



# MAASAI EDUCATION FOUNDATION WINTER 2026 | NEWSLETTER NO. 16



“EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON  
WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD.”

-NELSON MANDELA

# WELCOME BACK FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



**BRIAN BENHAM**  
MEF Chairperson

Greetings and welcome back to the Maasai Education Foundation (MEF) quarterly newsletter, Winter 2026 edition! As always there is much to report about happenings and our efforts to support the Engaruka Community Initiative Organization (ENCO) and its operation of a charity boarding school dedicated to educating Maasai youth in rural Tanzania. In this newsletter, among other things, we cover the results of the MEF's very successful 2025 End-of-Year fundraiser, discuss the status of various campus construction projects, note a significant achievement by Olar Paul, ENCO's Public Relations Officer Officer, share the inspirational story of one EEMPS student and spotlight another student in need of a sponsor, and celebrate the academic success of the EEMPS students.

In December 2025, the Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS) celebrated the graduation of its second class of 7th graders! The class of 2025 passed their national Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) exam with a "B" average. In addition, EEMPS's Grade 4 students completed the Standard Four National Assessment (SFNA) also achieving a "B" average. Kudos to the EEMPS students, their teachers, and the school staff that help to create a safe, healthy learning environment. Well done to all! As always, the progress reflected in this newsletter is due, primarily to the generosity of MEF's donors. Thank you! Just imagine what else is possible!





## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The year has opened on a very positive note for both EEMPS and ENCOSS. We are pleased to report a smooth start to the academic term, with full enrollment and attendance of 375 pupils at EEMPS and 53 students at ENCOSS. This strong participation reflects the continued confidence of families in our schools and reinforces our shared commitment to providing consistent, high-quality education. During this period, we also convened meetings of the EEMPS Education Committee, the ENCOSS Board, and the ENCO Organization Board to review progress and strengthen strategic planning and governance.

We have made meaningful advancements in improving the learning environment for our students. The fourth wing of the boys' dormitory has been completed, along with the construction of the science laboratories and a new outdoor

### MARTHA MERESO SENGERUAN

EEMPS & ENCOSS Manager  
ENCO Executive Director



# ENCO

ENGARUKA  
COMMUNITY  
INITIATIVE  
ORGANIZATION

kitchen to better support student welfare. In addition, the construction of permanent guest lodging is currently underway, which will create a flexible space and reliable accommodation for school visitors. These developments mark important steps in building the facilities required to sustain our expanding educational programs.

Academically, we are proud to share that ENCOSS has now been accredited to administer the Form Two National Assessment through National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA), a key milestone in strengthening the school's academic standing. On behalf of ENCO, EEMPS, and ENCOSS, we extend our sincere gratitude to our donors, education partners, government education departments, and parents. Your continued support and collaboration remain essential to the progress and opportunities we are creating for the children of Engaruka.



## RECORD-BREAKING END-OF-YEAR FUNDRAISER

We are filled with immense gratitude as we share the final results of the 2025 End-of-Year Fundraiser. Because of your extraordinary holiday spirit and generosity, we haven't just met our goals—we have nearly doubled them!

Our initial mission was to raise **\$50,000** to support the Engaruka English Medium Primary School (EEMPS) and launch our teacher housing initiative. Thanks to you, our total (including pledges) has reached an incredible **\$97,527**—and this doesn't even include some corporate matching funds that are still on the way!

Education is a long-term commitment, and your loyalty to these students is inspiring. Here is a closer look at sponsorship renewals during and since the fundraiser.

- 44 out of 50 sponsors of EEMPS students renewed or pledged to renew their sponsorships, and we picked up four new sponsorships.
- 19 out of 29 sponsors of ENCO Secondary School (ENCOSS) renewed or pledged to renew their sponsorships.

**Thank you to the following donors who contributed or pledged during the 2025 End-of-Year Fundraiser:** Andy and Cara, Anne and Tom, Anonymous (5), Ashley, Audrey, Barry and Sue, Bill and Melissa, Brennan, Brian and Karen, Brigitte and Bob, Carl, Carol, Caroline, Celia and Joe, Christy, David, Debra, Elizabeth, Ellen, Essra, Frank and Becky, Gene, Glenn, Gordon and Velva, Heather and Ian, Isabella, Jack and Sandy, Jackie, Jen, Jennifer, John, Jordan, Karen, Ken and Vickie, Kris, Kurt, Larry, Lori, Margie and John, Marissa, Martha and James, Mary, Mary Leigh and Debbie, MaryGrace, Michael, Mithran and Anita, Mohamed and Zeena, Nancy, Paul and Lynne, Peggy and Bill, Price, Ralph & June, Randy and Paula, Rebecca and Theo, Rick and Suzanne, Rory, Saied and Patty, Samantha, Sandy, Scott and Shanna, Shirley, Stacey and Daniel, Steve and Ann Marie, Suzanne, Tamara and Andy, Tom and Dani, Virginia, William, Wimberly, Windy, Zach and Dianne, and Zeena and Mohamed.





## GUEST LODGING UPDATE

Installation of the guest tents is ongoing. Recent design enhancements were made to ensure the facilities are durable and well-suited for the future. While these changes were made to improve the guest experience, they do mean the project will take a bit longer to complete. Look forward to future updates in our next newsletter.

## NEW BOARD POSITIONS

At the first Board meeting of 2026 ([click here](#) to see the draft meeting minutes), various Board members were re-elected to their roles. Brian Benham and Steve Conner were re-elected to their positions as Chairperson and Treasurer, respectively, through February 2028. Randy Stith stepped down as Secretary, although he will remain as a Board member; Isabella Munson was elected as Secretary through February 2028. Theo Dillaha and Karen Scalf-Benham were re-elected to the Board until February 2029. Finally, all liaisons and committee chairs were re-appointed to their roles until February 2028, as seen below.

### **Officers**

Chairperson: Brian Benham  
Treasurer: Steve Conner  
Secretary: Isabella Munson

### **Committee Chairs & Liaisons**

Nominating Committee: Rebecca Caldwell  
Sponsorship Committee: Jarek Campbell  
Proposal Review Committee: Steve Conner  
Development Committee: Theo Dillaha  
Audit Committee: Margie Lee  
Social Media Committee: Isabella Munson  
Guest Visit Coordinator: Jen Spurl  
ENCO/MEF Construction/Operations Liaison: Tom Neils  
Maasai Education Society Liaison: Audrey Spielmann

We would also like to thank Paula Stith for her time served on the Board. Paula served in 2025 after retiring from Virginia Tech after 36 years of service. For her department, she prepared budgets and analyzed spending along with her administrative duties such as preparing itineraries for job candidates and onboarding new hires. Paula has traveled to EEMPS and remains passionate about the children there. She enjoys quilting, walking, hiking, and traveling with her husband Randy (also a Board member). Thank you, Paula!

## BEST YOUTH PROPOSAL ACROSS EAST AFRICA FROM GRIC AFRICA

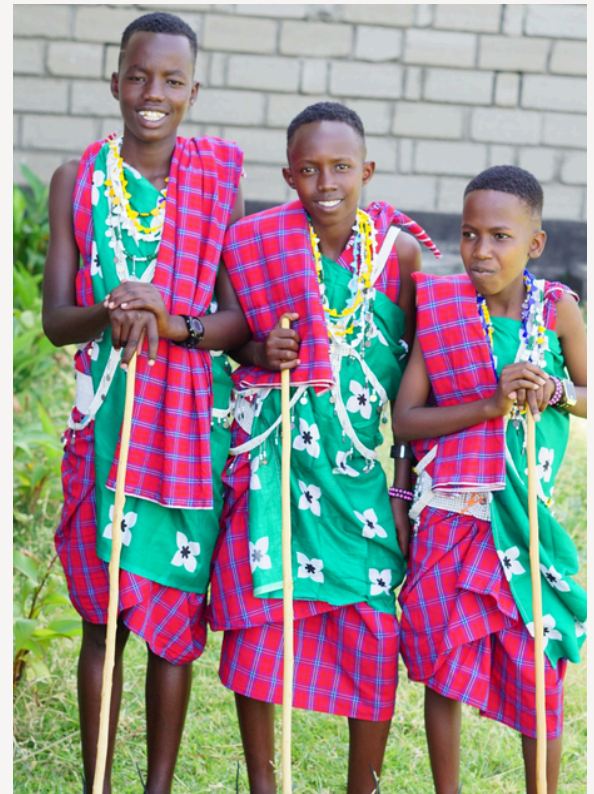
Olar Paul, Public Relations Officer for ENCO and integral member of the EEMPS community, was recently awarded the Best Youth Proposal across East Africa by GRIC Africa, an NGO that supports grassroots community-based organizations in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The grant from this award will fund his proposal for S.A.F.E. (Save a Future through Education), allowing ENCO to sponsor 20 young girls who are currently at risk for early marriage and dropping out of school. Olar was inspired to write this proposal by a young Maasai girl named Flora, whom he personally transports to a local government

school. Given the modest size of the grant, ENCO will partner with local government schools to ensure these girls can continue their education and build brighter futures for themselves. This recognition is a tremendous honor and will allow ENCO to continue transforming the lives of Maasai girls like Flora through consistent access to education. Congratulations, Olar!



## DECEMBER 2025 GRADUATION

EEMPS graduated its second class of seventh graders in December 2025! A ceremony was held at the school to celebrate the students' and teachers' hard work and encourage them to step confidently into their next stage of learning. After acing the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), many of the graduates were able to progress to ENCO Secondary School (ENCOSS) in a seamless transition, partially due to the generous continuation of sponsorships by MEF donors. Congratulations to our students, and thank you to the donors who helped contribute to their success!

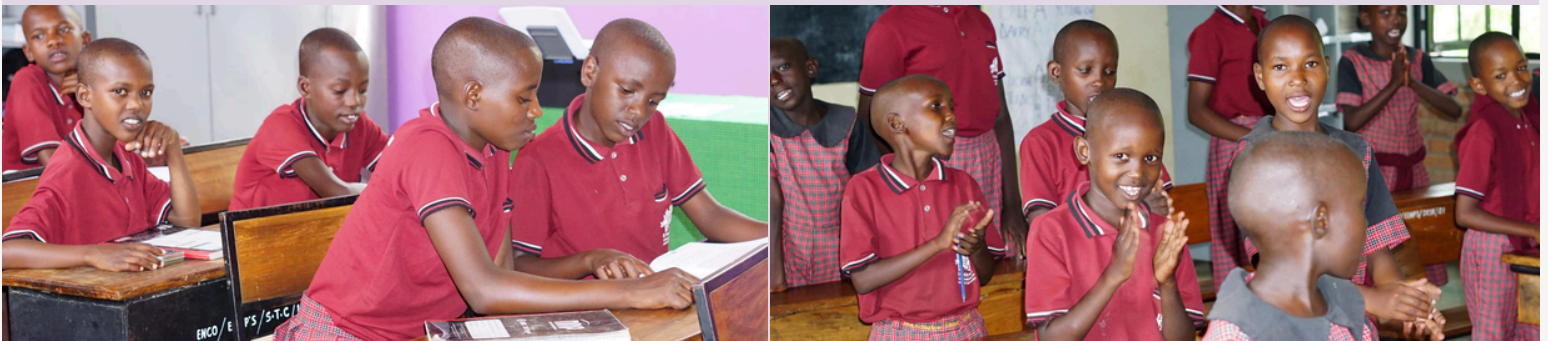


## 2025 EEMPS EXAM RESULTS

At the end of 2025, EEMPS students concluded another year of hard work and sat for their annual exams. Grade 4 students completed the Standard Four National Assessment (SFNA), receiving an overall score of B and placing EEMPS in the top 7% of 93 participating schools in the Monduli District.

*2025 Standard Four National Assessment (SFNA) for EEMPS 4<sup>th</sup> Graders*

PROFICIENCY GROUP	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE
Geography & Environment: Arts & Sports	32.33	B
Tanzania's History & Ethics	32.08	B
Swahili	42.86	A
English	42.81	A
Mathematics	37.83	B
Science	40.58	A



Grade 7 students completed the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), receiving an overall score of B and placing EEMPS in the top 22% of 83 participating schools in the Monduli District.

*2025 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) for EEMPS 7<sup>th</sup> Graders*

PROFICIENCY GROUP	SCORE (/50)	SCHOOL GRADE
Social Knowledge & Work Skills	30.17	C
Citizenship & Ethics	36.3	B
Swahili	40.96	A
English	44.35	A
Mathematics	24.43	C
Science & Technology	35.91	B

The school's commitment to empowering girls, providing a safe learning environment, and maintaining high academic standards has encouraged more families to enroll their children and pay tuition and fees to help support the school.

## CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

Construction on campus continues. The fourth wing of the boys' dormitory and associated washroom facilities has been completed. Construction of the fourth wing was supported by a \$53,050 USD grant from MEF. Remaining needs include bunkbeds and other furnishings. Additionally, a new outdoor kitchen adjacent to the Peter Ozolin Dining Hall is nearing completion. The kitchen addition is needed to support the growing enrollment and was partially supported with a dedicated donation made through MEF. The ENCO Secondary School (ENCOS) chemistry and biology labs are also nearing completion. A generous donation from Rob Crane and his family of Columbus, Ohio helped to fund labs construction. Additional donations are needed to fully outfit the labs and make them operational.



*Boys' dormitory exterior.*



*Chemistry & biology lab interior.*



*Outdoor kitchen exterior.*



*Outdoor kitchen interior.*

## LAMAYANA'S STORY

Lamayana is currently in grade 4 at EEMPS. He was bitten by a cobra as a young boy, and his leg had to be amputated. Lamayana was able to get around with one crutch but did not attend school regularly because it was too far for him to walk. Staff members noticed him in Engaruka and arranged for him to attend school at EEMPS. School was difficult for him because of his mobility issues, and he was far behind his peers academically. A generous MEF donor became aware of Lamayana's challenges, found a clinic in Arusha that made prosthetic legs, and paid for him to be outfitted. These photos show Lamayana being fitted for his second leg after he outgrew the first one. Today Lamayana is doing well both academically and socially and is a happy and handsome student.



*Lamayana's prosthetic leg.*



*Lamayana being fitted for his prosthetic.*



*Lamayana at school today.*

## MAASAI EDUCATION SOCIETY

A Canadian charity was formed to support the school in the spring of 2023 called the Maasai Education Society (MES). MES specifically aims to provide sponsorships for Maasai students in need. Over the last year, generous Canadians have donated \$50,000 CAD toward sponsorships.

If you are Canadian and would like to support a Maasai student directly, please contact us at [audreylspielmann@gmail.com](mailto:audreylspielmann@gmail.com) or [maasaieducationsociety@gmail.com](mailto:maasaieducationsociety@gmail.com), or eTransfer to [mescandonate@gmail.com](mailto:mescandonate@gmail.com). You can also check out the Maasai Education Society [website](#) or donate [here](#) via PayPal. Feel free to contact Audrey Spielmann ([audreylspielmann@gmail.com](mailto:audreylspielmann@gmail.com)), based in Vancouver, if you have any questions.



### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Brian Daudi Oltukai is an 11-year-old boy in the 5th grade from Irerendeni village. He is the third born of five children, and his parents are young with only a primary level education. His father was a truck driver but was totally disabled after an accident. Brian's mother struggles to meet the basic needs of the whole family, including her disabled husband.

Brian's future depends on consistent educational support. With a sponsor, he can have the stability he needs to thrive, access learning materials, and stay focused on his dream of completing his education. Please consider sponsoring him so he can stay at EEMPS and be successful in his learning.



**CLICK HERE  
TO SPONSOR**



## HOW CAN YOU HELP EEMPS OR ENCO SECONDARY SCHOOL?

**STUDENT SPONSORSHIPS:** An EEMPS student sponsorship is \$700 per year, and ENCOSS sponsorship is \$900 per year. Sponsorship covers a child's tuition, fees, clothing, room and board, and medical care. You can also provide partial support for a child. Sponsors receive regular updates on their child. MEF will assist you in picking a child to sponsor if you do not select one from [our website](#).

**DONATIONS:** General donations go towards school operating costs or facilities construction. Construction needs include staff housing so that ENCO can attract the best teachers and support staff, a water treatment system, and guest housing for visitors. To donate via credit card, click [HERE](#).

**CORPORATE MATCH:** Many corporations match the donations of their employees to charities. We receive over \$15,000 in corporate matching funds annually from corporations such as Altria, Apple, GE, IBM, and Verizon. Thousands of companies participate. Please check and see if your donations are eligible for a corporate match at the following website: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/donor-basics/giving-101/employee-match-programs/>.

**KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS:** The Kroger family of companies (Kroger, Ralphs, Dillons, Smith's, King Soopers, Fry's, QFC, City Market, Owen's, Jay C, Pay Less, Baker's, Gerbes, Harris Teeter, Pick 'n Save, Metro Market, Mariano's) and some other merchants donate a percentage of your purchases to a charity if you specify them as your preferred charity. Sign up at: <https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>.

**EBAY SALES:** Did you know that you can designate all or a portion of eBay sales to charity? When you do so, eBay waives the percentage of the fees that you donate. For example, if you sell something for \$20 and designate all the funds for a charity, eBay will waive all your transaction fees. If 50% is designated for charity, 50% of fees are waived.

**MEF AMAZON WISHLIST:** Items for the school will be delivered on our next trip. Donated items are charitable donations and tax deductible.

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/6ADPF403U0A2>

Questions? Reach out to us at [info@maasaieducationfoundation.org](mailto:info@maasaieducationfoundation.org).

## HOW TO DONATE

BY CHECK: Send checks payable to –  
Maasai Education Foundation,  
345 Woods Lane | Newport, VA 24128

BY CREDIT CARD (no fees): Select the applicable PayPal Giving Fund –



AMERICAN DONORS  
**DONATE NOW**  
CLICK HERE



CANADIAN DONORS  
**DONATE NOW**  
CLICK HERE



## MONTHLY DONATION OPTION

For just \$700 USD per year, you can cover the cost of a primary student's education. Through our [PayPal Giving Fund](#), you can offer your support via a monthly donation of \$58.33 USD; you can also choose to cover the associated PayPal fee (1.99% plus \$0.49 USD). If you would like to donate a different amount monthly, please [contact us](#).

You do not need a PayPal account to set up monthly donations, but you will need an account to stop or change monthly donation amounts in the future. Receipts and thank-you notes for tax-deductible gifts made via PayPal will be sent to you by MEF periodically during the year and you will receive a summary of all your donations early in the following year.

**CLICK HERE TO SET UP \$58.33 USD MONTHLY DONATIONS FOR A SPONSORSHIP**



## MEF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Brian Benham	Chairperson
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Audrey Spielmann	Maasai Education Society Liaison
Jen Spori	School Visit Coordinator
Randy Stith	Board Member
Nina Tarr	Board Member



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