

# EDUCATION FOR TOLIARA

## *Growing Minds, Growing Faith*

In 2022, we deepened the relationship between St James the Less and our link parish of Amboasary in the Diocese of Toliara, Madagascar, by sponsoring the education of 26 children in private schools, and, as a pilot program, provided supplies for all 296 children who attend the public primary school in the village of Marodokilimasy. This new program was such a success - encouraging children, parents and teachers - that it is being replicated in other parish links. All the children we support live within about 20 miles of Amboasary town, so we can meet them when we go on a short-term mission trip.



Our link parish would love us to continue and even expand our involvement.

We hope that all who are sponsoring individual children will continue to do so, and that more of you will want to take up this chance.

It is a great opportunity for children and families at St James the Less to learn about life and schooling in a very different country and setting.

Educating children helps break the cycle of poverty and improve job options.

It also means that more of the Christians are able to read the Bible for themselves. Churches are growing so quickly that it is important to have literate members to be lay leaders.

## **Literacy in Madagascar**

Adult literacy is defined as the ability to read and write, with understanding, a short simple statement about everyday life. Nationwide, one in three adults is illiterate. However, this is changing rapidly. Literacy among those aged 15-24 is at 80% (males) and 72% (females). Rates vary significantly between rural and urban areas.

# Individual Child Sponsorship Program

The Diocese of Toliara offers education benefits for K-12 children of all paid and some volunteer leaders in the Diocese through the Diocesan child sponsorship program, *Toliara Child*. This program has grown and is now also able to support some orphans and some children of the very poorest families in the Diocese.

Through *Toliara Child*, St James the Less' members currently sponsor 26 children to attend private schools, where there are considerably better facilities than in the public schools. Existing sponsors will keep the same child(ren). There are new children to support if you want to start sponsoring a child.

You will receive a photo of the child you are sponsoring, get news of their progress in school and once or twice a year get a letter by email. You may write emails / send pdfs to your child, which will be translated into Malagasy before being printed for the child.

## Costs of *Toliara Child* Sponsorship

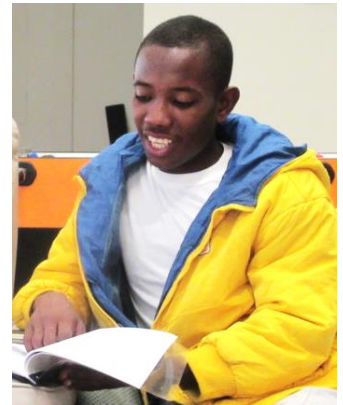
\$25 per month per child covers all the costs of school enrollment & tuition fees; school supplies, and uniforms; and a Days for Girls' kit for girls of the relevant age.

## Structure of *Toliara Child*



The coordinator for the *Toliara Child* program is Neny Holy who is the wife of Bishop Samitiana. (Neny is the Malagasy word for mother.) She is ably assisted by Fiadanana, whose father is one of the Deacons.

One of their significant roles is to facilitate the connection between a child and their sponsor.



As many families are located in rural areas, regular communication is difficult. On a monthly basis they make telephone contact with the parents of each child in the program. They endeavor to visit all children each year.

They monitor the attendance records sent by the schools, and will only pay the next month's fees if the school has received payment for the current month and the child has been attending.

In early May, Fiadanana undertook the challenging journey from Toliara town to our link parish to visit all our individually supported children and their parents, plus the public school in Marodokilimasy.

As you can see it was not an easy journey!



However, with his ever-cheery disposition and his deep faith, he says he enjoys traveling!

## School Supplies Program

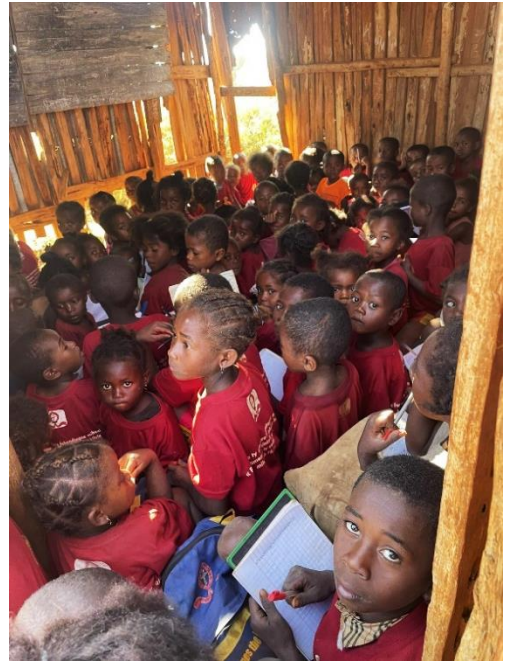
Public schools are free, but parents have to buy the necessary school supplies. Before we started this program, many children in this village were not attending school because their parents could not afford such items. Last year, we were able to provide supplies and t-shirts for the entire school in Marodokilimasy! Can we do the same this year?

The school is a 3-room wood and corrugated metal structure, with 296 pupils & 6 teachers.



The government cannot afford to pay all who want to teach. Initially, teachers get no salary but support themselves by working in the fields or other jobs as well. After 10 to 15 years of teaching, they will begin to be paid by the government and get pensions (if they live long enough). It is a hard system!

As a result of our support last summer, they have so many children going to this school that they don't have space to fit them all into the three classrooms at one time.



Pre-school and grades 4 & 5 go to school in the mornings and grades 1, 2 and 3 study in the afternoons. The children sit on the ground while learning, as there are no benches.

## **Costs of School Supplies:**

\$17 will provide supplies and t-shirt to enable one child to go to school for the year, or \$20 will send a child to school, and help provide the teachers with supplies and textbooks.

## **How and when to get involved**

We need to get individual sponsorships and supply donations in place now, so that families will know their children can go to school for the 2023-24 Malagasy school year.

See the bulletin board for more photos and information. If you have any questions or wish to donate through either program, please email Sue Babbs ( [suebabbs385@gmail.com](mailto:suebabbs385@gmail.com) )

All donations can be made through St James the Less by cash, check (with 'Education for Toliara' in the memo line) or online, again designated for 'Education for Toliara'.

**Please invite your friends, relatives, neighbors and work colleagues, to join us in providing Education for Toliara!**