

St. Nicholas Children's Centre Kemondo (NCK)
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9 Years St. Nicholas!

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Dear Friends and Supporters of St. Nicholas!

For us at St. Nicholas time has passed by so quickly since I last wrote you for Pentecost. The first weeks after the worldwide outbreak of the pandemic in Mid-March were strenuous and scary. All our visitors and volunteers left within a few days. Afterwards traveling was not possible for months. All the children stayed locked down on the compound of St. Nicholas while schools were closed for 15 weeks. I tried to isolate us at St. Nicholas as much as possible in order to prevent the Corona-virus to enter our house. The question was how badly the pandemic would affect all of us in Tanzania and particularly our most vulnerable children with disabilities?

Six months later I am happy to report that we are doing well. So far no one at St. Nicholas and in our close vicinity has contracted Covid-19. Schools reopened on June 29th. All school holidays have been canceled until the end of the school year in order to make up for the lost study time.

Some final school exams have been rescheduled to a later date but they will take place. In this regard we are more fortunate than the people in our neighboring countries of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda who are still under lockdown and who suffer from the effects of it. With the reopening of the schools I have given up any attempts to isolate the children at St. Nicholas because this is simply not possible anymore.

Tanzania is decorated in the ruling party's colors green and yellow as the current president is campaigning for a second term of office at the end of the October



The government of Tanzania has declared the country free of Corona which of course raises the question whether this can be true? I think this question can only be answered later on in retrospect by medical experts. My guess is that the constantly warm temperatures might help to slow down the spread of the virus. Furthermore, I suspect that people do have Covid-19 but that most people might not get seriously sick from it since the majority of the population is below 50, even below 30 years

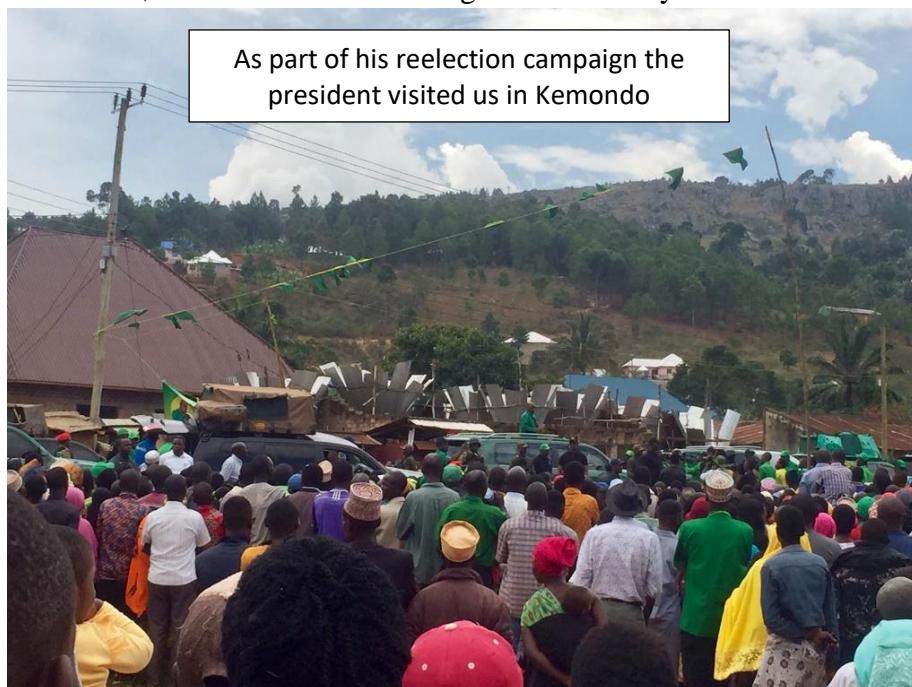
old. And since very few people are tested in Tanzania, the virus will not be diagnosed. Possibly later on studies will be conducted to see how many people in the population have developed antibodies.

Whatever the speculations are, until today I have not heard nor seen a suspicious number of sick people or heard of an unusual number of deaths.

Since July daily life continues in Tanzania as usual. Safety measures such as wearing face masks and washing hands frequently have disappeared. Only when traveling to Tanzania travelers should present a negative Covid-19 test.

With what I just said I neither want to belittle nor deny the danger of the pandemic. I am only describing the current situation here in Tanzania. People have simply resumed their daily life. If it weren't for the news media nobody here would know about the virus.

As part of his reelection campaign the president visited us in Kemondo





Stefanie with Anita and Aisha at their confirmation

In August I traveled to Germany in order to prepare my family's move. Traveling from Tanzania to Germany was not easy because of the flight restrictions and safety measures but at least it was possible. While visiting Germany I was able to prepare our house, find a job for myself and to register my daughters in school. The pandemic has delayed our plans to move by some weeks but we are

grateful that we are still healthy and that daily life continues – in Tanzania as well as in Germany.

In September and October we had so many reasons to celebrate: Some of our children received the sacraments of baptism, first communion and confirmation. The picture shows our youth from St. Nicholas on the day of their confirmation: Anita, Ellieth, Erick, Jessica, Christoph, Aisha, Sebastian and Annajoyce!



In September Kulwa, Dotto, Kaijage and Anthony celebrated their 18th birthdays, Sebastian (to the right) turned 16!

Three teenagers graduated from so called “Standard 7” of Primary School and two other youth will graduate “Form 4” of Secondary School (11-year school education). This means that soon we will be able to officially discharge our first children from St. Nicholas. However, we will continue to be their family to come home to and we will support their education until they are able to work and care for themselves.



Anita, Sebastian and Dotto



Kaijage and Adventinva

With great thanksgiving we are looking back on 9 years of St. Nicholas and with a very sad heart we are anticipating our farewell in mid-October. We just celebrated all of this with a Mass of Thanksgiving on October 10th.

Even after leaving St. Nicholas physically in order to live in Germany I will stay in close touch. I will return for visits and I will support the leadership team with advice and whatever help needed. The leadership team has been working well together for a year and I am confident that they will continue to do well. I will also send you newsletters in the future.



The leadership team: Mr. Clemence, Sr. Celestina and Mr. Njunwa

Thank you so much for your prayers and faithful support!

Stefanie Köster with the leadership team, the children and caregivers