

KIKATITI SECONDARY SCHOOL

The mission that was started by Our Savior's Lutheran Church at Kikatiti Secondary School in Tanzania in 1999 through our friends and former members, Doug and Linda Dybsetter, continues to assist poor young people get an education and provide the school with funds to purchase needed food, textbooks, mosquito nets and tuition scholarships. This has been possible only because of the great generosity of our members and others who have gotten involved. In 1999 there were only 63 students taught in 3 dirt-floored classrooms with no electricity. The school was about to close because there had been no money to pay its three teachers for several months. Today, we can report there are now over 900 students at the school. Through the amazing generosity of many of you we have been able to build an additional 12 classrooms, two dormitories, library, science lab, staff housing and dining hall. Donations continue to make this school work. As I have mentioned before students in Tanzania can go to free "primary" schools (about the equivalent of our elementary grades). However, when they reach the point where they must advance to the "secondary" school level (similar to our 7th-10th grades) students must start to pay tuition. Because Kikatiti Secondary School is in an area of extreme poverty only about 5% of all students can typically advance to the secondary school level. Our involvement with the school has made educational opportunities available to many kids who would otherwise have no opportunity to go to school. Your gifts for tuition scholarships, food, textbooks and drinking water are critical for its survival. Even though this mission has grown well outside Our Savior's Lutheran Church and Christ Lutheran Church in Cottonwood (our wonderful partner in this mission), support from our members is critical.

During 2016 a total of **\$70,069** was donated to this mission! I thank God and many of you for opening your hearts to the needs of these kids. Of that amount, **\$6,342 (9.05%)** was contributed by members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

My most recent trip to Kikatiti Secondary School was nearly three years ago when former Our Savior's member Jim Thomas and I spent two weeks researching the potential to drill a well that could provide safe and adequate drinking water for students and staff. As I have mentioned before, safe drinking water is a luxury at the school. This part of northern Africa has a terrible problem with excess natural fluoride being found in water supplies. The Kikatiti area has, probably, the most issues with excess natural fluoride found in northern Africa. The only "safe" drinking water that flows to the school comes from a pipeline from a water source about 10 miles from the school. Sadly, because of many reasons the flow of this water is not nearly enough to satisfy the minimal needs of the students. Hence, water must be purchased and transported to the school by a small transport tank pulled by a tractor several times a day. With money so limited, we started the **Water Angel Project** and have been purchasing water for the kids.

We are happy to report that we have entered into an agreement (after more than two years of negotiating an acceptable development agreement with the Meru Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania) with a company called **Ground Water Tanzania** that will supervise the drilling of a well on a site about one mile from the school where we hope to find adequate and safe water. We have done our due diligence by performing two separate hydrological/geological surveys at the site to give us the best evidence of a successful drill and are now ready to drill the well. Nothing is guaranteed, but we feel it's time to move forward. This drilling should take place before the end of January. We ask prayers for its success. We are one step closer to this goal we have had for many years. If it's determined the

water supply is good and adequate we will then work on the issues of necessary storage tanks and a distribution system to transport the water to the school. I welcome any questions you might have about this project. Many of you have supported this project with your financial donations and we have money raised and in a separate fund that will, hopefully, pay for the drilling, storage and distribution systems.

Educational work at the school continues successfully. The students have performed very well when their test scores are compared with all other secondary schools in Tanzania. Their facilities remain simple but their results are exciting. Demand to get into the school because of its lower tuition costs is great resulting in having to turn down prospective students because the facilities are at capacity. Two simple meals each day are what the kids get and needs for food, textbooks, water and tuition scholarships remain high. I thank you all for opening your hearts.

One major disaster hit the school early in 2016 when a fire severely damaged the boys' dormitory caused by an electrical short. 110 boys were displaced for a couple months and they lost all their personal belongings including textbooks. Thankfully, many of you helped in the rebuilding of that dormitory through gifts totaling over \$25,000.

Sincerely,

Bill Koeckeritz, Coordinator of Kikatiti Secondary School Mission