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ST PETER'S GIRLS PREP SCHOOL

Weekly Newsletter of St Peter's Girls SP School



FROM THE RECTOR

If the school has an unofficial motto, it has to be 'always seeking to improve'. I think we have managed to do this on many fronts this year and I am very grateful to the staff, parents and members of the community who have supported us with their time, effort and constructive criticism.

My PA, Shelley Heald leaves us to support her husband in a new venture. Those of you who have dealt with her, will miss her willingness to help and her efficient and gracious manner. At the same time, I am especially delighted to tell you that Monica Sloane has been appointed as the new Foundation Manager following an exhaustive process. This included two rounds of advertising, as we were dissatisfied with the initial response, followed by interviews conducted by members of the Foundation Trust and School EXCO. We were unanimous in Monica's appointment and she is excited to begin this role.

The children have done us proud this year. There is a sense from all of them that they are increasingly taking responsibility for their own progress and also seek to continually improve. Their many achievements are humbling.

There is an apocryphal story about a school boy at a prestigious school who struggled desperately with his academics. The teachers did everything they could to assist him, alas, to little avail. At the end of the year, his parents opened his report to discover that his Housemaster, obviously at a loss, had used the familiar words from St John's gospel as his comment: *'The light shineth in the darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not.'* Hope you don't receive one of these...

Pam and I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a happy and fulfilling New Year and urge you to take care while on the roads.

Questions for the Rector:

If anyone wishes any further information on any topic, please feel free to contact me at school or at (sheald@stpeters.co.za)

Greg Royce
(Rector)

FROM THE HEADMASTER

It seems like yesterday that I nervously started to type my first newsletter at St Peter's and here I am 11 months later writing my last of 2016!

What a year it has been!

It started with a trip to New York to attend an inspirational Girls' School Coalition Conference, returning the day before my Installation. The rest of the Easter Term was a blur of Sports, Music and PA events, the highlights being our phenomenal Choir performance at Singing Sistas and winning the Prestige Gala. The Trinity Term was just as frenetic, and included a very memorable Gr 7 performance of Panto Pandonium. The Advent Term has just disappeared. One moment we came back to school, the next we are preparing for the last few days! But as much as it's been a whirlwind, I have loved every second of it!

You'll be pleased to know that I'm not in the habit of giving long end-of-year speeches at Prize Giving, other than thanking my amazing JP and SP teachers and our wonderful administrative support team. Instead I prefer to give a short message to our Gr 7 leavers at prize Giving and rather write a Headmaster's Report in terms of a summary of the year and what to expect in the year to come, in this, my final newsletter. This 'report' will also be included in the 2016 School Magazine, which will give you one less article to read when you receive the magazine next year.

HEADMASTER'S REPORT

Starting a school from scratch is a formidable task on so many levels and can be easily related to raising a child from birth. The very thought of handing over a 10-year-old to another person is almost inconceivable and the thought of taking over responsibility for this 10-year-old is equally daunting. When my position was announced last year, I promised Trish that I would do everything in my power to look after her precious 10-year-old school! And I have done everything in my power to do so this year!

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 realized that it is far more than tranquil – it's vibrant, energetic, fun, passionate, competitive, friendly and rigorous. One only has to think back on the year in terms of the number of scholarships we received, the success we achieved on the sports field and the accolades we received for our many cultural performances, to justify all these descriptive words.

Overall, I have also been so impressed with our girls' manners, work ethic and determination to achieve. My 'take away' from the Girls School Conference in New York, was that we need to deliberately teach girls to be determined, to take calculated risks, to build and create and to encourage them to make mistakes as part of their learning process. Our new Creatical Centre which has been set up by Cath Holm and her team of willing helpers will, without doubt, play a critical role in this regard, in the years to come.

A further 'take away' is the need for us to formally teach leadership and I am delighted to report that this process is in place for 2017.

I am slowly, but surely getting to know every girls' name in the Senior Prep and soon as I am 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. I will get there eventually!

The staff at St Peter's are 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.

Our teachers are simply amazing! Every one of them goes out of their way every day, to make sure that your daughter has the best possible opportunity to learn and grow into leaders of tomorrow. I am very excited to welcome Julia Aitken as our new Gr 3 teacher for next year, Miss Lauren Keeve (currently one of our interns) as our new JP Afrikaans teacher, Mrs Wilna Coetzee as our new SP Afrikaans teacher and more recently, Miss Alyssa Stockers (also currently one of our interns), as a collaborative teacher in the Senior Primary.

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.'

This has always 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 significant changes in this regard next year, which will be shared at our Information Evenings and I would like to thank Mrs Pam van Gass for driving this process for us.

TRANSFORMATION

There is no doubt that we have to reflect on 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 Ashmore's appointment toward the end of last year, we have received significant positive feedback in terms of our sporting progress. Liz has a strategy in place to constantly reflect on current practice thus ensuring we keep improving on our sporting offer. I know that she also intends to take our communication, around sport, to a whole new level next year.

CULTURE

Marguerite Schmitt has some exciting plans to improve upon an already well-functioning music department. She is upgrading the enrolment process for private music lessons, making optimum use of technology and constantly providing opportunities for all our girls to develop a love of music and the performing arts.

LEADERSHIP

As previously mentioned, a number of plans are in place for the deliberate teaching of leadership next year. One of the most exciting initiatives will be for our Gr 7 girls next year. They will be going on a leadership camp in the first term. Instead of camp facilitators, our teachers will be going out to teach them in the bush. Cath Linnell has been the instigator of this process and I'd like to thank her in advance for driving this incredible opportunity for our girls.

BUILDINGS

This year, we have made some minor alterations to our Music Block, to include a Reception area, additional storage, a new drum room and we have upgraded our Sound Room in the Royce Hall.

We have knocked down a wall between our existing Science lab and the classroom next door to give us a double volume Science Lab, that will no doubt add tremendous value to the teaching of Science and STEM related activities.

Adding an additional 26 girls per grade over the next five years means we will need additional facilities.

Next year, we will be extending the Girls School staffroom, which means that the library upstairs will also be made bigger and this will provide space for a coding laboratory.

With grateful thanks to our PA, we will be putting a Multipurpose surface on Brecknock field for additional tennis and netball courts and 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 Peter's 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.

I wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Christmas, a relaxing holiday and a wonderful New Year!

Darrel Webb
(Headmaster)

SPORT DEPARTMENT

The extra-mural timetable for 2017 will soon be made available to parents.

Please remember to diarise the 6 December – we will hold the SP Inter-house Relay Gala from 10:30 – 13:00.

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

Liz Ashmore
(Director of Sport)
LAshmore@stpeters.co.za

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Registration for individual music lessons is open for 2017. An **electronic application** form (that is found on the communicator and the school's official website) must be completed so that new pupils can be allocated to a teacher.
<https://goo.gl/forms/xJdsPcgclF1kSHsf1>

The following instrumental lessons are currently on offer at an additional cost of R180 per half hour lesson:

Piano	Cello	Saxophone	Violin	Recorder	Percussion
Flute	Drum kit	Voice	Clarinet	Guitar	

The majority of the above lessons take place during the morning. Some lessons are scheduled in the afternoon, depending on the availability of the teachers and the extramural timetable.

Marguerite Schmitt
(*Head of Music*)

SPEET WEEK

SPEET Week is now well underway. The Grade 6s enjoyed their photography and flower arranging courses while the Grade 7s went away on Leavers' Camp. The Grade 5s brushed up on their chess skills after learning the strategy of playing chess this year.

A reminder that the girls who represent any provincial or national side are allowed to wear their respective tracksuits on Friday. Tomorrow we will also all be enjoying some good tennis as we watch the finals of the tennis championships as well as having fun at the Talent Extravaganza.



Girls enjoying SPEET Week

Cathy Linnell
(*H.O.D. Science and Additional Culture and Learning*)

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

'Tis the season to be jolly!' so the song goes, but many people are not feeling it. Our own personal pain and difficult situations, relationships and even our country politics outweighs the 'jolliness' of life. There are times when we even feel guilty because we haven't 'caught' the Christmas spirit.

In reality, Christmas was never about happiness, but about hope. The first Christmas story was about God being born into a land and people who were broken. He was the hope in their brokenness. Over 2000 years later this story has changed with the increasing commercial celebration of Christmas. However, the reality has not changed. Christ is still our hope in every situation and as long as we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate hope.

What is hope? I believe it is knowing that our future will be okay, that tomorrow won't destroy us, but that we will be looked after. This is what Jesus promised, that we would have life in all its fullness. This is what we celebrate, the hope of this promise, that even in death we celebrate the resurrection. Today might be dark and stormy, but tomorrow will be brighter, filled with a few rays of hope.

This is the hope of Christmas - Christ in us and we are not alone, Christ through us and we walk in the power of God, Christ with us and we belong to Him.

So without God we are defeated and have no hope in a better future, but realistically because of Christmas and knowing that God is on our side, we have the assurance that we will be fine. St John agrees, as he says that Jesus, the light, shines in our darkness and the darkness will never put it out.

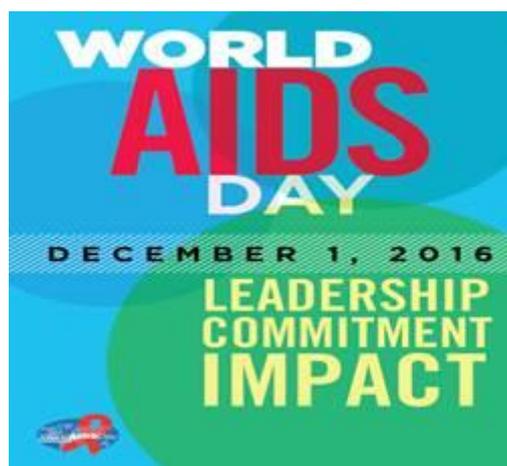
I wish you a million rays of sunshine this Christmas!

Love

Fr Richard
(Chaplain)



DIVERSITY: WORLD AIDS DAY



World Aids Day is celebrated every year all over the world on 1 December - to raise the public awareness about AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is a pandemic disease caused due to the infection of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). The day is celebrated by government organizations, NGOs, civil society and other health officials by organising speeches or forums discussion related to the AIDS.

A variety of activities can be done on the day to increase the awareness and distribute the message of the theme of a particular year. It is necessary to increase the awareness among people as they are the main target of the programme.

- Pupils are encouraged to speak against AIDS intolerance.
- Trees will be draped in red to heighten awareness among parents and visitors.

Vijay Maharaj
Director: Diversity

DIVERSITY: ST PETER'S YEAR OF THE WOMAN

St Peter's Prep School dedicates itself to a particular theme every year. The 2017 theme will be *Year of the Woman*. A planning committee is already at work creating some innovative initiatives across the school for the year. The theme will be integrated into the school curriculum. The launch event of the year will be an exciting and purposeful morning for all the women of the school, on Saturday, 4 February 2017. You may want to diarise now!

More details will follow in a letter early in 2017.

Vijay Maharaj
On behalf of the Diversity and Planning Committee

SUNSET CAROLS – TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE GATE ON SATURDAY



St Peter's Foundation
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Rivonia 001 255
Acc no.: 422 057 533



Your ref: Your Initial & Surname

- TABLES CAN ALSO BE BOOKED AT R2000 FOR A TABLE OF X10 (limited)
- DVDS CAN BE ORDERED AT R150

Tables and DVD payments can be done together with your ticket payment.

Please send proof of payment with your contact details and confirmation of what you paid for, to: tickets@stpeters.co.za

Tickets will also be sold in the last week 28 November to 2 December in the car park

BRING FRIENDS AND FAMILY, PICNIC BLANKETS AND CAMPER CHAIRS - DELICIOUS FOOD WILL BE ON SALE

HOLIDAY CLUBS

GRADE 2 - 4 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY COOKERY CLUB THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER TO THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER.

Do you love to Cook, Bake and Create? Do you love Christmas?
We are combining a love of Christmas with baking, cooking and creating.

**Join us for a week of fun-filled baking, cooking, decorating, designing and packaging this holiday!
Friends and family are also welcome.**

Remember to bring an apron, an ice-cream tub, a packed lunch, water bottle, hat and sunscreen.
SPACES ARE LIMITED SO BOOK YOUR PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE by sending Mrs Montagu an email on:
cmontagu@stpeters.co.za

Dates: Thursday, 8 December to Thursday, 15 December.

Time: 08:00 – 12:00 Daily.

Cost: R200 per day. (EFT available on request)

We look forward to seeing you there!



FORTHCOMING WEEK

Saturday	03/12/2016	14:00:00	18:00:00	Christmas Market	Mvukuzane Field
Saturday	03/12/2016	18:00:00	21:00:00	Sunset Carols	Mvukuzane Field
Monday	05/12/2016			SPEET Week	
Monday	05/12/2016	13:00:00	13:00:00	School Closes at 13:00	
Monday	05/12/2016	18:00:00	19:00:00	Prize Giving (Grade 5-7)	Royce Hall (Wear No 1s)
Tuesday	06/12/2016			SPEET Week	
Tuesday	06/12/2016	09:30:00	10:00:00	Girls to meet 2017 teachers	Classrooms
Tuesday	06/12/2016	10:30:00	13:00:00	Inter-house Relay Gala (Grade 3-7)	
Wednesday	07/12/2016	07:30:00	09:00:00	Eucharist	Chapel
Wednesday	07/12/2016	11:00:00	11:00:00	Term Ends	



*Merry Christmas and happy
holidays!*