

Yamba Abaana Spring 2019 Newsletter

Father Dominic would like to share his recent experiences from his trip home to Rubanda, Uganda, in January to visit his family, friends, and of course, the wonderful Rubanda Solidarity Nursery and Primary School, his pride and joy.



Father Dominic with his sister (on the left) and his mother (behind him)



Father Dominic (in yellow) with the students on Sports Day

"Please, here below I would like to run you through what I was able to accomplish in Rubanda or Africa during my recent vacation. I departed for Uganda on January 21 and was back on Feb 26th. My round trip was all safe and enjoyable despite starting on a scary note of de-icing the plane in Boston due to critical weather, before takeoff. Once I got there, my schedule was so busy with school planning: different meetings with staff and Alumni workshops with a Thanksgiving Mass and ceremony to honor our 21 graduates of grade (Primary) 7, who all successfully passed with excellency their national exams of 2018 to enable them to advance to secondary education (editor: similar to high school in the USA) 2019. This is the 7th year that **ALL** of our school graduates have met the national Education standards to advance on to higher education. I am proud to let you know that since the seating of our first candidates in 2012, we have a record of 188 students, all scoring with excellency to higher institutions. **What a remarkable feat this is! Our school was recognized as being the #1 rated school in Rubanda district out of 130 primary schools in the district. It is also featured among the best 10 performing schools in the country.** This has resulted in our enrollment going up to the highest number in years with 306 students total for 2019. Thanks to Yamba Abaana and all of the miracles done in our school, our reputation and pride has never been better.

Then we had a sports day: You should have seen students compete with their teachers and support staff. They played soccer and tug of war and twice the students brought the teachers to their knees on the ground. Incredible. I laughed until my jaws dropped. With that excitement, the biggest pig from the school piggery project was given out to the jubilation of all students. They enjoyed the pork and the Muslim students, beef.



The famous very big pig. RI

I was so glad to be home to celebrate many wonderful accomplishments at the school. The best being the new classroom construction sponsored by Yamba Abaana which is nearing the end. I can't put in words the beauty of this structure, the excitement and the expectation of everyone in Rubanda about our school. It is going to be a model school structure in the entire district. I must apologize that the completion of the classrooms has taken longer time than initially planned due to: Government new requirements for more time to allow foundation and pillars to settle (21 days more), sunshine with scarcity of water, heavy rain interruptions and limited, irregular local professional manpower. However, they are at the final touches with April 1st being our target for students to enter the new classrooms.

School furniture is needed for the five new classrooms as the final touches are going on. (Editor: Due to a single generous donation, \$3,000 was transferred to the school earlier this week from YA for the purchase of all the new furniture required. We're so grateful to this donor and to each of you, our cherished friends.)



The new classroom and meeting hall project

We also examined our mosquito nets and found that most of them had worn out over the past 3-4 years and needed replacement. (Editor: The Board approved 217 new bed nets during our meeting March 7, 2019). New nets will soon be hanging from the ceiling to protect our kids from malaria.

Our gardening project is doing very well. Due to the help and expertise of Yamba Abaana's Board members, Dan Bedard and Dr. David Sharp, the garden project was a big success in 2018. Due to the food raised and sharing it with the students, it is my first year in the history of the school, that students did not complain on poor eating. Students thanked the school administration for good feeding and many commented how they enjoy vegetables from their own garden!

For our future, we still have some needs. In the nation, there is a new look at child safety issues for nursery and primary schools. There may soon be laws requiring perimeter walls around schools for young children. Currently the wall around the nursery school has not yet been completed and there is no wall or fence around the entire primary school either. With this new outlook on schools and child protection measures, national laws may soon require we provide these measures.

Going along with these protection measures, we hope someday to obtain a mini bus to pick up our day scholar students who do not sleep at the school. This follows a series of child kidnapping in some parts of the country. Since Yamba Abaana-USA has been so generous in funding the expense of building the new classroom and meeting hall facility, we are asking the Rubanda School PTA and the other local stakeholders in the community to help contribute to the mini bus and perimeter wall fund, in addition to the usual school fees. We will see how that goes.

Anyway, these are some of the things I had to deal with during my vacation to Uganda. Please, I am sorry for the long email and do not hesitate to ask me any question or clarification. Yamba Abaana, you are my pride and, above all, God's instrument to reach out to Rubanda and to the needy. Thank you so dearly. God bless each one of us."

Father Dominic Tumusiime

Minor editing by Dr. Bruce Murray (please contact at: pbrucemurray@hotmail.com)

Editor note: The Board of Yamba Abaana welcomes contributions to help fund the projects mentioned above. God bless you for your help!

Please send donations to: Treasurer, Yamba Abaana. P.O. Box 880, Grants Pass, OR, 97528