

St Amedeus secondary school

for boys in Moshe Tanzania was started 5 years ago with the help of funding from FHS. In this short period of time it has become the highest ranking school in Tanzania. It didn't take me long to realise why this was. The year 7s worked harder than I did for my A levels.

Every day the students woke at 5 am for mass and a quick breakfast of porridge. This was followed by an hour of manual labour. Some of the boys use this time to wash their clothes, while others had to sweep and mop the classrooms. Lessons started at 8 am. During my stay I was teaching all of year 7 Chemistry and Biology. The class sizes were exceptionally large and I would not have been able to teach 60 boys if they had not been as attentive and respectful as they were. The Tanzanian syllabus was incredibly demanding. Some of the topics I was teaching the 11 year olds I had only learned myself in the last two years of A level, so I was pretty thankful that I had turned down the offer of teaching Physics!

In my year 7 Biology class the boys had to have comprehensive knowledge of 40 diseases, and be able to write 2 page essays on each one. My older sister, in her 5th year of medical school, somewhat struggled with this task. In Chemistry I taught oxygen and hydrogen, this in fact took me the whole 6 weeks, due to the detail that they were expected to know ... Unfortunately I didn't have Miss Hotchkiss' (FHS Chemistry teacher) phone number but luckily enlisted the help of the local Head of Science to ensure my knowledge was up to scratch. The benefit of teaching Chemistry was that it enabled me to use their one science lab. However it lacked most of the equipment I needed for experiments, so I had to be some-what inventive. FHS is currently funding the building of the new science block, massively enhancing their facilities and hopefully improving the opportunities available to the students in science.

I also taught English classes to all forms. I was able to do team teaching with their current English teacher and also hold my own extra classes. When I organised a voluntary English class at 5pm on a Friday ... I had expected 3 very keen people based on what my personal likelihood of attending extra English class on a Friday afternoon would have been. Therefore I was pretty surprised to walk into a class of 169 11 year olds who all stayed for the next 2 hours.

5 days a week I held English remedial classes for 15 students in year 7 who really struggled with English. Most of these boys had come from Swahili primary schools where they had learnt no English. At St Amedeus everything is taught in English so understandably they were failing most of their classes and little was being done about it. Over the course of my stay they worked incredibly hard and showed much improvement not only during my lessons but also in other subjects.

One of the highlights of my stay at the school was teaching sport 5 days a week to the students. They approached my lessons with relentless enthusiasm and mastered Tag Rugby, a fast moving and tactical game with ease. Most the boys played with bare feet as they had no trainers, just one of the things that we take for granted. Every Saturday after a morning of lessons the boys had clubs. I chose to supervise dance. What I quickly became aware of was the fact that the boys were all much better dancers than myself. Even though they worked hard to help me, my skills showed little improvement over my stay. I also taught a music class to the students on Wednesday evenings, which was immensely enjoyable. This was one of the hardest parts of my week as it was the only time I taught all 400 students at once. However they were as ever respectful and many of the students had fantastic voices and even the few that didn't were always enthusiastic.

It is hard for me to explain the impact my stay in Tanzania has had on me, it was quite simply life changing. Teaching, although challenging at times, was the most enjoyable and rewarding

experience. I am so grateful for the teachers and students at the school who welcomed me in to their community and Quondam for the funding that made my trip possible. The students taught me as much as I taught them they wanted me to pass on the message Asante Sana ... which means quite simply: THANKYOU.