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## ST PETER'S GIRLS PREP SCHOOL

Weekly Newsletter of St Peter's Girls SP School

### FROM THE HEADMASTER

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY ST PETER'S GIRLS SCHOOL!!!!

Tomorrow we celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. The day will start with a special Eucharist in which Trish Atlee will reflect on everything that has been accomplished in our ten year history. We will then use our girls to make the number ten in front of our school and finish off the short morning with a High Tea which, I'm sure, the girls and teachers will thoroughly enjoy. Suffice to say our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday will be celebrated in style!

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our countdown articles: Trish Attlee, Jess Webb, Cara Eggett, Greg Royce, Jean Macleod, Father Richard, Elizabeth Thornton-Dibb, Patti Blackhurst, Cath Holm and Heather Kissack.

We conclude the 10 year countdown with an article by Heather Kissack, followed by a brief reflection of my 10 months at St Peter's as well as some ideas about what the future holds.



#### 2015 – by HEATHER KISSACK

*'Space creates culture and culture creates your next space'-Peter Crawley*

A progressive approach to teaching and learning goes hand in hand with the environment we create: and we have done just that at the Girls JP: a new, independent, purpose built school. Just as this 'little' project was launched, I arrived at St Peter's and it has been the highlight for me and all JP staff over the past two years. Built on a footprint of the original boys' JP school and like a strong, resilient seed; it has grown from the dust and boasts the heritage of its predecessors and the progressive approach to education for which St Peter's is renowned. I am endlessly grateful for the opportunity to spearhead this project from conception to the completed article.

During the planning and building process, much thought went into making sure we had everything just right, and there were many trips back and forth, to the building site, wearing gum boots and the recognisable pink hard hat. During this time a number of traditional classroom 'rules' were broken and learning areas and classroom spaces created. The rooms were to be built in such a way to allow for privacy (sound proof) and openness (visual) by the connection through glass.

From the outset, the intentional and collaborative goal was to, model all that we know to be in the interests of learning. The buildings and playgrounds were designed to support our strong educational philosophies. We boast spaces that provide opportunities for progressive best practice. They are both original in design, but created for educational purposes. They celebrate the joy of spaces both in and out of the classrooms. Facilities, such as the Media Centre, Makerspaces and the Sensory Garden, offer opportunities for independent and collaborative learning in central meeting spaces and play areas that have been skilfully designed to engage students in learning which is flexible, co-operative, collaborative and age appropriate.

The fun element, which goes hand in hand with innovative learning, was clearly high on the priority list. This included our Media Centre slide, generously donated by the PA. The school was intended to create a home away from home feeling, attractive and functional at the same time. Colour schemes were specifically chosen and spaces were dictated to by the age level appropriateness, based on essential criteria such as developmental needs, skills and the type of classroom activities used in each grade. The Perceptual playgrounds are more focused around the Grade 0 classrooms, but available to all the girls, including a veggie garden and netball posts for Grade 2.

The Media Centre is central to learning and is used as part of the classroom as it allows for quiet spaces and a sense of community, where books and research matter. The physical aspects of classrooms included storage, room arrangement, seating, bulletin boards, technology and board displays. Together this creates a thoroughly contemporary physical climate. Carpet areas allow for a sense of community as class conferences and discussions take place in these areas. This is valuable as we encourage and strive for connectedness between individuals.

Each aspect of the school in its totality was carefully considered using internet, social media, visitorships and consultation locally and internationally, and the individual student's needs and instructional goals which were paramount. Cupboards replaced the traditional storeroom areas and cubbies were placed inside and outside the classrooms for convenience. The JP facilities are equipped with furniture that supports the philosophy of collaborative learning, group work and guided discovery designed by a local supplier. All furniture is movable and multi-functional, allowing teachers and students to change their learning spaces with ease. Classrooms are fitted with multi-touch promethean boards and the playgrounds offer a multitude of learning experiences.

Research shows that glass promotes imagination and subdues errant behaviour. The glass doors and windows into classrooms from the Media Centre have attested to this theory. When children can see out, contrary to a first impression, there is less distraction and more focus. The glass allows children to ponder and dream and not feel enclosed in a small space, but have limitless opportunity for imagination and investigation. The end result is a calmer classroom environment. On this note, the glass offers a philosophy of transparency and invites the outside, in! The teachers' effect on the child's learning (John Hattie) is ultimately paramount, and teachers were encouraged to place their own particular style on their classrooms. I chose to occupy a central position in the school; this for visibility and availability. The staffroom reflects our belief that our teachers are an important human resource to our school and they occupy a sunny, bright and well-appointed room in which to relax and connect with colleagues.

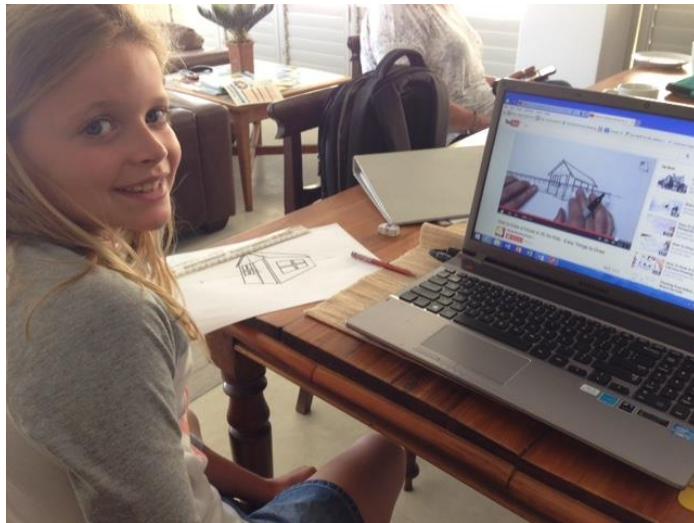
In August we began our move and after packing and unpacking through our holidays, the first day back at school was a flurry of excitement as the girls each received a Blue Bear biscuit and invited their parents to their new classes. Since then, we have grown a third Grade 1 and Grade 2 class at the start of 2016 and are filled to our capacity in this amazing little school.

Within a relatively short space of time, our school has moved from the architectural plans and bricks, into a warm nurturing environment, where children feel secure. One can tell a lot about a school from the buildings they build, and whether the school builds for what they have or what they aspire to. I am sure you will agree, we are extremely lucky and grateful for this amazing school and look forward to going from strength to strength. I look forward to many years in this school and greater family as we grow our own traditions and history in this wonderful space in which we are so happy and at home.

Photos from 2015



*The year started with Witkoppen Road being upgraded! Parents had difficulty getting their children to school.*



*The Flexible Learning programme (FLP) was introduced.*

*The Girls JP building was commenced.*



*The JP moved in, in August 2015.*



*We said a sad Farewell to Trish Attlee.*

**REFLECTING BACK ON MY SHORT TIME AT ST PETER'S:**

Coming from a Boys only and then Co-ed environment, the first word I used to describe St Peter's Girls School was 'tranquil'. Yet after a while, I realised that it is far more than tranquil – it's vibrant, energetic, fun, passionate, competitive, friendly and rigorous. And after I've been here a little longer, I'm sure I'll have far more adjectives to describe this amazing school.

Overall I have been impressed with our girls' manners, work ethic and determination to achieve. I am slowly, but surely, getting to know every girls' name in the Senior Prep and as soon as I finished I will start with the JP. I have also been overwhelmed with parent support and commitment to our school. I must, however, apologise to those parents whom I have not as yet met or whose names I can't yet recall.

The staff at St Peter's is phenomenal. Greg, Rob and our Girls School Executive Committee have been unbelievably supportive. My management team: Pam, Heather, Cara, Rachel, Liz, Cath Linnell and Marguerite have welcomed me with open arms and have provided ongoing support, guidance and wisdom. Our Girls School administrative staff are incredibly efficient, knowledgeable and above all loved by the teachers and all the girls. And last and most importantly - our teachers are simply amazing!

So where to from here??

**Academic**

At the beginning of the year I quoted Martin Luther King's philosophy of education:

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." Martin Luther King Jr.*

This always has been the mantra for education at St Peter's and I believe strongly that we need to constantly reflect on our current processes in terms of timetables, curriculum, assessment and reporting to ensure we are living up to this ideology. And I am delighted to announce that there will be a few changes in this regard next year.

Following my visit to the United States at the beginning of the year, I have realised the critical need for the intentional teaching of leadership in girls' schools to ensure that our girls have all the skills required to be the leaders of the future. To this end, we have already started implementing a new leadership programme and I look forward to seeing it develop as the years go by.

**Transformation**

There is no doubt that we have to reflect upon and seriously consider the way we have done things in the past to ensure that moving forward, every child and parent feels equally welcome and accepted as part of our St Peter's family. I have been humbled to be a part of 'My African Story' sessions and I encourage every parent to make an effort to attend these meetings to ensure that we all are part of the solution to the challenges that may lie ahead.

**Sport**

Since Liz's appointment toward the end of last year, we have already received significant positive feedback in terms of our sporting progress. Liz has a strategy in place to constantly reflect on current practice to ensure we keep improving upon our sporting offerings.

**Culture**

Marguerite also has some exciting plans to improve upon an already incredibly highly functional Music Department. She is upgrading our enrolment process for private music lessons, making optimum use of technology and constantly providing an opportunity for all our girls to develop a love for music and the performing arts.

## Buildings

This year, we will be doing some minor alterations to our Music Department facility, to include a reception area, additional storage, a Sound Room upgrade in the Royce Hall and a designated room for our drumming lessons.

An additional 26 girls per grade over the next 5 years means we will need additional facilities. Next year, we will be extending the Girls School staffroom and upstairs will extend the library to provide space for a coding laboratory. We also hope to extend our Science Lab, not only for easier access, but more importantly to give Science the space and facilities it needs.

In terms of sport, with the help of the PA, we hope to put a Multi-purpose surface on Brecknock field for additional tennis and netball courts as well as for hockey.

In 2018, we hope to upgrade the Keys Pavilion to provide us with much needed toilets, changing facilities, sports offices, storage and a nurse's station in close proximity to the fields. And in 2019, we hope to build additional classrooms to ensure that we have the required space for our five new classes.

There is no doubt that there are exciting times ahead for St Peters Girls School. As much as our 10 year milestone has been a celebration of what has been achieved, I am equally keen to celebrate what lies ahead.

Nibe neviki elimnandi (Have a good weekend)

Darrel Webb  
(Headmaster)

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## **SPORT DEPARTMENT**

The athletics season will conclude with the Prestige Athletics meeting on Friday, 28 October at St Stithians. Only an 'A' team will be selected for this meeting. The team list will be posted on the School Communicator this week.

We will commence with swimming in all sports lessons on Monday, 31 October. We will not be participating in galas this term as it will allow us to focus on pre-season training, fitness and stroke correction. We will also use some of the lessons to expose the girls to other aquatic disciplines, for example, water polo, synchronized swimming and lifesaving. We will be holding two internal biathles and a swimathon on Friday afternoons (the details of these are in the calendar). More information will be communicated with regards to those arrangements.

See the School Communicator under the Resources tab for sports notifications.

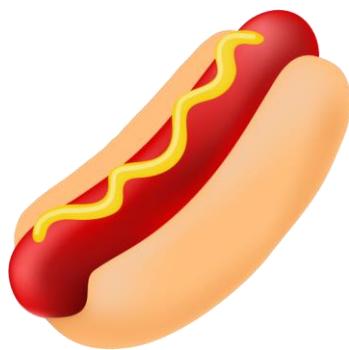
Liz Ashmore  
(Director of Sport)  
[LAshmore@stpeters.co.za](mailto:LAshmore@stpeters.co.za)

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## CARTRIDGE COLLECTION AND HOT DOG DAY FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER

If you are available and would like to help with Hot Dog Day, please add your name to the list which will be up on the front door of Reception (Senior Prep) and on the notice board – next to the Grade 0 sign out sheets - (Junior Prep) from Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> October. Five volunteers per grade are required and are to meet us at 09:30 (for Grade 0 – 2) and 10:00 (for Grade 3 – 7), at the Keys Pavilion

Please remember to bring in your empty ink cartridges. There will be a collection point (big green and white cardboard boxes) throughout the day for empty ink cartridges in the Chapel car park. There are permanent collection points at both the Girls Senior and Junior Prep, and Boys Junior Prep reception areas. Thank you for your continuing support this year!



## SUNSET CAROLS CHRISTMAS MARKET AND BROCHURE 2016

The poster features a yellow background with a red decorative border. At the top is the St Peter's Foundation crest. Below it, the words "SUNSET CAROLS" are written in large, stylized, black and white letters, with "2016" underneath. The background of the main area has a subtle pattern of hanging Christmas ornaments. Below the title, the text reads:

**LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE – book now**  
**Saturday, 3 December 2016.**  
This concert usually draws in excess of 2500 spectators.

The St Peter's Foundation invites you to participate in the **Christmas Market**, which is held prior to the Carols. This is a wonderful opportunity to sell your goodies!

To further support the fundraising efforts, a glossy **A4 Carols brochure** will be distributed to all the attending parents, grandparents, St Peter's staff and friends. This is a fantastic platform to advertise.

For Christmas Market details, contact Amanda or Dalene at [carols@stpeters.co.za](mailto:carols@stpeters.co.za)

For the Carols brochure details contact Monica [msloane@stpeters.co.za](mailto:msloane@stpeters.co.za)



## FORTHCOMING WEEK

Tuesday	25/10/2016			BISHOP'S HOLIDAY	
		<b>Start</b>	<b>Finish</b>		
Wednesday	26/10/2016	07:30:00	07:30:00	Term Recommences	
Wednesday	26/10/2016			REMINDER: COLLECTION FOR CHAPEL TOMORROW	
Wednesday	26/10/2016	11:30:00	12:30:00	Hooked on Books (Grade 0 - 3)	Royce Hall
Wednesday	26/10/2016	13:00:00	14:00:00	Hooked on Books (Grade 4 - 7)	Royce Hall
Wednesday	26/10/2016	16:00:00	17:30:00	General Knowledge Quiz	St David's Marist, Inanda
Thursday	27/10/2016	13:30:00	16:30:00	Tennis Matches (Grade 3-7)	Home/Away
Friday	28/10/2016			HOT DOG DAY	
Friday	28/10/2016	09:00:00	13:00:00	Trinity College London Music Practical Exams	Chapel
Friday	28/10/2016	13:30:00	16:30:00	Athletics Prestige Meeting (Grade 3-7)	St Stithians College