

The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.

'Bee Connected' Bega kwa Bega with Bunda Girls' Secondary School and our service projects

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

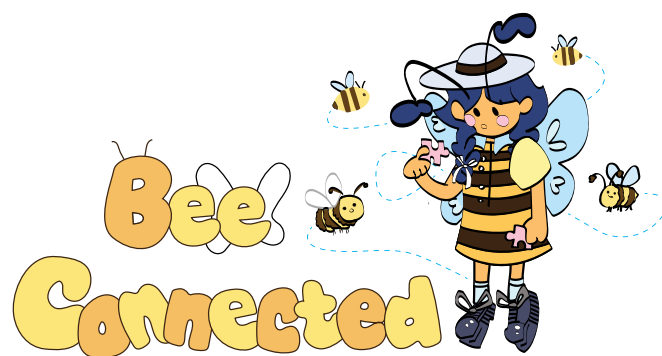
Our Abbotsleigh girls are connected, collaborative trailblazers who have a true heart for social justice and service. This is seen in spades every week through our Senior School social justice clubs and through each of our Junior School classes learning about and sponsoring a World Vision Child.

In addition, and most significantly, we have a strong connection with some very special schools in Tanzania:

- For our Junior School girls – this is The School of St Jude, for whom our girls raise a significant amount of money each year and, as such, make a very positive impact on the extremely disadvantaged students who attend that school.
- For our Senior School girls, our partnership with Bunda Girls' Secondary School (BGSS) is especially deep and meaningful, as BGSS was established by our very own AOG Rev Helen Hoskins (1969).

Our relationship with BGSS has been long and positive. Our Boarders connected with Bunda a number of years ago, and our Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union and a number of individual Abbotsleigh Old Girls have sponsored, and continue to sponsor, Bunda students so that they may have access to an outstanding education and an excellent pathway to further education and impactful careers. Most recently, our Senior School relationship with BGSS has been cemented in the form of a partnership.

Beginning with Year 7 2022, our partnership with Bunda involves each Senior School year group sponsoring two Tanzanian girls to attend BGSS for their entire high school journey (four years). As such, Year 9 have been sponsoring Agness and Elizabeth since they were in Year 7, Year 8



girls are sponsoring Ntoji and Happyness, and Year 7 will meet their girls, Mary and Yvona, next week.

Not only have our girls raised money to pay for the girls' school fees, they also have opportunities to connect with the Bunda girls, write letters and emails, and exchange stories and experiences. Moreover, last year a group of students and teachers visited BGSS and St Jude's as well as other schools connected with Bunda. This was a life changing experience for all who went on that trip.

So why does this matter? According to our Vice Head Prefect – Service, Davina Chan,

'Only 39% of Tanzanian girls get to attend secondary school, and even fewer graduate due to pressures to marry early and have children. By [sponsoring these girls, our girls will] be giving students the chance to continue their education and access future job opportunities – ones they [would] not have without our support.'

Last Friday, as part of our commemoration of International Women's Day, Abbotsleigh hosted a breakfast highlighting Bunda Girls' Secondary School and Rev Helen Hoskins' journey in establishing Bunda and other important educational institutions which aim to assist young Tanzanian girls and women 'march' along the path to leadership and equality in Tanzania.

An extract from Rev Helen Hoskins' presentation as well as the speech delivered by Eleanor Zhu (Year 11) at the breakfast follow. (Eleanor was a member of the group that visited Tanzania in 2024). I warmly commend both to you.

March forward: it's time to turn promises into progress

Rev Helen Hoskins
IWD Breakfast at Abbotsleigh
7 March 2025

The following is adapted from Rev Hoskins' presentation:

In 2001 the first Girls Brigade Company in Tanzania began marching forward. We never could have imagined that by 2025, this small beginning of young girls in the Bunda Anglican Church would have led to the establishment of the Girls Brigade Sewing Centre, the Bunda Girls' Secondary School and the Shalom Pre and Primary School.



How did this all happen?

After ten years of Girls Brigade in Bunda Church and expanding into many other churches as well, we realised that the older girls were dropping out. Many of them, as they finished primary school and didn't qualify for secondary school, followed the inevitable path of early marriage or teenage pregnancy at home.

So in 2010 we expanded our 'marching' in our local church GB Companies, and opened the Girls Brigade Sewing and Handcraft Centre – our target being girls from the villages with little education – our aim to give them a skill to enable them to have their own income, to nurture them in a Christian environment and to equip them to make their own choices and decisions in life, to have their own dreams and goals and to stand firm against unwanted pressures and coercions.

By 2014, with four cohorts of students graduated, we realised once again that we needed to expand our 'marching' girls. Some of our GB Sewing Centre girls



had actually qualified for secondary school education and even enrolled in secondary school, but had dropped out due to pregnancy or family pressures.

So, in 2014 we opened the Bunda Girls' Secondary School – an Anglican boarding school for girls to provide a safe, nurturing, Christian, quality education for girls.

I was the founding chaplain and [taught] Bible Knowledge to all the classes... I soon realised just how much these girls were struggling with education with English as the medium of instruction. In government primary schools, all teaching is done in Swahili with English as a subject. In secondary school all teaching is done in English. The students from the government schools are generally severely disadvantaged and struggle to make the transition. So, the dream came to me to open an English medium primary school.

The Shalom Pre and Primary School was opened in 2018. We began with the three Kindergarten classes and Grade 1 of Primary. Building has continued. In 2024, we reached full capacity with our first graduation class of Grade 7. ...

The stories of some individual students whose lives have been changed through these schools – GB, BGSS, SPPS follow:

Caroline: Born in 2001 – Caroline was a baby during our first GB Officers training, grew up in GB, attended and graduated from BGSS, then attended and graduated from university. She is now teaching at Talanta Girls Secondary School in Tarime.

Martha and Mary



Martha graduated from GB Centre in 2012. In 2014 her husband threw her out and gave her their daughter, Mary, while he kept their son. Martha came to Bunda, and we put her in charge of our Sewing Sisters business in Bunda town. This flourished under her management.

Her daughter Mary finished primary school and studied at BGSS graduating in 2022. She has now completed Form 6 in preparation for university.

Through her work at the Sewing Centre, Martha was able to educate her daughter, build her own home, and is now married to a faithful and loving husband, and they have a new baby.

Consolata and Melania

Consolata and Melania were both students at our small Shalom Kindergarten – a project run by the GB Centre from 2014 to 2017, which then moved across to be the founding students of Shalom Pre and Primary School. (SPPS) Consolata was a sponsored student right through SPPS and very able academically; she was the top student in the first national exams in 2024. At the SPPS graduation, the Bishop announced that she was to be awarded a special diocesan scholarship to enrol at BGSS.

Melania was actually a fee-paying student at both the Shalom Kindergarten and then the SPPS. However, her family circumstances changed in 2023, they fell behind in paying fees and she was sent home from school and not allowed to return to her final year in 2023 until the debt was paid. I was able to provide a sponsorship for her to return to school. She had missed many months and so was well behind in her studies but worked very hard. When she sat for her 2024 national graduating exams (for primary school), she achieved an overall result of C. This is actually quite a respectable result, but for a school which is trying to build a good reputation for academic success, it was looked down on as a blot on our straight As and

Bs. When I shared her story with one of my friends in Australia, who happens to be an Abbotsleigh Old Girl, she was so moved that she offered to sponsor Melania at BGSS.

Melania passed the entrance exam and so now Consolata (the top graduate) and Melania (the bottom graduate) are both enrolled at BGSS in Year 7. This illustrates so clearly our philosophy that academic brilliance is not the criteria for success. We want all our students to perform to the best of their ability and to find the path that God has prepared for each of them as they march forward in their lives.



Rev Helen Hoskins' story

As an Abbotsleigh Old Girl, I am delighted with the way Abbotsleigh has joined us 'Bega kwa Bega' at BGSS.

I was a pupil at Abbotsleigh from 1959 to 1969. After university and then later Theological College, I went to Tanzania in 1983 as a CMS missionary. Serving God there for the next 40 years and more meant that I was too far away to attend school reunions or Old Girl events.

I reconnected with Abbotsleigh at our 40th school reunion in 2019. Then when I became stranded in Australia unexpectedly in 2020 – pancreatic cancer diagnosis and treatment, and Covid pandemic, my connection with Abbotsleigh continued to develop – leading to the establishment of the Bega kwa Bega partnership with BGSS.

The highlight for BGSS in this partnership was the visit of the Abbotsleigh group last year – 15 girls and three staff for an amazing six days immersed in our school in Bunda and strengthened our partnership with real friendships formed and much learning taking place for everyone. Abbotsleigh is now sponsoring six students as part of this partnership, with another 10 students sponsored by Abbotsleigh Old Girls.

We are committed to ‘marching forward together’ – stronger together for both our schools.

My new vision and dream for BGSS is that we should be equipped and registered in the future as an inclusive school to enrol girls with disabilities. This dream has come about from my relationship with



Perusi and Diana.

Perusi

I met Perusi 14 years ago when she was three years old in Bugando Hospital about to have her second eye removed because of cancer. Her home was in Bunda and so our relationship began and has continued to this day.

Since then, she has studied at a government primary school in Musoma, which caters especially for blind children. She has done amazingly well and graduated with one of the top results.

She was then sent to a government secondary school where there were supposedly facilities to support her.

However, the school was very inadequately equipped for the task and basically she was doomed to fail in an environment where she was very vulnerable; one of four blind children in a large co-ed secondary school with both day and boarding students and a reputation for drugs and related bad behaviour. I was stranded in Australia with the Covid lockdown when Perusi enrolled at this school, and with my short visits back, there was little I could do even as I realised the seriousness of her situation. On this recent visit I have been able to find a wonderful school in Moshi – St Pamachius Inclusive Secondary School, run by the Catholic church – 300 students: 20 blind, 40 deaf, others with various disabilities and others with no disability. Perusi will complete her secondary education there.

Diana

I also have Diana from the Tairo village. I found her in GB Tairo company about five years ago – singing in the choir and doing all the dancing and actions, despite the fact that she was deaf. I was able to send her to a government school in Musoma which is supported by a Catholic hostel and caters for deaf students. Diana is now in Grade 4. Her prospects are also to be sent to a government school for secondary education where she will experience similar challenges to Perusi.

With these two wonderful primary schools on our doorstep and no local quality secondary school for these children to continue their education, my dream now is that BGSS becomes a place where students with disability can safely and with all the extra support they will need, continue their education with us.

My promise to Diana is that she should look forward to enrolling in BGSS in 2029. And my hope is that before that date other blind and deaf students may become part of our BGSS family – ‘marching forward.’

March forward: It’s time to turn promises into progress – my experiences in Tanzania

Eleanor Zhu, Year 11
 Abbotsleigh IWD Breakfast
 7 March 2025

A mix of 15 students and three teachers had the incredible opportunity to travel to Tanzania visiting schools, meeting students and experiencing first-hand the impact of education and empowerment. From the moment we arrived in Bunda Girls’ Secondary School, we were welcomed with open arms by



Helen and the students. It became clear that this trip was about more than just observation. It was about connection, understanding and seeing the power of education in action. The theme of *March forward: It's time to turn promises into progress* became more than just words. It became something we lived every day we were there.

I will never forget the moment we stepped through the school gates. The Bunda girls formed a path for us, clapping and singing as we walked in. Their voices rang out in celebration and the joy in their faces made it clear that this school was a place of hope and opportunity. Throughout our visit I found myself constantly in awe of Helen who built this school. Her vision, her determination and courage have created a place where young girls can learn, grow and shape their futures. Each time we reflected on the day's experiences, I was overwhelmed by the love and dedication that had gone into creating such a vibrant and nurturing space.

BGSS: At BGSS, we played sports together, running and laughing. In the classrooms, we sat beside the [Bunda] girls, learning together and seeing how dedicated they were to their studies. These girls welcomed us wholeheartedly, and by the time we left, it felt as though we had built friendships that would last a lifetime.

Shalom School: When we stepped off the bus, the children greeted us with the sweetest singing. Their voices were full of excitement and their smiles were contagious. One thing that immediately caught my attention was the bright pink colour of the school buildings, standing out beautifully in the landscape. It felt like a place of joy and hope. As we visited each classroom, we saw how eager and intelligent the students were. One class acted out a scene about giving up a seat on a bus for someone in need – a simple but powerful lesson about kindness and respect. Another class recited Bible verses, carefully spelling out the word Christian as they went. The baby class introduced themselves to us with

confidence, despite their small voices. As we spoke with the children and flipped through their workbooks, I was amazed by the level of detail in their writing and their sketches. Their passion for learning was evident, as well as the teachers' dedication to teaching these children.

Girls Brigade Sewing Centre: Here we met young women who were around the same age or a bit older than us. Some of them were already mothers, but they all came to learn valuable skills that would provide them with financial independence. We were given a tour of the classrooms, where the girls showed us their current project – embroidering flowers on handkerchiefs. They also showed us the dresses they had made and their beautifully crafted necklaces and bracelets. These young women were not just students; they were future business owners, providers and role models for their children and peers. Their dedication and resilience were incredible to witness and it reminded me of the importance of providing opportunities for young women to gain independence and build a future of their own.

One of my favourite memories from the trip was singing and dancing with the students at the choir festival.

This trip was more than just a visit. It was a chance to witness the impact of education, to see how a school can change lives and to understand the importance of supporting young women in their journeys. When we reflected on our experiences, the main words that came to mind were hope, love, generosity, friendships, inspiration and colour.

To all the students listening today, if you ever have the opportunity to take this trip, do it. You will leave with more than just memories; you will leave with a new perspective, a deeper appreciation for education and a desire to be part of the change. You will see what it truly means to 'March Forward', which is to take action, to support progress and to be part of something that transforms lives.

Chaplain

All the feels

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

Junior School chapel talks have been exploring the diverse range of feelings we all experience; from joy and sadness to anger, jealousy, empathy and compassion. By examining stories of Jesus' interactions with others, students see how these emotions are part of God's design for us as humans. They learn that their feelings are valid and that God is with them in every emotional moment. Equipping our learners with emotional literacy is vital for growth and navigating relationships. It's reassuring to know that God understands our feelings and through Jesus' example, we learn to respond in ways that honour him. This journey not only strengthens our personal walk with Christ, but also fosters a supportive and understanding community within our school.

Colossians 3:12-15

God has chosen you and made you his holy people, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Don't be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. Together with these things, the most important part of your new life is to love each other. Love is what holds everything together in perfect unity. Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. It is for peace that you were chosen to be together in one body. And always be thankful.

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Good of the Hive art installation	Until end March	Senior School campus
ART NORTH – HSC 2024 Visual Arts from schools in Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai	Saturday 1 to Saturday 22 March	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
A Studio Community exhibition	Wednesday 27 March to Saturday 26 April	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Abbotsleigh Autumn Fair and opening of the Betty Archdale Library	Saturday 29 March	Senior School
Mystery Masterpieces at the Abbotsleigh Autumn Fair	Saturday 29 March	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
International Day of Happiness	Thursday 20 March	
Harmony Day	Friday 21 March	
SchoolTV program – student wellbeing resources	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to watch

JUNIOR SCHOOL

IPSHA Saturday Sport	Saturday 15 March	Various locations – see team sheets
ELC Family Picnic	Saturday 15 March 9-11 am	Junior School Oval
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN commences	Monday 17 March	
URSTRONG Parent Information Evening	Monday 17 March 6-8 pm	Junior School Auditorium
K-2 Josephine Wants to Dance	Tuesday 18 March 11 am-2.30 pm	Glen Street Theatre
Year 4 Backflips Against Bullying	Wednesday 19 March 9-10.30 am	Judith Poole Sports Hall
Year 6 Backflips Against Bullying	Wednesday 19 March 10.20 am-12.20 pm	Judith Poole Sports Hall
Year 4 Father Daughter Dinner	Thursday 20 March 6-8.30 pm	SS Dining Room
K-6 National Ride to School Day	Friday 21 March	
IPSHA Saturday Sport	Saturday 22 March	Various locations – see team sheets

JS Production auditions	Saturday 22 March 2-5 pm	Everett Hall
T-2 Intensive Swimming Week	Monday 24 to Friday 28 March	Junior School Swimming Pool
Year 6 Halogen Young Leaders Day	Tuesday 25 March 8.20 am-3 pm	International Convention Centre, Sydney
ELC and Transition ACEE visit	Tuesday 25 March 8.30 am-2.30 pm	Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education
JS Production rehearsal	Friday 28 March 3.30-5.30 pm	Everett Hall

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday Sport	Saturday 15 March	Click here for times and venues
Year 12 Elective Music Workhop	Monday 17 March 8.20 am-3.20 pm	PDCH
Year 10 Red Earth Parent Information Session	Tuesday 18 March 6-7 pm	Via Zoom
Years 7-12 Tildesley Shield Tennis Tournament	Wednesday 19 to Friday 21 March	Pennant Hills Park
Years 10 and 12 UTS Big Day in IT/STEM Careers Conference	Wednesday 19 March 8.20 am-3.25 pm	UTS
Year 12 Elective Music Workhop	Wednesday 19 March 8.20 am-3.20 pm	PDCH
Year 12 Agriculture Excursion	Wednesday 19 to Friday 21 March	Quirindi
Years 7- 11 100th Anniversary Shakespeare Festival	Wednesday 19 March 6.30-9 pm	Peter Duly Concert Hall
International Food Fair	Friday 21 March 12.45-1.15 pm	
ISDA Debating Round 6 vs Redlands	Friday 21 March 4-9 pm	Redlands
Saturday Sport	Saturday 15 March	Times and venues to be advised
Year 10 vaccinations	Monday 24 March 8.20 am-1.30 pm	
Science and Engineering Challenge	Tuesday 25 March 8.20 am-3.30 pm	
Year 7 parent/teacher interviews	Tuesday 25 March 3.30-8.30 pm	Via Zoom
OxClo National Competition	Wednesday 26 March 2-4.30 pm	Senior School
Year 12 Geography field trip	Wednesday 26 to Friday 28 March	Jindabyne
Year 10 Regency Morning Tea	Friday 28 March 8.20-9.35 am	Gymnasium
ISDA Debating Round 7 vs Brigidine	Friday 28 March 4-9 pm	GLC

