St Mary's Matters

Volume 20 Issue 1

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Dear St Mary's DSG Community

Loitering with Intent

While on a flight recently I read an article about fishing, in which fishing was described as "loitering with intent." I presume this referred to doing "nothing" but waiting for a fish to strike.

The phrase itself, coined in legal jargon in the 1890s, is usually associated with a negative connotation, "Loitering with the intent to perform a crime." The positive slant with respect to fishing (which for me, has never been a passion) attracted my attention and my thoughts.

In what ways does loitering with intent play out in our School?

I suppose that a girl who is wasting time when there is much to be done could be called "LWI". Loitering ***without*** intent could be described as relaxation, Loitering ***with*** intent as procrastination.

The goal shooter in netball, or wing in hockey, or goal keeper in football may spend much of a game doing nothing, but if they are loitering with intent they will be ready when called into action. This would be anticipation. My late mother, who proudly described her hockey career as madly trying to not have the ball hit to her, could be blamed also with loitering without intent! In her case this would be called avoidance.

How do parents loiter with intent? There are those who always in the background, ready to be called upon, eager to serve, to put up their hands, who if they see fault become part of the solution. This would be called contribution.

Unfortunately, schools also have parents who are always around, waiting, almost wanting something to happen to upset them, eager to pick up gossip and spread rumour, fostering discontent. This could be called agitation.

And what about the educators. Invigilating an exam or test could be called LWI. This may be called prevention. Or perhaps in a world where "there is no action so small that it cannot be blown out of all proportion," waiting for time to pass and matters to resolve themselves, may be called wisdom.

Whatever the case, I hope that this short diversion into the world of fishing has raised in us the question, "What are you fishing for?" I hope and pray that as the swift waters of 2020 flow, it will be through beauty and bounty, and that, even if you do not catch "the big one" you will be refreshed and renewed by that flowing river.

The Revd Canon A W Paterson
Head of School

Junior School Academics

It was heart-warming, yet reassuring, to watch our pupils return to school on 15 January this year. The girls waited in anticipation for their friends to arrive, who were then welcomed with warm embraces and shrieks of excitement. This was a clear indication that our primary school girls were eager to start 2020 with new hope and promise.

A new year tends to bring newly made commitments for improved behaviour and habits. It comes with anticipation of starting again. A new year at school brings new teachers, friends and classrooms as well as a variety of subjects. This year we have introduced inquiry-based learning (IBL) into the Junior School curriculum. It is a teaching approach that builds on the idea that both teachers and pupils share in the responsibility of learning. 'Inquiry' is defined as 'a seeking for truth, information, or knowledge -- seeking information by questioning.'

IBL focuses on investigating an open-ended question or problem. The girls will research the topic, using evidence-based reasoning and creative problem-solving to reach a conclusion. The girls will be encouraged to ask questions and to use various resources to solve the problem and to present their findings. The approach emphasises learning by doing, encouraging the girls to build their knowledge through experience and exploration as we have so often been reminded of by the Chinese proverb, 'Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand.'

We eagerly anticipate the answers to the various questions that will be posed this year and the creativity that will unfold in the girls presenting their work, as we strive in our quest to develop enquiring minds in our young ladies.

Mrs Louise Whitelaw
Deputy Academics: Junior School

https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/domain/5505

IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY: SEEKING A CONNECTED MUSICAL SOCIETY

In today's society, we consistently hear about diversity's practical rewards: it will make us more productive, innovative, creative and efficient. We are told that fostering diversity is a moral imperative and an ethical responsibility. Questions and discussions around diversity are very relevant to South Africa, and our St Mary's DSG community is continuously wrestling with these. As a music educator, I have had to think about the role I am playing in recognising the diverse community I serve at our school.
An article written by Marilyn Nonken, "Identity and Diversity: seeking a connected musical society", framed the following questions around music and diversity:

- How does diversity really function in musical environments?
- How have issues of identity and diversity related to making "new" music in the past?
- How can our understandings of identity, diversity and inclusion inform our future initiatives?

Nonken speaks about "identity diversity" which she defines as social identities based on race, ethnicity, gender and its expression, sexual orientation, religion, class, age, nationality and physical ability. Differences in individual identities also relate to family structure and ancestry, geography, education and class. Identity, of course, extends to aesthetic preferences, with regard to the types of music and listening experiences to which we're drawn. All of these factors influence how we see the world and how our environment is seen by those with whom we share it.

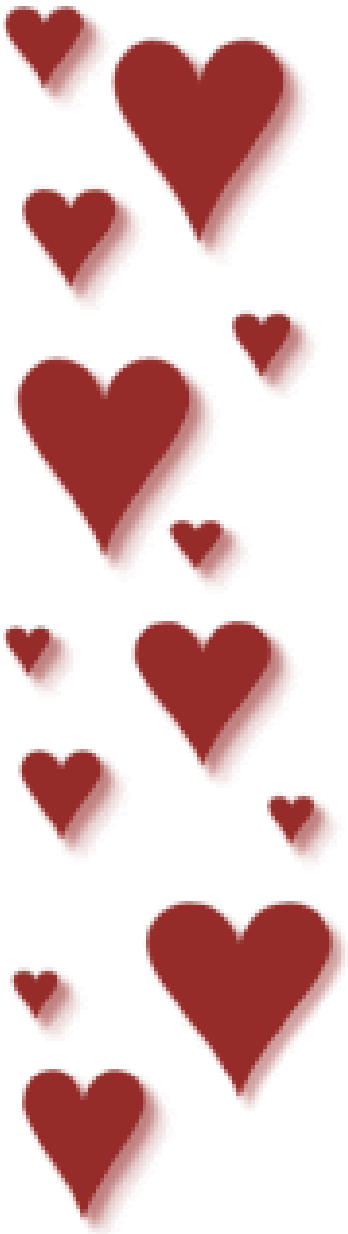
Identity diversity is complex. And in this complex society, there is a lot of pressure on our communities to recognise and accept each other's diversity. As a music educator at St Mary's DSG, I have come to realise that I have had to adapt my teaching to embrace the girls sitting in my classes. I have had to try to find a balance between my formal music training and the free-spirited beats that my girls enjoy. I have had to learn that I can expose them to the rich history of music from centuries ago but that I need to give them the space to teach me about the music that is alive and vibrant for them today. Am I therefore being diverse? No, there is so much more to diversity than appreciating different music styles.

Nonken says, "Each of us has multiple dimensions to our identity — and only by acknowledging the complex identities of those whom we hope to

include in our environment can we fruitfully engage them. Once we grasp the richness of identity diversity, we can begin to connect meaningfully with others less like ourselves."

The challenge is real and it is not easy to implement in our daily lives. I believe that I have started well on this journey of breaking down barriers and I hope that I can continue to embrace each girl in my classes. How rich and fulfilling our days will be if we can each allow ourselves to connect with each other on every level of diversity.

Mrs Hildegard Joseph
Junior School Music and Drama Teacher
http://21cm.org/21cm-u/2019/06/06/identity-and-diversity-seeking-a-connected-musical-society/



Junior School Cultural Events

Monday, 9 March at 17:00
Public Speaking at WHPS
Girls selected from Grades 4-7

Tuesday, 17 March at 14:30
Junior Choir Festival at WHPS
Foundation Phase Choir

Thursday, 19 March from 18:00 – 19:30

- "*This is me*" Music Concert in the Diocesan Hall
- Senior School Choirs, Marimbas and Orchestra
- Foundation Phase Choir
- Suzuki Ensemble
- Intersen Phase Choir
- St Mary's String Ensemble
- Junior School Marimbas
- Junior School Orchestra

#Smartgirls

ICT – Focus

Our girls continue to hold their place in the global scale of education where IT skills are concerned. They can navigate the laptops and iPads. They use ICT to create content and present their learning and understanding. They easily move between Apple and Microsoft platforms. And we look forward to extending them further in 2020.

We are excited this year to have Mrs Hussein join the IT department. She will be teaching Grade R – 3 skills as well as integration. Another exciting development is the introduction of Inquiry Based Learning and this will link closely to student's ICT skills. We will be expanding on our coding and robotics and extending our girls to use IT skills to solve problems and create unique solutions. We are part of the 4IR.

What better place to do all this than in our new stimulating IT lab that is linked to the iHub. The learning environment lends itself to different learning styles and creativity and the easy access to the iHub gives us space to move beyond a fixed desk and complete tasks. The mini lab also has a new look that is colourful, open and inviting. Take a closer look:

In conclusion I have attached a QR code that shows an insightful summary of how technology use amongst tweens and teens has increased since 2015.

Sepedi

Welcome back to all our Sepedi "Super Stars". It gives me great pleasure to welcome our Grade 2s to the Sepedi classroom; I wish them many fun-filled experiences learning this language. They have started off with the basic forms of greeting structures in the Sepedi language and have learnt a "Greeting Song" and "Bana ba sekolo". The girls are filled with enthusiasm and excitement which is pleasing to see.

The Grade 3 Sepedi girls have started off the term with energy and a positive attitude. They are on their way to learning how to introduce themselves. The class is buzzing with excitement.

As we welcome our Grade 4s to the Intermediate Phase, we look forward to travelling an exciting journey with the girls in exploring the many possibilities in the language and embracing its heritage.

Our Grade 5s have taken a giant leap forward and soon they will be writing their first examination in Sepedi. Hard work, dedication and commitment is always key in achieving the best results in this subject. The girls will explore their storytelling skills in the classroom as they role play different characters in fables and folktales.

The Grade 6 girls have come a long way. They are excited and eager to learn more about the structure of the language and the contexts in which it can be used.

Reading plays an integral part of language acquisition and gaining vocabulary. There is an exciting website the girls can use called "African story book.org". Here they will have access to a variety of storybooks ranging from level one to level five. It will be beneficial and fun for the girls to be able to read at their leisure time and in the comfort of their homes.

I am looking forward to a fruitful and productive year together with the parents and their daughters.

"Re ya pele ka Sepedi"…

Mrs N Zwane
Subject Head (Sepedi - FAL)

SOCIAL SCIENCE

We focus more on skills than content when teaching Social Science in the lower grades. The Grade 5 girls have had their first experience in debating over the past two weeks and have had to prepare opening statements and argue three points on whether the San lifestyle or our modern lifestyle is better. Their ability to express themselves, deliberate and argue their points is most encouraging. The girls argued that the San were far better for the environment, were self-sustaining, never wasted or threw anything away and were all equal, whereas today it's all about the money, who has the best of everything and there is very little thought for the environment and the people around us. Wise arguments indeed!

Debating helps children to develop their ability to express their opinions and views clearly in front of an audience, which builds their self-confidence and courage. Preparing a focused discussion using confident words of expression helps the girls to be more confident public speakers. Our girls are equipped for success!

Eco-Bricks with the Transformation Portfolio!

The eco-brick is a fun and energising way to help reduce the amount of unnecessary accumulation of plastic and therefore to reuse the plastic in a way that can effectively give back to the community as well. The eco-brick can be used to make furniture and even build houses or schools. This is achieved by stuffing clean and dry pieces of plastic into a two-litre plastic bottle until it is filled to capacity. This is an environmentally friendly and convenient way to build, as it not only saves raw materials, but it is also cost effective which is beneficial for areas where raw materials and money are scarce.

The Transformation Portfolio continues to create eco-bricks during their tutor lessons and any other time the opportunity arises. We encourage everyone to take part in this fulfilling project and hope to see this project continue for many years to come, as it has been doing so globally for the past 20 years.

Grade 12 Eco-Angel: Christiana Theodorou and the Transformation Portfolio.

Sports and Recreation

Swimming

Junior Swimming

Starting the year off with a big splash, we dove right into team trials and our first gala for the year on 24 January. Apart from the frequent lightning interruptions, we have made good headway in developing the styles and strokes of our young swimmers. By fielding only A to C teams this year and starting modular swimming, it has created more focused time on the girls who want to swim competitively. Our girls have been dedicated to their early morning training sessions before school, and are showing progress and promise for the Inter-Primary galas coming up in the first week of March. We also look forward to co-hosting the Inter-Primary A-League Gala with WHPS and Laerskool Menlopark at the Hillcrest municipal pool on 4 March.

Senior Swimming

Term 1 swimming is a sprint. We started the year off with our Inter-House gala, only 2 days after school had started. What an amazing day out in the sun! Huge congratulations to Maxine Boyce, our Junior Victrix Ludorum, and Kelsea Munro, our Senior Victrix Ludorum. I need to make special note of the following girls, too, for breaking multiple records at the event: Hannah Andraos, Zoë Terblanch, Maxine Boyce and Kelsea Munro. Congratulations, girls, you did your Houses proud. Our girls have been committed to the early morning training sessions and have shown a true sense of team spirit and camaraderie. We have focused a lot of time on the girls' starts, turns and underwater work, as we coaches feel that is where we were lacking in skill. We are looking forward to fielding our strong and confident A Team at the Inter High A-League gala on 17 February and our B Team at the C-League gala on 19 February.

Midmar Mile 2020

A weekend full of memories made, laughs shared, and overcoming the fears of open-water swimming. We took a group of 25 girls ages 11-17 to the world's largest open-water swimming event, the Midmar Mile. Having many first-timers on tour, it made for a nerve-wracking, but obstacle-smashing time away. We stayed at a beautiful venue, Haycroft Farm, that over looked trout dams and the rolling misty hills of the Midlands Meander. Even though the weather and water conditions were not in our favour, ALL our girls still completed two Midmar miles. One of those races was the first CHOC foundation only swim, where our girls raised R70 000 for the charity. Well done to all the swimmers and staff who made this weekend possible.

Volleyball

Goliath Cup Volleyball League Results: Saturday, 1 February 2020

Our U19 A Team lost to Fourways A and B, but won against the African Leadership Academy. The U19 B Team lost to Fourways A and B and the African Leadership Academy.

The U16 A Team won both their matches against Fourways A and B, and the U16 B Team lost to Fourways A and B.

Volleyball Camp

All six senior school teams participated in the school's Volleyball Camp on 7 and 8 February 2020. Each of the players spent time improving their basic skills, understanding both offensive and defensive team play, while also spending time getting to know their teammates better in fun-filled team-building activities.

If she believes in herself, she can also ride

As the Equestrian Captain, I have strived to improve the spirit and communication within our team. As a small group of girls, we continue to support our riders during our preparation, as well as at a competitive level.

Our first SANESA Qualifier took place during February and I was extremely pleased with the support we received from our St Mary's DSG community. The results were outstanding and I look forward to sharing the news of award-winning riders and exceptional results during the course of the year.

Miss A Watson

Senior School Basketball

The year 2020 promises to be a great year for St Mary's DSG Basketball. We are happy that the programme keeps growing in leaps and bounds. This year we have entered eight teams into the Pretoria Basketball League compared to five last year. We hope that this will improve our depth and yield even better results.

This year we started the year with the Johannesburg league where our girls were put through their paces. So far, the teams have performed well and are looking to make the final push before the Pretoria League. The results so far are as follows:

St Mary's DSG vs SAHETI

U14 A: won 28 – 12

U14 B: won 20 – 12

U15 A: won 33 – 18

U16 A: won 45 – 16

St Mary's DSG vs Pretoria High School for Girls

U15 A: won 40 – 06

U16 B: won 19 – 09

U16 A: won 27 – 06

Open B: lost 13 – 15

Open A: won 29 - 18

We hope our girls can continue producing such results. Our programme for the rest of the months is as follows:

Date	Fixture	Venue	Time	Teams
12 Feb	St Mary's Waverley	St Mary's DSG	15:00 – 17:30	U14 - Open
15 Feb	St Peter's College	St Mary's DSG	08:00 – 11:00	U14 - Open
20 Feb	Midrand Christian	St Mary's DSG	15:00 – 17:30	U15 and Open
4 March	Bishop Bavin	Bishop Bavin	13:30 – 18:00	U15 and Open
7 March	**St Mary's DSG U15 / Open Tournament**	St Mary's DSG	**08:00 – 15:00**	U15 and Open A
20-22 March:	**U19 ISSA Basketball Tournament, Mafikeng**	ISSA, Mafikeng		Open A

Junior School Basketball

Our Junior School basketball programme continues to grow yearly. This month we hosted our basketball festival on Saturday, 1 February. It was a great day of basketball and the kids and parents enjoyed the day. The festival was attended by Michael Mount Waldorf, Saheti School, American International School of Johannesburg and American International School of Pretoria.

Teenage Girls, Stress, Anxiety and Resilience

In the last decade, anxiety-related disorders in teenagers (especially in girls) have risen steadily, causing distress in the parents and teachers who are involved in the adolescents' lives. The positive news is that everyone needs some degree of stress and anxiety to get into action. Some stress and anxiety is therefore essential for human growth. It is not the parents' responsibility to make these feeling disappear, but rather to develop the resources needed by our children to move forward and to grow as individuals.

In her book "Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls" (2019), Lisa Damour emphasises the fact that anxiety is a normal and healthy function, and often a sign that the person is aware of his/her surroundings, mindful of their growing responsibilities, and frightened of things that are, in fact, scary. Adults can make a difference simply by "reassuring them that, a great deal of time, stress is just operating as a friend and ally to them."

The following are important to remember:

1. **Build strength and resilience**

Change and stress go hand in hand, and adolescents' lives are filled with many changes e.g physical changes (bodies and brains), school and teacher changes, difficulties in friendships and social challenges, an increase in school work and expectations to do well as they move closer to Grade 12. The anxiety that accompanies new challenges is important and is needed to develop **strength and resilience**, says Damour.

2. **The adolescent phase is a time during which many emotions are experienced.**

"The adolescent brain is very gawky and vulnerable to emotion." When a teenager is calm, she can easily out-reason her parents, but when she is upset and emotionally overwhelmed or stressed, she can easily have an emotional outburst or cry uncontrollably. Meltdowns are very common during the teenage years, due to the extraordinary brain development that happens during adolescence. The brain is developing, but in the same order as it initially developed: from the more primitive regions that house emotions to the more sophisticated regions that regulate perspective and problem-solving. If an emotional "storm" occurs, the adult must not panic or try to stop it. The brain will reset itself. Instead, **be calm**, sit with your daughter, go for a walk with her, watch a funny video or drink a cup of tea, advises Damour. After weathering a few storms successfully, "parents and teenagers get to discover that -- all by itself -- the storm will pass. At that point, either the problem completely evaporates and she moves on, or the girl can now look at the problem with clear eyes, assess it with her prefrontal lobe back online, and figure out what she wants to do."

3. **Portray trust in your child that she has the ability to solve problems and to become more mature.**

Damour warns parents not to give in to the almost primal desire to alleviate the pain experienced by your child. To jump in and solve their problems for them, or to remove stressors for them, such as letting them stay home if they are anxious about a test, exacerbates the problem, as avoidance feeds anxiety. It is important to remember that teenage girls often feel stressed because they *overestimate* the difficulty of a situation and *underestimate* their ability to deal with it, said Damour. When they avoid a situation, they miss the opportunity to correct that perception and recognise their own strength and enhance their own self-esteem.

4. **Help your child to develop a healthy self-esteem by responding instead of reacting.**

Life is tough and many problems do not have (easy) solutions. Our children must learn that there are times when they must just persevere, and sometimes you must just persist through the situation. This will build a confidence that they are able to handle even difficult situations. It is, however, important to be empathetic during such times of stress and anxiety. Your child must know that you realise that it is difficult to cope, but that you believe that she can get through it by approaching the difficult situation step by step, and as well as she can. Teach her to take the next step, without over-focusing on the overwhelming reality (as she sees it).

5. **Build in recovery time**

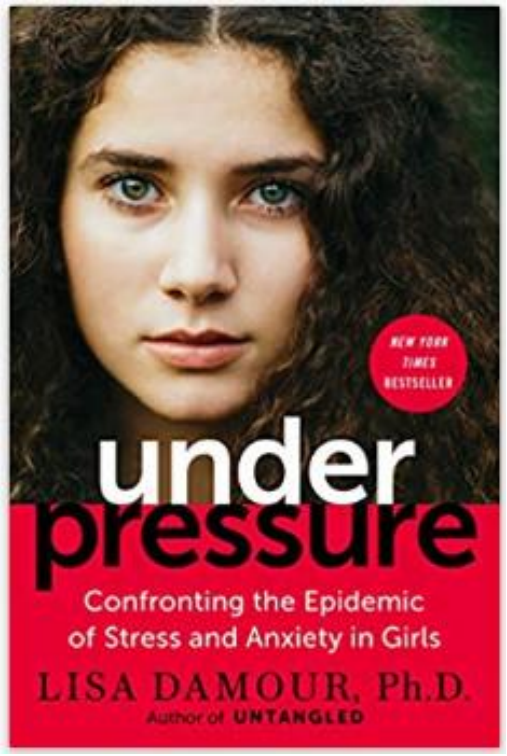
Teens need to accept that some level of stress is inevitable and even good. That will allow them to worry less and focus more on building in recovery time. Although the brain recovers much faster than muscles, we need to be aware that we all need activities to regain equilibrium. These activities may be different for different people and may include things like exercising, being in nature, spending time with friends, reading or watching a movie. This type of downtime allows attention to be redirected away from stressors (that can't be controlled) towards recovery and how she chooses to restore herself.

6. **The Restorative Power of Sleep**

"Sleep is the glue that holds human beings together." We are less emotionally resilient when we are sleep-deprived. According to Damour, teenagers need nine hours of sleep a night, and Junior School children 11 hours of sleep per night. Technology before bedtime is a bad idea. It is better not to have any phones or computers in the bedroom while you are sleeping because of the melatonin-suppressing effect of blue light emitted from cell phones and other devices' screens.

7. **Growing Up Brave**

According to Damour, the most powerful positive force in a teenager's life is a "caring, working relationship with at least one loving adult." Within that context, adults can offer teenagers empathy, grounded perspective and a vote of confidence as they work through challenges - helping them aim for courage, and not avoidance.



Contact Us:

www.stmarys.pta.school.za

Tel: 012 366 0500

Email: dsg@stmarys.pta.school.za