroundings. Here are some of the haiku written by the students.

cockroach legs
under the gas cooker—
year end cleaning

~ Margaret Wangari

out with a rat's nest
inside our old sofa—
New Year's Eve

~ Shampy Brenda

scrubbing dry faeces
of our cat under the bed—
year end cleaning

~ Esther Wanjiku

year end cleaning—
wiping cockroach droppings
from the cupboard floor

~ Pinky Gulprit

freezing water—
I grudgingly work
on my laundry

~ Victor Mumo

cleaning our kitchen—
scrubbing cockroach eggs
from cupboard walls

~ Patrick Wafula

sudden shower —
running to save the clothes
on the line

~ Isabelle Prondzynski

putting a clean plate
in the right utensil rack--
time to work

soaking my white socks
in a pail full of water--
house corner

~ Hussein Amuka