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ST PETER'S GIRLS PREP SCHOOL

Weekly Newsletter of St Peter's Girls SP School

FROM THE HEADMASTER

As mentioned in last week's newsletter, I recently finished reading *Mind Change*, by Susan Greenfield (recommended by Mr B) on the impact of technology on the brain in the 21st century. The book shares vital information and research for both teachers and parents. It's a book that requires meticulous note taking as you go along, to ensure maximum benefit and I am extremely grateful to Mrs B for allowing me to use extracts from her summary for the purpose of this newsletter.

Baroness Susan Greenfield CBE is a British scientist with a doctorate and more than 32 honorary degrees. In this book Greenfield examines research that will enable us to start considering the impact of technology on the brain, cognitive skills, lifestyle, culture and personal aspirations as well as neurodegenerative diseases. Greenfield believes that we need to fully understand the impact of technology so that we can effectively plan the kind of world we want and the kind of people we wish to be.

Greenfield makes it very clear that technology has enabled speed and efficiency in the workplace as well as in educational spaces. The advantages of technology in the educational arena have led to many children accessing education and information and many others accelerating their academic progress and conceptual frameworks. However, the concept of "Mind Change" is based on the premise that our brains are "magnificently and exquisitely adaptable" and they are undoubtedly changing in parallel to the cyber world's ever-changing 21st Century environment.

As rational beings, one would argue that we should simply 'ration' our use of digital technology, so as to maintain a balanced approach, but this argument has not stood the test of time. Greenfield uses the analogy of smoking. Sensible adults and children continue to smoke cigarettes, despite our knowledge that it is a harmful habit. Sensible, moderate use of computers is a subjective concept but all current research shows it is not happening. Many people are immersed in digital technology for much of their daily working and social lives.

Never before in a child's development have there been so many easy opportunities to create an alternative identity (primarily through social media sites and games) and within these spaces, to accept the notion that actions don't have consequences. As such, this environment is raising unprecedented questions as to what is best. Greenfield argues that, while our children's brains are not 'hard-wired' to interface effectively with screen technologies, each has evolved to respond with sensitivity to external influences, in whatever particular environment it inhabits, and therefore the exposure to technology is undoubtedly changing their brains.

Children are also being introduced to the digital environment at an ever younger age, as reflected by the production of Fisher Price's potty training seat with an iPad stand. The question of the impact of digital technologies is ever more important, as these early years are so vital in a brain's development.

Internet and video games are very popular with children and young people and offer a range of opportunities for fun, learning and development but we cannot ignore the fact that relationships, including a child's relationship with their parents, are compromised by the time spent engaged in these activities. If a young person does not experience sufficient rehearsal of the basic non-verbal communication of eye-contact, voice modulation, body language perception and, above all, physical contact, he or she will not be particularly good at them. Everything takes practice. Consequently, the youth would not be good at exercising empathy. Research into university students already shows levels of empathy are declining.

Excessive or obsessive use, exposure to violence and other inappropriate material are all obvious negatives too. With regard to aggression and recklessness, whatever we practise repeatedly affects the brain. Aggressive video games do promote aggression. Excessive play of video games can lead to abnormalities in brain fibres associated with emotional processing, powers of attention, decision making and cognitive control.

Most researchers agree that the digital age is producing an easily distracted generation with short attention spans. This is a grave area of concern for learning, which demands concentration and focused, sustained attention.

In recent years there has been a huge increase in social network users. Greenfield states that, if a person is increasingly anchored in the present and consequently devoting considerable time to the demands of the outside world, a robust sense of inner identity might be harder to sustain. The thrill of reporting and retrieving may exceed the pleasure derived from life's ongoing experiences. For example, tweeting or Facebooking at a restaurant becomes more important than the whole restaurant experience. Privacy becomes a less prized commodity.

On the positive side, the digital age is eroding old constraints of time and space and moving towards a blurring of cultural differences and diversity, which is breaking barriers and increasing our awareness and understanding of each other at an unprecedented rate.

Speed, efficiency and ubiquity are also generally rated as good things but it is worth considering that the time necessary to reflect deeply before responding to an email or SMS is often sacrificed. Have we considered the consequences of this? Greenfield also urges us to consider how we digest what is happening around us, without specifically allocating time to do so? What is the pace and habit of reacting and responding instantly doing to our ability to manage our impulse control in other areas? Are we thinking deeply and giving matters the attention and consideration we should?

With this research in mind we have already engaged in conversations and debate with our IT Drive Team around how much screen time we should be encouraging at school from Grade 0 through to Grade 7 within the context preparing our Girls for a Digital world but at the same time being aware of concerns raised in this book.

Have a great weekend.

Darrel Webb
(*Headmaster*)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SCHOOL MAIL SERVER

Please note that we are experiencing problems with our school server, which affects receiving and sending emails. We apologise for this inconvenience. The problem is being addressed and we hope to be up and running again soon. Should you not receive a reply from us, to a mail which you have sent the school, please resend your email.

ST PETER'S DAY – 1 JULY 2016

- SP Eucharist – 10:00
- School closes at 11:00 for the mid-term break, as per calendar

WATER SOLUTION

Parents are advised that the school is in the process of investigating a number of options to address water outages at St Peter's. In the meanwhile, girls will be reminded to bring water to school on these days.

SPORT DEPARTMENT

As the winter sports season is now in full swing, I thought it appropriate to share some thoughts on how the girls can be good teammates and really embrace the opportunities they have to work in a team. There are 10 basic principles we aim to instil:

1. GOODWILL : Win as a team. Lose as a team.
2. RESPECT : Show respect to everyone around you, in your team and the opposition.
3. DEVOTION : Devote yourself to the sport/team for your teammates.
4. SUPPORT : Show your team that you are trustworthy and always willing to help.
5. TRUST : Work together and for the team. Don't play as an individual.
6. ENCOURAGE : When things get tough, encourage your teammates to keep working hard.
7. PROBLEM SOLVE : Work together to solve problems and mistakes.
8. COMMUNICATION : Be honest with your teammates.
9. LEARN TO LISTEN
10. WORK TOGETHER!

To get the best out of individuals and the team, our coaches aim to be someone who listens and inspires the girls, and someone who is positive, passionate and supportive. We will always show the girls respect, whilst role modelling the expected behaviours. But most of all, we want to give all the girls a chance to play and have fun!

All girls must please wear a hat for all sports lessons, and bring their own water bottle.

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

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

ST PETER'S APP

We will be swopping over to the authenticated App at the end of May. Thank you to all those who have filled in their details. If you have not given your details yet here is the link:

<http://goo.gl/forms/kvMdlCEq0G>

Jean Macleod
(Marketer)

TALK BY DR JOHN BUSWELL: CHALLENGES FACING OUR TEENAGERS TODAY

Dr John Buswell from the Proactive Education group will be here on Wednesday, 1 June at 18:30 in the Royce Hall. He will be discussing topics such as social media, cyberbullying, alcohol and drugs. The Proactive Education group was established in January 2000 and aims to educate children, teenagers and parents about the dangers that face our youth in South Africa today.

John spoke at our school a few years ago and was extremely well received. I would encourage all parents to attend this very informative talk.

Cara Eggett
(HOD: Pastoral Care)

ST PETER'S ISEMATHOLENI INTERN PROGRAMME

It has been wonderful to witness the continued successful growth of the St Peter's Intern Programme.

There are now 17 interns in the Foundation Phase at both the Boys and the Girls Junior Preps. Each intern has been assigned to a class, with the intention of rotating on a termly basis. This will enable them to gain the maximum experience possible by experiencing the various teaching methods used by a number of teachers.

The class teacher becomes the 'Mentor teacher' to the Intern, directing and giving advice and guidance wherever possible. I commend the teachers for their dedication and commitment to the programme. They have embraced it wholeheartedly and committed themselves to ensuring its on-going success. They all agree that it has been a great help having the extra pair of hands and eyes in their classrooms to assist with their daily tasks!

The boys and girls enjoy the individual attention and small group teaching. They say they are able to focus more, have a greater chance to "discuss" in small groups and love the kind, caring approach of the interns.

The Interns are an enthusiastic and dedicated group. They had the following comments to make when asked to share their views on how the programme has influenced their lives:

Penny - *I feel blessed to be part of such a great programme*

Lydia - *This programme has given me hope for my future - I'm very grateful to St Peter's*

Catherine - *It has changed my life for the better - I have found the missing piece that completes my puzzle*

- Itumeleng - *An amazing opportunity for me to gain experience - it gives a clear perspective of what is expected of me in my chosen career*
- Alyssa - *A great way to gain experience in the classroom - such a blessing to know all the beautiful young people in our classes*
- Lerato - *I feel privileged to be part of such a wonderful school and programme - a life changing opportunity!*
- Jo - *It has been the most incredible experience for me - I feel privileged to be a part of this wonderful group*
- Tlangelani - *It's been magnificent so far! - I love being active in the classroom, interacting with my mentor and pupils - we are lucky to be part of the amazing St Peter's family!*
- Janine - *I love that every day is a learning experience and comes with new challenges and opportunities*
- June Tromp
(Intern Head Mentor)
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FLOWER ORDERS – GRADE 7 FUNDRAISER

We are pleased to advise that the flower orders will re-commence next week. Beautiful big bunches of fresh flowers are available, for ordering, at R200 per bunch – a variety of colours will be available. Please note that orders and payments need to be in by Tuesday evening for convenient delivery to the school on Friday morning. To place your order, or to make enquiries, please email Andi Coetzee on andicoetzee@icon.co.za. We are also able to assist St Peter's families with any other flower requirements. Special arrangements can be made for delivery on any day of the week. Please support this Grade 7 Leaver's fundraising initiative.

I must have flowers, always, and always.
- Claude Monet

Order beautiful bunches of flowers for R200 – convenient collection at Girls Senior Prep reception on Fridays.

Send an email to andicoetzee@icon.co.za to place your order or to find out more details.



PA NEWS

2016 FUN RUN & WALKST PETER'S
SCHOOLS

SUNDAY, 5 JUNE
08:30-10:00

VENUE: St Peter's Boys Prep School, Mvukuzane Field
Start AND finish at the Prep School for the first time

DISTANCES: **6.8km** – Incorporates PWC Cycle Park
08:30 – R40 entrance fee – Qualifying leg for Ironman

2.5km – Incorporates PWC Cycle Park
08:45 – R20 entrance fee – Qualifying leg for Ironman

1.5km – Exclusively on the school grounds, ideal for JP runners
09:00 – R20 entrance fee – Qualifying leg for Ironman (**JP runners only**)

TICKETS: On sale at morning drop-off, in the JP and SP car parks
Tue 31 May – Fri 3 June
And **on the day** at the Mvukuzane Pavilion

VOLUNTEERS: If you are able to volunteer with this event in any way, please contact the committee on funrun@stpeters.co.za.



**SECOND LEG OF
THE IRONMAN
CHALLENGE**



OPEN TO ALL PUPILS, SIBLINGS, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND FRIENDS

ST PETER'S FUN RUN – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for ticket sellers for the fun run. Please consider offering about 45 minutes of your morning (07:00 – 07:45) to help sell tickets in the carpark. The dates are Tues 31 May, Wed 1 June, Thurs 2 June, and Friday 3 June. We would also like volunteers to help us on the day with last minute ticket sales. Kindly let the team know if you are able to help – funrun@stpeters.co.za. Thanks so much!

QUOTATION

'Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes and having fun.' – Mary Lou Cook

FORTHCOMING WEEK

| | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------|----------|---|----------------------------------|
| Monday | 30/05/2016 | 14:00:00 | 15:00:00 | Academic Meeting | Council Chamber |
| Monday | 30/05/2016 | | | Class visit week | |
| Tuesday | 31/05/2016 | 08:00:00 | 12:00:00 | Grade 7 Study Skills (Level 5) | Royce Hall |
| Tuesday | 31/05/2016 | 18:30:00 | 22:00:00 | PA Meeting | Council Chamber |
| Wednesday | 01/06/2016 | 08:00:00 | 13:00:00 | Gr 7 Girls Sexuality talk by Proactive Education | Royce Hall |
| Wednesday | 01/06/2016 | 18:30:00 | 19:30:00 | Proactive Education - Parent Talk | Royce Hall |
| Wednesday | 01/06/2016 | | | REMINDER: COLLECTION FOR CHAPEL TOMORROW | |
| Thursday | 02/06/2016 | 07:30:00 | 08:30:00 | Parents' (Gr 1-7) Coffee Morning - talk 'Building Resilience' | Boys JP Hall |
| Thursday | 02/06/2016 | 13:30:00 | 16:30:00 | Netball vs Brescia | Home/Away |
| Thursday | 02/06/2016 | 14:00:00 | 15:00:00 | Health and Safety Meeting | Council Chamber |
| Friday | 03/06/2016 | 13:30:00 | 16:30:00 | Hockey Matches vs APPS | Away |
| Friday | 03/06/2016 | 13:30:00 | 16:30:00 | Mini Netball Festival (Grade 3 Purple & Orange) | Dainfern |
| Saturday | 04/06/2016 | | | Gr 3 & 4 Netball Festival | Holy Rosary |
| Saturday | 04/06/2016 | 09:00:00 | 16:00:00 | Staff First Aid course | Boys Staff Room |
| Sunday | 05/06/2016 | 08:30:00 | 12:00:00 | Fun Run | St Peter's Prep & PWC Bike Track |



The Africa Day creation at the Girls Senior Prep