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Helping young alumni settle in their professional lives

About 6 years ago I was invited by one of the venerable priests in Strathmore School for a chat.

04/14/2018

He greeted me with a smile when I arrived in his office, sat me down and explained how in his many years working as an assistant chaplain in the School, he had met many wonderful young men with great human qualities. He felt that it was

rather regrettable that once they graduated from high school and left Strathmore, the majority of them had probably no access to the same talks and means of formation that they had enjoyed and allowed to mould them into the fine young men they were becoming. He thought that perhaps I could squeeze some time from my professional work to attending to these alumni. That was how it all started.

Fortunately, a good number of alumni of the School built such great friendships with their mentors that they would already on their own initiative, pop by the School to say hi and catch up. And if it wasn't their mentor, it was their sports coach.

Speaking with a number of these alumni who formed our "steering committee", we have organised all sorts of activities over the years. The activities have one common goal: to

be an accessible source where all interested alumni could continue to receive the all-round formation they enjoyed while within the four walls of Strathmore School.

Of all the activities we've had, two have been the most popular.

We invited one medical doctor-turned priest to give a two part series on St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. Many alumni attended these sessions, some with their fiances, others with their girlfriends and still others with their colleagues from work or campus. The Q&A sessions after the presentations had to be cut short, to make time for snacks that were being served at the back of the hall.

The second event that proved very popular was a rather informal talk with an older alumnus with plenty of prestige in his field. He has a reputation for speaking rather

bluntly and forcefully - and the alumni turned up in numbers for a slice of this manly serving.

Smaller groups of alumni would meet in different places in Nairobi for more specific talks on Christian life, on leadership, for evenings of recollections and even for the same mentoring they had while in School. That is not to mention those who call in or Whatsapp to ask after retreats in Tigoni Study Centre like those they attended while they were in high school. It is not uncommon for them to remark at the end of these sessions with smaller groups that it is only after graduating from Strathmore and going out and on to university locally or abroad that they have learnt to appreciate a lot of what they were taught in School in between all those Biology exams, Geography classes and rugby training sessions. And as if to underline how strongly they were

convinced of this, many of them will attend these same activities with friends they met and made in university or in their work place.

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(04/08/2025)