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# **Fun, Culture and Faith: Young Achievers Online Camp**

The year 2020 was one filled with innovation and the desire to keep hope alive in the midst of a pandemic. Faida Club, was equally drawn by the necessity to keep alive the family atmosphere often exemplified in the club activities especially the holiday camps and the annual family day which are often highlights of the year.

04/19/2021

The Club held an online camp from the 8th to 11th of December 2020. The idea was a culmination of the desire to have a local chapter experience by the older club girls; mentors, who participated in an international online camp in August: Camp Orbis.

The target campers were mostly girls aged between 8 and 13. It was a delight to have participants from different parts of the country notably Nairobi and Mombasa as well as diverse schools. This was thanks to the ability to reach more people and communicate faster virtually. The camp was themed “Fun, Culture and Faith.”

The selection of the mentors was a critical task. It involved receipt of

applications and Google forms from them which explained skills and talents they possessed and wished to share and transmit to the campers. Most of the mentors were students from Kianda School and Alliance Girls High School. Most potential mentors expressed their desire to serve, share, accompany and keep alive the Christmas spirit with the campers in the new normal. They were open to foster friendship with the campers, giving any necessary help with some being able to keep in touch with their camp buddies' even after the camp.

The preparation of the select mentors required commitment and involved weekly meetings to prepare for different camp activities. These included fun virtual games, the art of making videos, cookery sessions, art and crafts, self-care and of course dance; if you can walk, you can dance! The dance sessions would

make up for the camp fun party usually held at the end of each term and camp! In addition, the mentors learnt many skills valuable for their preparation for interaction with the young campers. They had a session on leadership to help them understand their role as mentors. One of the remarkable questions during the leadership session was on how to handle the campers during online session without losing one's patience. This was necessary as the African proverb goes, "Patience can cook a stone!"

There was both excitement and anxiety about the turn out of the camp as it was a novelty for both parents and campers. Registration for the camp was slow although we were determined to have a 1:2 ratio of mentors to campers. We shared an e-prayer card of St. Josemaria Escriva with each mentor and asked them to ask for his intercession daily from

the 2nd of December so that more girls could sign up for the camp. We received the favour as there was an overwhelming response with many families registering their daughters even a few minutes to the camp commencement time!

The camp finally began with the activities taking place between 3p.m. and 5p.m. The games committee ensured that all the take offs were interactive and fun. At the end, one of the mentors said:

**“I had a lovely experience during the online camp. It was lovely to see the amount of fun and excitement in the girls' faces as they logged on in preparation for each day's activities. The camp preparation was a new and exciting experience.”**

Besides the games, the campers also had a cookery session on day one. They baked Christmas cookies which

the instructor of the day did with tonnes of patience and tact. She later on commented,

**“...overall I am very grateful for being a mentor and the experience was worth it. I learnt how to deal with the campers calling out your name all at once.”**

The campers also had a chance to learn how to pray, make pop up Christmas cards and dance. The highlight of the five day camp was “Faida Got Talent” watching party on the last day! We were all glued to the screen to see the amazing talents of the girls. The girls from Mombasa really outdid themselves while the mentors also showcased their talents.

The parents were very grateful for the opportunity to have the girls positively engaged. Some commented that their daughters were able to make new friends and

that they too, especially the mothers also learnt new skills. In their words:

“From analogue to digital by force.”

“Online mother-daughter learning!”

“Here we are because of you Faida!”

“Happy to be interacting with new people!”

“Thank you for making it happen!”

Time camping is indeed invested, not spent!

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