

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



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"Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."

Luke 3:4

First of Advent 2023

Dear Friends and Supporters of St. Nicholas!

It is a joy to look back to the year 2023 at St. Nicholas because we experienced many good things. At the end of 2022, we officially discharged seven young adults from our children's home. All of them are now living on their own. Some are working, some are still in professional job training. Adventina is the first one who has started college! We hear from the young people from time to time, and some come to visit us at St. Nicholas occasionally.

Since the house for young adults was left almost empty, we decided to rearrange the usage of this house and the older main house. In February 2023 we separated the girls and the boys. The girls stayed in the main building, the boys moved into the other building. This change worked out even better than we had hoped for.



Girls' House



Boys' House

We hired more caregivers and other personnel so that both houses have enough staff to care for the children. Now the children have more personal space than they had before. The 23 girls and 22 boys sleep in bedrooms with no more than six children per room. Some of the older children have their own rooms. The children room together according to their peer groups. When I visited in July of this year, I right away noticed the absence of noise! Everyone who has already visited us at St. Nicholas will remember the noise level in our house. But now the 45 children are spread out on a much bigger compound and in two buildings. Meal times are more peaceful as boys and girls eat in their respective houses. However, the children are not separated. They continue to play together as they have many play areas outside. Everybody gathers at 7 pm for evening prayer in the living room of either the girls' or the boys' house. This arrangement has been working out well.

We had a change of personnel in the leadership team. Her religious community needed Sr. Grace for another ministry. Sr. Leonardina came in her place. She first worked for six months as a caregiver in order to get to know the children, the staff and the work. In July, Sr. Leonardina joined the leadership team. She is very kind and well-liked by the children and staff as well.



Clemence Sr. Celestina Stefanie Sr. Leonardina Njunwa

We received five new children:



John

John and Jason were brought to us by a social welfare officer. Both are three years old and were transferred from a children's home for infants to our house. The children have no disabilities. By now they have adjusted well and feel at home with their new big family at St. Nicholas.



Jason



Vanessa

Vanessa and Elisabeth joined our family in July. Vanessa is twelve years old. Health wise, she is not doing well. She has seizures and is HIV-positive. Since she is with us she is under medical care. We hope she will improve soon.



Elisabeth

Elisabeth is eight years old. She has physical and mental disabilities.



Kevin

When we received her, she was in a severe state of malnourishment. We started feeding her nutritious soft food multiple times a day in small amounts. She has started to gain weight and to improve.

Kevin has been living with us since September. He is two years old and he too is mentally and physically challenged. I am always excited to meet the new children when I come to St. Nicholas and to see how much they have grown since my last visit!



Tumaini in May 2023

In April, Tumaini had open-heart surgery. It was a high risk surgery to close the hole in his heart. We are grateful beyond words that this surgery was possible in Tanzania and that the surgery was a success. Since his heart has been repaired, Tumaini is growing so fast! He has started to catch up with all his developmental delays. For me, he is the miracle of 2023!



Tumaini and Sr. Celestina in October 2023

From September 2022 until August 2023 Clara from Germany did a year of voluntary service in our house. She was the first volunteer since the Covid-pandemic.

Within a short time, she mastered the language. She found friends among the children and staff as well. She also made friends in the village and adjusted well to the local culture.

Nora and Margarethe came in September 2023. They too will stay with us for one year. In the beginning everything was new to them but by now they too have become part of our family.



Clara



Nora und Margarethe



Aisha, Stefanie, Anita, and Joseph

In September of this year, the first young men from St. Nicholas has started a year of voluntary service in Germany! Joseph is volunteering at a school for children with special needs. He is living with my daughters and me. I am excited to have a son now as well, and I am only missing my other 45 kids back in Tanzania!

What is our vision for the year 2024?

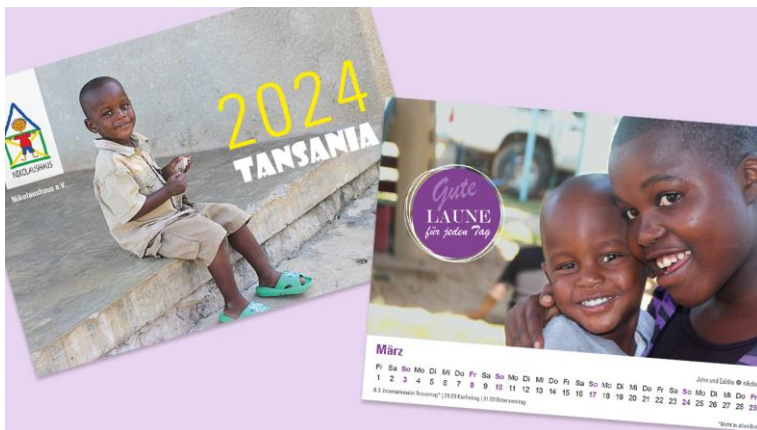
We want to build a house for those children at St. Nicholas who have become adults but who will not be able to live independently because of their special needs.

At this point in time this is the case for four young adults: Steven and Anthony, Asimwe and Zawadi. All four of them are in their early twenties. In the years to come more children with disabilities at St. Nicholas will become adults. For them we will build a separate house. When I will visit St. Nicholas for Christmas and the New Year, we will start with the building.



Zawadi, Anthony, Asimwe, and Steven

With grateful hearts, we look back to twelve years of St. Nicholas – twelve years that would not have been possible without your help! Twelve years in which we accompanied more than sixty children on their lives' journey.



As every year, we have printed a calendar that portrays our children. Please let me know if you would like to have a calendar and I will send you one.

We are wishing you a blessed and peace-filled Advent and Christmas Season,
God's abundant blessings and good health for the New Year 2024,

Stefanie Köster, the leadership team, caregivers and children