St. Joseph School in Addis Ababa was established in 1959 at the request and blessing of Emperor Haile Silassie I, King of Ethiopia, to educate boys from grades one to 12. The first principal was a German-born Swiss Brother who also built the school. It currently serves nearly 1,600 students in full-day classes. St. Joseph School admits students to first grade at the age of six or seven, and many students graduate at the age of 18. The school also admits new students in grades seven and nine to give scholarship opportunities for students from government schools and low-income families.

**ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND STUDENTS**

St. Joseph School has a reputation for academic excellence and for its students having best academic performances in the country. The school has maintained a 100 percent graduation rate and a 100 percent admission to national and international universities including Princeton, Cambridge, Yale and Harvard. This reputation places St. Joseph School in high demand. For first grade admission, as many as 700 students apply over two days and only 100 are admitted due to limited space. For grades seven and nine, the number of students who apply may reach 400, but only a total of 50 are accepted. Currently, students come to St. Joseph School from as far as 15 kilometers using public transportation.

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

Addis Ababa, where St. Joseph School is located, has now become an attraction of investors and the place of international and regional offices. Many competitive private schools are being established all over the city providing education using technology and information systems, which are expensive. The government of Ethiopia is insisting schools like St. Joseph School must be competitive in providing technology based education, improved science laboratories, and other related services in spite of low tuition. In response to this and with the intention to maintain its standard, St. Joseph School is currently working on its information technology labs, the school library and the music department with the funding it has received from parents and its twin school.

Financial constraints put a burden on how much the school can enhance its services and how many scholarships it can provide to less fortunate children. Still, relying on help from its twin school, loyal alumni and local donors, the school hopes to increase the number of scholarships offered to children in need by two percent each year in order to reach 10 percent of its total student population.

**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

As part of the celebration of its 55th anniversary, St. Joseph School unveiled its “Vision 2020” plan, which seeks to improve the school by the time it celebrates 60 years of service. It wants to complete major restoration work on the school’s property, along with upgrading technology and teaching methods. The school highlighted the plan at anniversary celebrations in December 2014.

**CHALLENGES**

Addis Ababa, where St. Joseph School is located, has now become an attraction of investors and the place of international and regional offices. Many competitive private schools are being established all over the city providing education using technology and information systems, which are expensive. The government of Ethiopia is insisting schools like St. Joseph School must be competitive in providing technology based education, improved science laboratories, and other related services in spite of low tuition. In response to this and with the intention to maintain its standard, St. Joseph School is currently working on its information technology labs, the school library and the music department with the funding it has received from parents and its twin school.

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USE OF RECENT TWINNING DONATIONS

In addition to providing scholarships for less fortunate students, the school has used recent twinning donations to create a borehole to solve its water problem. Water obtained from the borehole is used for the school’s renovated toilets, gardening and sanitation.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED FOR SPORTS

Saint Joseph School is not only known as a top academic institution in the country, it is also known for its strong athletic programs. The school has mandatory PE classes and offers intramural sports for all class levels in soccer, basketball, tennis, volleyball, track and field, and cross country. Approximately 50 - 60 percent of students participate in the intramural competitions. The school teams compete in the International Schools Sport Association of Addis Ababa League, of which St. Joseph is a founding member, Catholic schools tournaments, Kirkos Sub City district tournaments, and Addis Ababa Basketball Federation.

Saint Joseph School has many needs related to improving its sports facilities and upgrading equipment. The school has many sports fields, but conditions of the grounds are inadequate and there are not enough fields to accommodate all of the students who want to participate. The school needs to resurface basketball courts, which will also be used for volleyball, tennis and other sports. It is in need of sports uniforms, basketballs, volleyballs, track and field equipment, and other sports equipment. It also needs to renovate the changing and shower facility.

IDEAS TO CONNECT

St. Joseph School would like to establish more personal contact with its twin school on the administrative, faculty and student levels to increase collaboration. The school also seeks advice on creating a camera club. St. Joseph School is interested in learning if you have a photography/ videography/cinematography program and about your experience with it.

CONTACT ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

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Sports on Facebook: www.facebook.com/StJoeSports

While St. Joseph School is interested in communicating with its twin school via email and Skype, please allow for flexibility as the Internet is unreliable.