



Operation Bootstrap Africa

Dignity

Summer 2019 Annual Report Edition

Thoughts on Gratefulness and Happiness



On OBA's most recent visit to Tanzania we learned something remarkable from Joyce Ndege, a teacher at MGLSS. She expressed that the Tanzanian understanding of success might be different than ours. They consider themselves successful when they have enough for their families and a little extra to give to someone else. Though impactful, this statement did not come as a surprise. It has long been our experience that the Tanzanian people are extraordinarily kind, generous, and happy.

Great thinkers from Aristotle to contemporary philosophers such as Albert Schweitzer have spent much of their lives trying to understand mankind's search for happiness. Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk and interfaith scholar, gave a TED Talk in June 2013, in which he proposed that Gratefulness is the key to Happiness.

If happiness is man's end good, as Aristotle claims, and gratefulness is the key to happiness, as Brother Steindl-Rast claims, then we have some scholarly evidence as to why our Tanzanian brothers and sisters express such happiness despite such economic challenges. By comparison, our American society demands us to have more "stuff". As it turns out, according to Steindl-Rast, our need of "stuff" cannot be satisfied, thus leaving us wanting and unfulfilled. However, in Tanzanian society there is less opportunity for "stuff". The people are dependent on each other, creating a community of gratefulness for their relationships and happiness without "stuff".

Joyce's humbling words sneak into my consciousness regularly. What can I learn from our Tanzanian friends about embracing relationships and experiences over consumerism? The saying, "You never see a U-haul behind a hearse" comes to mind.



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In this issue of the Dignity you will find great stories of success in education—successes through education that cannot happen without the generosity of our donors. If gratefulness is the key to happiness, let me assure you there are many very happy students in Tanzania. They are working hard and sacrificing much to eventually have a little extra to give to someone else. We at OBA are also truly grateful for the donors who see the value of investing in young people in Tanzania. Asante sana! Thank you!

Jason R. Zeman



One Fish, Two Fish, Bacho School Has New Fish

During a trip to Tanzania in May, OBA's director was able to visit Bacho Vocational School in the rural town of Babati. The school is one of OBA's newest partners in Africa, and with our help recently installed tilapia ponds on the campus. The project will create an additional area of study for students in the agricultural program.

Support the Sciences at MGLSS!

Many students at the MaaSAE Girls School dream of becoming doctors, nurses, midwives, and more. In order to do so they must perform very well on the Biology and Chemistry portions of their national exams after graduation. However, the students are currently using broken or borrowed equipment in the science laboratory as there is not enough to go around. We hope to provide new laboratory equipment to help these young

women prepare for not only their exams, but also fulfilling careers in the medical field.

Help Operation Bootstrap Africa raise \$5,000 to supply the science laboratory at MGLSS



Donor Highlight ~ Shane Fletcher & Tammy Davis


Shane, Tammy, and John at MGLSS in 2012



When Shane Fletcher and Tammy Davis learned about the MaaSAE Girls School over dinner with friends in 2011, they knew instantly that they had to get involved. Though they were encouraged to sponsor a student, Tammy and Shane felt that they were being called to do something different—something more. At the time, most of the students pursued teaching certificates after graduation, but Tammy, being a nurse, wondered why the girls did not often go into the medical field. It turned out that the school did not have a full time science teacher on staff, and the students weren't testing well enough in the sciences to earn placements at nursing and medical schools. After learning more about the shortage of medical workers throughout Tanzania, Shane and Tammy decided to sponsor a science teacher and have been doing so ever since. Shortly after making the decision, Tammy and Shane had the opportunity to visit Tanzania in the winter of 2012, and met the new science teacher, John. Reflecting on that experience, Shane said, "It changed us, no question about it. We came back different people and haven't been the same since." The couple also said that they are honored to be able to make this opportunity possible, and that the decision to do so

was simply a matter of passion meeting need. Over the course of almost a decade, John has now advanced the science education of hundreds of students. He regularly keeps the lab open late—even up until 11 p.m. at times—and comes in on weekends, so that students can get extra tutoring. At this year's Form 6 graduation he was given the "Favorite Teacher Award" in recognition of that support. MGLSS students are now excelling in the

"It's over-
whelmed us
what's possible
with OBA"
~Shane Fletcher

sciences, and many go on to post-secondary programs in the medical field every year. Upon hearing the students' latest test scores, Shane commented, "you just know they are going to change their world. They are going to have an effect and that's exciting." Through their incredible gift, Shane and Tammy have impacted the lives of so many students, but also the lives of every patient they will treat. Their impact is immeasurable. 



The Science Lab at MGLSS



Loy Yamat, head of the Special Needs Unit at Ilboru Primary School, shows renovation plans to visitors from the United States.

Downsizing to Create Greater Educational Opportunities

OBA is excited to be partnering with the organization Friends of Tanzania to renovate classrooms at Ilboru Primary School in Arusha, Tanzania. Ilboru's Special Needs Unit serves children with a variety of physical and intellectual disabilities from early childhood through Standard 7 (the equivalent of 7th grade in the USA). OBA and Friends of Tanzania will help Ilboru to divide several existing classrooms into smaller rooms for children who experience sensory issues, such as those with autism. These children struggle in the larger classroom settings, but in a smaller environment, with a better student to

teacher ratio, they will be able to thrive.

Renovations are expected to begin after the rainy season concludes. 

A young autistic student returns to the classroom on weekends to read or study in a quieter setting.



Nursing School Update

After learning that the ALMC School of Nursing would be required to own property, instead of renting as they currently do, in order to maintain their accreditation, the school entered into a partnership with Ekenyewa Secondary School last year. Administrators from the nursing college and the secondary school have now reached an agreement on how to divide the current buildings as well as the remaining unused acreage on the campus. The nursing school has had plans drawn up for renovations of the existing structures to accommodate dormitories, restroom facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and a dining hall. Future plans for the nursing school include constructing additional dorms so that more students can access a nursing education, as well as additional classrooms equipped to provide specialized education. The school hopes in the future to be able to train technicians who can operate and repair advanced medical technology, along with their current 1, 2, and 3 year degree programs.


Classrooms and a dining hall at the new nursing school site



MGLSS Girls Giving Back!

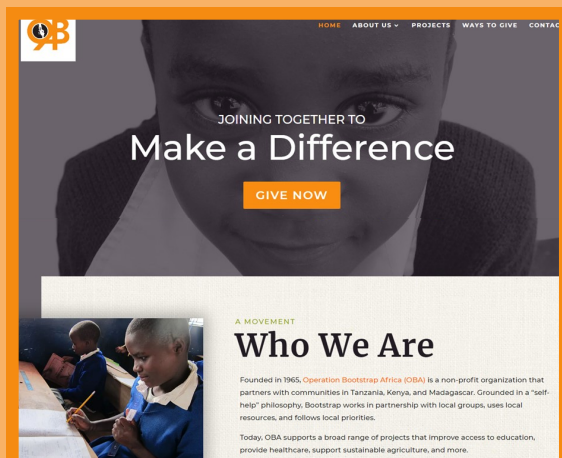


After almost 25 years of providing education to Tanzania's most vulnerable, the MaaSAE Girls School boasts graduates working in every economic sector of the country. A generation of girls who feared they would never have access to education are now women serving their communities as doctors, nurses, architects, and even as teachers. Agness Joseph was one such girl, raised in a very traditional and patriarchal, rural village. Instead of entering a child marriage like she expected, Agness was able to join one of the very first classes of students at MGLSS. After graduating from Form 6 at MGLSS in 2006, Agness had the opportunity to attend university and received her degree in education 3 years later. Today she is a teacher at Olchoki Primary School in Arusha where she works primarily with young Maasai children. Though officially Agness teaches English and Geography to the Standard 6 students, she said that her most important subject is teaching the students that they have rights. She is proud and happy to be creating an opportunity for

others in her community to access education, just as MGLSS and her sponsor did for her. She is now also happily married to a man of her own choosing, and together they have a baby daughter. Agness is working every day to create a better world than the one she grew up in for her own little girl, and for other Maasai girls like her. 

OBA's website has gotten a makeover!

Visit us at www.BootstrapAfrica.org to see the new website and to get all the latest OBA news



OBA Needs You!

Intern with OBA

OBA seeks a talented and motivated individual to assist with communications and social media. Internship is eligible for a paid stipend and/or college credit. Must be available 10-15 hours per week during business hours.

To apply, send your resume and cover letter to admin@bootstrapafrica.org

Volunteer with OBA

Do you live in the Twin Cities metro area and want to get more involved with OBA? We are always looking for volunteers to help around the office with mailings, filing, and other projects. Please contact OBA at info@bootstrapafrica.org to sign-up.

Q&A with Dr. Seth Msinjili

Headmaster at MaaSAE Girls Lutheran
Secondary School (MGLSS)



Dr. Msinjili is known as 'Babu' ('grandfather' in Kiswahili) by the students at MGLSS.



How long have you been working in the field of education, and how long at MGLSS?

I have been working in the field of education for a total of 42 years. I have been headmaster at MGLSS for nearly nine years.

How many staff and students are there at MGLSS?

We have a total of 50 staff members—28 are teachers and 22 are nonteaching staff, which includes cooks, maintenance staff, and guards. Of the 28 teachers, 17 are women and 11 are men.

We currently have 347 students—286 are in O-level (ordinary level consists of forms 1-4, which is the equivalent of middle school to early high school in the US) and 61 are in A-level (advanced level consists of forms 5-6). A new class of Form 5 students will begin in June, and it will be a big class at 40 students.

What is the mission of MGLSS?

The school board adopted a vision, mission, and school motto several years ago. The school vision is "to nurture and uplift girls from the marginalized communities, enable them to translate the secular and spiritual education provided, to suit their local cultures and empower them to adapt to the world dynamics. The school motto is: "We are the architects of our own destiny!"

Is there a recent success story you'd like to share?

I can tell you the story of Sion Mbarua, who completed forms 1-4 at MGLSS. During her time at MGLSS, her parents were supportive of her education. She always went home during school breaks to visit them. However, after Sion completed Form 4, her parents decided to arrange her marriage without Sion's knowledge. Sion managed to rescue herself. She ran away. She finished Form 6 at MGLSS and was among the top scorers on the national exam. She is now completing her second year at the University of Dar es Salaam. We have many stories like Sion's, but she is an exceptionally tough girl.

At long last the MaaSAE Girls School chapel has a new roof! The new shingles were delayed by customs in Kenya, but finally arrived on campus in March and were installed shortly thereafter by Nathan Simonson. OBA is grateful to Nathan, and to all who contributed to the renovation. The roof of the chapel—which stands in the very heart of the girls school campus—was designed to mirror the Maasai shield presented to our founder, David Simonson, when he was made a 'Laibon' (elder of the tribe). The roof was completed just in time for the Form 6 graduation ceremony in May, which began with a formal chapel service.

Afterwards, a number of community leaders gave speeches, and the other MGLSS students celebrated their peers with skits and songs.

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MGLSS will be celebrating its 25-year anniversary in January 2020. What are the school's biggest achievements?


Our biggest achievements are our graduates. We have over 1,500 young women who have gone through our school and are now leading a free, economically self-sufficient life.

What are some of the most pressing challenges you face at MGLSS?

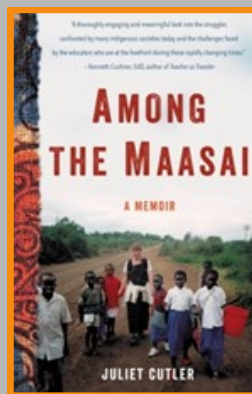
We have a limited number of scholarships and yet many girls who are unable to gain access to education. Every September, when Form 1 begins, girls show up at our school begging for scholarships to go to school. We do not have the resources to help them all, so we are forced to turn girls away. We wish we could help them all.

As headmaster, what do you want sponsors to know?

What I would like sponsors to know is that the need to help these girls is still great. Right now, our government is starting to provide more public secondary school opportunities for students. However, many girls who are selected to attend these public schools never make it there because they are married before they have the chance . . . some at the age of 12-13 years. The government doesn't yet have a system of social services to support and protect these girls. These are the girls MGLSS is helping, and there are many who need help.

I also want sponsors to know that we are extremely grateful for everything they have done at MGLSS and for their ongoing support. Asanteni sana, sana, sana. You are making a difference for these girls. 

About the Author



Juliet Cutler served as an ELCA volunteer English teacher at MGLSS in 1999-2000. For the last

20 years, she has remained a strong supporter of education for Maasai girls. Her first book, *Among the Maasai*, tells this story and will be released in September. All proceeds from the sale of the book will support MGLSS and other causes that uplift Maasai women and girls. To learn more visit www.julietcutler.com

Perhaps the most compelling moment during the graduation, however, was when one Form 6 student stopped the ceremony and asked to speak privately to OBA's director, Jason. She whispered in his ear, "In honor of the graduating students at the Girls School, please express our greatest thank you to our supporters in the USA".



OBA Annual Report

Fiscal Year 17-18 (September 1, 2017—August 31, 2018)

Statement of Activities

Support and Revenue	
Contributions	937,406
Other Revenue	<u>12,657</u>
Total Revenue	950,063
Expenses	
Program Services	711,020
Management & Gen. Operations	75,575
Fundraising	<u>47,548</u>
Total Expenses	834,143
<i>Change in Net Assets</i>	<u>115,920</u>

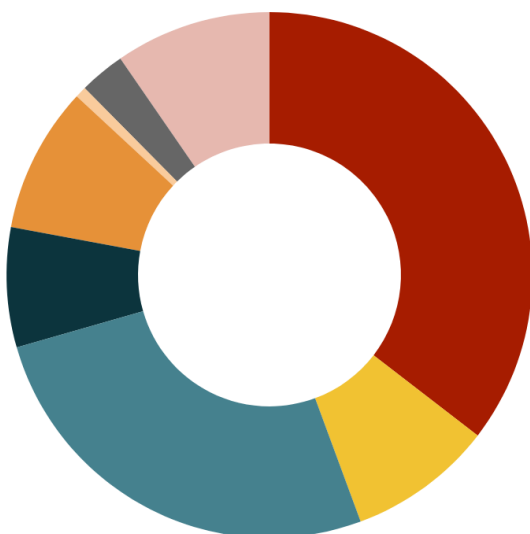
Operation Bootstrap Africa's Federal 990 report and fiscal year audit report are available on our website at www.BootstrapAfrica.org/financials

Balance Sheet

Current Assets	
Cash and Cert. of Deposit	808,273
Other Current Assets	<u>2,079</u>
Total Current Assets	810,352
Other Assets	
Endowment Funds	212,260
Other Investments	—
Net Property & Equipment	—
Total Other Assets	212,260
<i>Total Assets</i>	<u>1,022,612</u>
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	6,664
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	175,014
Designated Endowment Funds	<u>212,260</u>
Total Unrestricted	387,274
Temporarily Restricted	<u>628,674</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>1,015,948</u>
<i>Total Liabilities & Net Assets</i>	<u>1,022,612</u>

OBA Supported Programs

	Fiscal Year Grants	% of Total Grants
■ MaaSAE Girls School Scholarship Fund	229,861	35.45%
■ MaaSAE Girls School Special Projects	57,778	8.91%
■ Post-Secondary Scholarship Fund	169,771	26.19%
■ ALMC Nursing School Scholarships	47,800	7.37%
■ Arusha Lutheran Medical Center, Selian Hospital, and The Plaster House	58,184	8.97%
■ Madagascar Primary Schools	4,500	0.69%
■ Ilboru Special Needs Unit	18,180	2.81%
■ Other East African Schools	<u>62,258</u>	<u>9.61%</u>
<i>Total Grants</i>	<u>648,332</u>	<u>100%</u>



Accomplishments

Educational Operating Grants and Scholarships:

Grants totaling \$229,861 were provided through OBA sponsorships to cover the cost of tuition, room and board, and other fees for 175 students at the MaaSAE Girls School in Monduli, Tanzania.

Additional scholarship funds were provided for 4 students at Moringe Sokoine Secondary School in Monduli, Tanzania, and for 1 student at Mother Teresa of Calcuta Secondary School in Same Town, Tanzania.

A grant of \$4,500 was provided to pay teacher salaries at five primary schools in the rural south of Madagascar. These teachers taught more than 550 students in one of the most impoverished areas of the country.

Leadership Development:

The OBA post-secondary program provided \$169,771 of scholarships for 100 graduates of the MaaSAE Girls School pursuing degrees at colleges, universities, and vocational schools in Tanzania. Support for these scholarships came from OBA sponsorships. Two graduates of other post-secondary schools also received post-secondary scholarship support.

Post-secondary grant support also included scholarships of \$1,000–\$1,500 each for 24 students at the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center (ALMC) School of Nursing.

Construction and Special Projects at Schools in Tanzania:

Grants totaling \$57,778 were provided to the MaaSAE Girls School for textbooks, roofing shingles, computer teacher training, a farm trailer, dairy cow maintenance, the construction of a sport court, storage cabinets, uniforms, desks, basketball equipment and coaching, internet upgrades, and vehicle maintenance.

A \$7,500 grant was provided to Best School Academy in Kenya for classroom construction.

Grants totaling \$18,180 were provided to the Ilboru Primary School Special Needs Unit for the construction and furnishing of a boys' dormitory, installation of solar panels and lighting, and for textbooks.

A grant of \$7,400 was provided to Olarash Primary School to purchase daily porridge and textbooks.

\$12,704 was given to the Bassodawish schools in Karatu, Tanzania for the construction of a girls' bathroom, installation and maintenance of internet service, and the provision of uniforms, science lab equipment, and menstrual health kits.

Grants totaling \$17,280 were provided to the Bacho Vocational School in Babati, Tanzania for a tractor, plough, farm trailer, fuel, and seeds to support agricultural education programming.

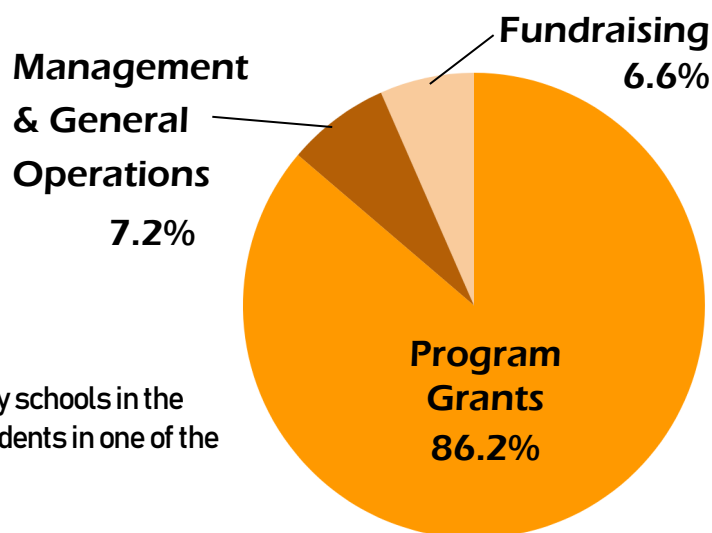
A grant of \$12,500 was provided to complete ongoing construction projects at schools in Dodoma, Tanzania.

Healthcare and Health Education:

A grant of \$56,284 was provided to the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center as support for their Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). An additional \$1,900 was provided to The Plaster House—a pediatric post-operative rehabilitation center in Arusha, Tanzania.

OBA subsidized the high cost of nursing education for students at the ALMC School of Nursing with grant support of \$47,800.

2017-18 Expenditures



Your gift creates change and hope

Ways to Give:

- Give Directly from Your IRA—If you are 70^{1/2} or older your contribution will count towards your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and will not be included in your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). You may contribute up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA. In some situations lowering your AGI may be more beneficial than itemizing charitable deductions.
- Make a Stock Contribution—Gifts of stock are generally tax deductible at the full fair-market value and exempt from long-term capital gains tax.
- Create a Donor Advised Fund—A donor advised fund allows your assets including cash, appreciated stock, mutual funds, real estate, and more to be invested and grow tax-free. Contributions to your fund are tax deductible in the year that they are made, but may be granted to eligible charitable organizations over a period of multiple years. Donor advised funds are a useful tool for donors who are affected by the new, higher standard deduction threshold and wish to combine multiple years worth of giving into one year in order to itemize.
- Legacy Gifts—Include a gift to OBA in your will or trust, designate OBA as a beneficiary of your IRA or life insurance policy, or give to the OBA Endowment Fund at InFaith Foundation.

For more information, please contact the OBA office.🌐



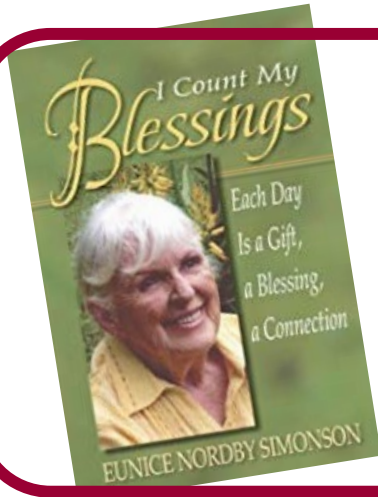
OBA is proud to have been recognized as a 4-star organization by Charity Navigator again this year for meeting the highest standards of financial health, transparency, and accountability. We are a mission-driven organization, committed to ensuring your support goes where it is most needed!

For over 50 years OBA has been making a difference in Africa as an independent 501(c)(3). Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Operation Bootstrap Africa and its affiliates are not a financial advisor and cannot provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. Please consult your financial planner to learn how gifts to OBA may benefit your unique tax or financial situation.

OBA Book Club

A place to share books by and about the OBA Family, our projects, and the communities we serve



I Count My Blessings **Each Day Is a Gift, a Blessing, a Connection**

Follow the journey of the Simonson family, from the rolling hills of the Midwest to the endless plains of the Maasai, through the eyes of its matriarch, Eunice Simonson.

Available online through Amazon and other booksellers

OBA has a new mission statement!

Operation Bootstrap Africa partners with Africans to strengthen their future through education, healthcare, agriculture, and other long-term development projects.



OBA's new mission statement was adopted in a strategic planning session on January 26, 2019 by the Board of Directors and will guide the work of the organization going forward.

Operation Bootstrap Africa Board of Directors

Jeanie Geurink (President), Ward Larson (Vice President), Gene Mickelson (Treasurer), Mary Nosek (Secretary), Gary Floss, Stan Guimont, Michael Hedley, Judie Lehman, Dr. Jack McAllister, Carol Stark, Dr. Peyton T. Taylor Jr.



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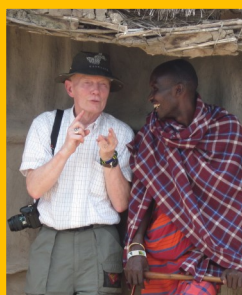
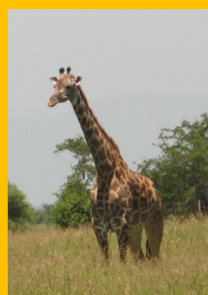
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Dignity is a publication for friends of Operation Bootstrap Africa, a Minnesota-based non-profit dedicated to helping people help themselves in a variety of educational programs in Africa.

In partnership with African communities and organizations, Bootstrap provides support and assistance to projects and programs based on locally-established priorities.

Gifts to OBA are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. OBA may assess up to 10% for administration of these gifts.

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Email: info@operationbootstrapafrica.org
Phone: 1-612-871-4980 OR
Toll-Free at 1-888-755-1318



Join us for the experience of a lifetime in Tanzania!

Travel to Tanzania with Operation Bootstrap Africa on a Discovery Tour! Visit OBA projects including schools and clinics, embark on safari to view some of the world's most abundant and beautiful wildlife, and engage in cultural activities.

Tours cost approximately \$6,000 per person, including airfare, meals, lodging, tips, and all land travel costs. Costs not covered include beverages, immunizations, anti-malarial medication, a Tanzanian tourist visa, and travel insurance. A Zanzibar extension and other optional excursions may be arranged at an additional cost. Tours are limited to 12 participants. Contact the OBA office for more information or to secure your spot on a future tour.

Upcoming Tours
January 2020*
May 2020
October 2020

*Tours typically run in May and October each year. Join us in January 2020 for the 25th anniversary celebration of the MaaSAE Girls School.