

St. Nicholas Children's Centre Kemondo (NCK)
Bukoba Catholic Diocese



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"I am risen and I am always with you. Alleluia."

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Dear Friends and Supporters of St. Nicholas Children's Center!

In my last newsletter for Christmas 2021 I shared with you that my daughters and I were planning to visit St. Nicholas.

By now more than three months have passed by since our visit. We arrived in

Tanzania on Holy Night but reached St. Nicholas on

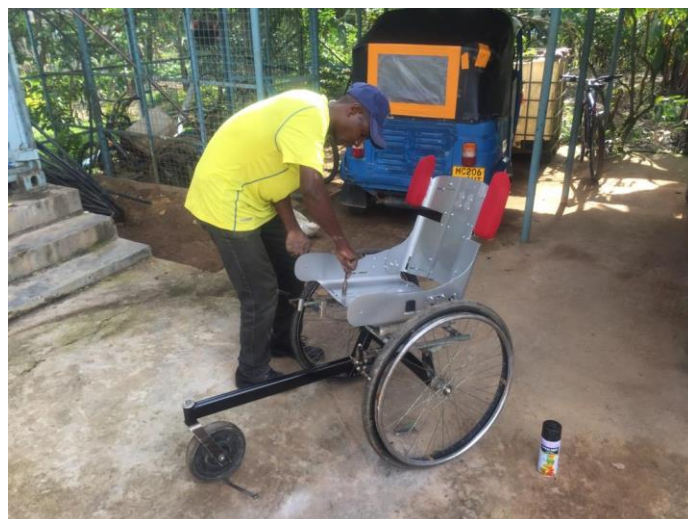
Christmas Day. We went straight to the beach from Bukoba Airport where the whole family was gathered and waiting for us with Christmas dinner. It was wonderful to be reunited with our St. Nicholas family!



We had a very special gift in our luggage for Christoph. Christoph has cerebral palsy and is not able to sit.



A specialist in Germany custom-made a seat for him. The specialist took Christoph's measurements by giving instructions through a video call. It was amazing that this worked out!



The seat can be adjusted in many ways. We took pictures of the seat, then took it apart to fit in the suitcase.

In Tanzania we reassembled it and mounted it on Christoph's old wheelchair. Finally Christoph is able to sit without pain!



The seat is worth more than US \$ 5,000 and we received it free of charge! We are so grateful to the company for this most wonderful donation!



Christoph sits in his chair like in a Rolls Royce!



For New Year I went with 14 children and a caregiver to Kigoma at Lake Tanganyika which is 300 miles away from St. Nicholas. It was a 10-hour drive to get there.

On the way home we had rain and got stuck in the muddy roads. Yes, we were “in” in the road, not “on” it because the muddy ground is able to swallow up people and vehicles alike. In Africa every long safari on unpaved roads is an adventure guaranteed!



However, the trip was worth the adventure. It is a special treat for our kids to go on holiday and most kids from St. Nicholas have been to Kigoma. In July I will take another group of 14 kids. The children themselves

decided on who should go in which group. My suggestion to take the boys on one trip and the girls on the other trip was rejected with great indignation! The kids prefer to have a mixture of small and big children, girls and boys.





Furthermore I can report that we have received a new vehicle. We purchased the vehicle last year and it was delivered to Tanzania before Christmas. However, it took a number of weeks until we received the tax exemption. In March the vehicle finally arrived at St. Nicholas. We are very blessed to have another strong vehicle for our daily trips.

Because my daughters' school break for Christmas was limited to two weeks our time at St. Nicholas was far too short! Every minute of our short trip was filled with celebrating, quality time spent with the kids, meetings with the leadership team and staff and much more.

We went to Dar es Salaam on January 8th for our international flight back to Germany. While we were at the airport I received the test results of the PCR-tests on my phone: the girls were negative, but I was positive! Because I had no symptoms at all, I first did not trust the test results. We had already



checked in our luggage and had our boarding passes. We actually did not need PCR-tests. To show our vaccination charts would have been enough to fly. But somehow the ground staff of the airport stopped me. The PCR-test was registered with my passport number and the positive result flashed out in red on the computer screen. I was not allowed to take a rapid test or another PCR-test for seven days. Only with a negative test after one week I would be allowed to fly out, so I was told. There was not much time left to decide how to deal with the situation. My daughters and I agreed that the girls would fly without me. I gave them their passports, vaccination charts and some cash money. I asked another passenger who was waiting in line to help them change planes at the airports. And then they were gone – and I was left at the airport! I was absolutely nervous until my daughters had safely reached Germany and a friend of mine welcomed them. Once they were in Germany my friend took them to the pediatrician and they were tested again for Covid. Both were positive! They had to stay at home in Germany while I was in Tanzania. It was an awful situation for all of us! On January 16th I finally received a negative test result and took the next available flight home.

Of course I had also called the staff at St. Nicholas and had asked if anyone was sick. They reported that no one was sick. My guess is that almost everyone in Tanzania already has had a Corona-infection without being aware of it, because people usually do not get tested and most people might have mild symptoms or they think they are sick with the flu. At least we would not have noticed our infection without the tests. In late June we want to travel to Tanzania again. We hope that this trip will be without surprises!



The children at St. Nicholas are doing well.

Joas has officially left the children's home. Since February he has been working as an auto mechanic in a workshop in Bukoba town. He is living in a rented room. We stay in touch with him and he comes to visit.

For Matungwa it is much more difficult to step into adulthood. He is working as a mason but he does not want to leave our house! We need to give him a gentle but firm push into the world! The other young adults are still in boarding schools and in vocational training schools.

The small and medium-sized kids are growing at a remarkable speed. Since Aglipina, Isabella, Benson, and Kevina joined our family last year, we have not received any more children. But this can change any time. Usually the social welfare office brings us children without prior notice.

I had written this letter up to this point when I received the message that Editha had passed away on Palm Sunday. We are shocked and very sad to lose her. Editha had severe mental and physical disabilities. She was 11 years old and still fit in a baby seat because her body was so small and fragile. We had known her for many years. Initially her mother came to our weekly Outpatient Clinic for treatment and support. In February 2017 we agreed to care for Editha at St. Nicholas because her mother was no longer able to do so. At first Editha thrived and developed well under our care. But these past two years her health steadily declined due to her severe disabilities.





Editha with her sister in December 2021

These past months we took her to the doctor and to the hospital several times a week. She was treated with all kinds of medicine. Her death does not come as a surprise to us but we are grieving her loss.

I am comforted with the thought that for the past five years she had a good quality of life with us.

Her death reminds us that resurrection follows death.

Thank you so much for your support and prayers!

We are wishing you a blessed Holy Week and a joyful feast of the Resurrection!



Sr. Grace Clemence Stefanie Njunwa Sr. Celestina

Stefanie Köster, St. Nicholas Leadership Team, the children and staff