



Dear Family and Friends,

We are currently in Mekele together with many visiting volunteers who have spent the past 1-2 weeks with us at the school, and will soon be leaving to spend Christmas at home.

Here in Ethiopia, Christmas is celebrated on 7th January and from 22nd December this year to 6th January 2018, the school will be welcoming two volunteers from the PUM organisation in the Netherlands. They are returning to the school to teach cooking and catering skills to students in our vocational training unit and are giving up their family time as well as the Christmas celebration at home to help these students gain future employment. We will post more from their visit after the New Year on Facebook and Twitter; meanwhile we thank them very much indeed for their dedication.

It has been a busy and successful year for students and staff alike at the Nicolas School and we particularly would like to credit the dedication and hard work of our school staff as they all work together to give the 1,400 students at the Nicolas Robinson School the very best possible start in life.

We would also like to thank the many volunteers who have been to the school during 2017. A few of them can be seen engaged in training activities in the latest video update (the link is at the end of this letter) - many others have been thanked in previous newsletters. Our staff really appreciate the special effort made by our visitors and they love to meet people from a different country and culture and to learn from them and share ideas. It is also a great opportunity for many of our visitors to meet the children whom they sponsor.

As we seek to discover the talent in every child we are keen to encourage music, art and sport in addition to the academic curriculum. This year for the first time, we are running a social science stream as well as natural science for grades 11 and 12. Those of you who have skills in marketing, music, sport, economics, history or geography are very welcome to contribute – please email us if you would like to get involved.

Our technical training project continues to run very nicely and our first trainees are now employed in local hotels, having followed our hotel & catering training program. We have good management support for this program from the leading hotel in Mekele (Planet Hotel) which has also provided experienced staff to train our students. There are many new industrial and commercial companies starting up in and around Mekele and we are now searching for the next partnership for our vocational training program.

We are always looking to improve the school's materials, especially learning materials and as you open your Christmas presents, upgrade your i-Pads or phones, or your children move to more sophisticated learning games, please think of the school and let us know if you have second-hand items in good condition that we could take to the school and share with the students and staff.

Here is the link to our end-of-year video update:-

<https://youtu.be/t8HqiK82Leg>

Together with all the staff and students at the Nicolas Robinson School in Mekele, Ethiopia, we wish you and your families all the very best for this festive season.

Kathryn and Max

Dec 2017