St Mary's Matters

VOL 19 ISSUE 8

St Mary's

DIOCESAN SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS

Table of Contents

Head's Message	Page 1
Junior School	Page 3
The Counselling Centre	Page 10

Head's Message

Vision 20/20

Optometrists did strategists a big favour with the 20/20 description of "perfect vision", for many a strategic planning meeting for the last decade has been labelled *Vision 20/20*.

And here we are on the cusp of 2020, about to draw a close to a momentous 140th Year.

Moving forward is only made possible by the bricks laid into the foundation of the School by those who have gone before. We acknowledge with gratitude the following contributions:

Mrs Gina Johnstone: Almost eight years' service as principal of the Junior School.

Mrs Nozi Hans: 21 years' service in the Senior School Life Science department.

Mrs Jane Eiselen: 17 years' in the Mathematics Department

Mrs Helen Druce: 5 years in the French department

Mrs Carol Stedall: 18 years in the Consumer studies department

Miss Pearl Makhene: 6 years in the Junior School starting as an intern and ending up as Head of Science and Leadership.

Mr Eliot Mokgohloa: 5 years as school electrician

Fr Timothy Lowes: 3 years as Junior School and Assistant School Chaplain.

Mr Chris Gatsi: 1 year in the IT department.

Mrs Marika Labuschagne: 11 years in the Physical Science Department.

We wish them all God's richest blessing.

By the time you read this, **the matrics** will all have finished their exams which seem to have gone as smoothly as we would have hoped. Their results will be published on January 7 2020. This is a final thank you to them for their contribution to the bricks laid into the foundation of the school.

Our consistent message this year to the school, despite the best efforts of the world to detract from this, is that "tomorrow will be a better day." And indeed, it will be. Built on the bricks of the last 140 years, the Governing Body are busy putting together a strategic plan as the mortar and cement for the next period of building under the headings:

Invest in our learners; Invest in our sportswomen; Invest in our musicians, artists and performers; Invest in our educators and other staff; Invest in our facilities; Invest in and celebrate our diversity; Invest in our communities; Invest in our brand.

I am sure that when this is completed it will be circulated for input to the stakeholder groups of the School.

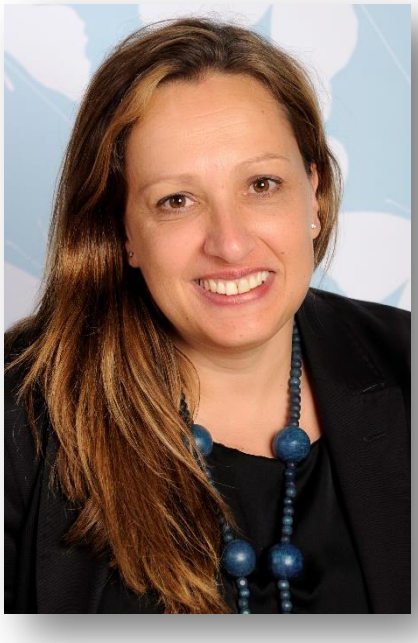
Our major focus in the school for next year will be the slogan **"One for all."** This will call us to concentrate our efforts on what we are doing for the Community, not what the Community is doing for us.

But at this time we remember especially the Foundation Stone of our School, the "babe of Bethlehem" as referred to in our School Prayer, the gift of the first Christmas where God showed us a glimpse of heaven, and gave us the Way to Heaven.

May you all enjoy a lovely holiday and a very blessed Christmas.

The Revd Canon A W Paterson
Head of School

Because of you…



A term after our current Grade 7s enthusiastically joined our St Mary's DSG family in 2012, Mrs Gina Johnstone became our Junior School headmistress. Within no time, she became a sincere and caring 'mother' to our girls, showering them with love and support and encouraging them to strive for personal excellence.

The education environment today is dynamic and the role of a principal more complex than in the past. Mrs Johnstone has been responsible for driving the development of literacy and numeracy skills, critical thinking, collaboration skills, global awareness, responsible digital citizenship, positive mental health strategies and so much more….It is an immense responsibility. Through workshops and staff training, she ensured that the staff were empowered to impart this knowledge and grow a new generation of children for the 21st century.

In doing all of this, she has given generously of her own time, always being aware of the individual needs of her pupils and staff. This has extended to the support and guidance that she has given to the parents. This was at times, so extensive that it came at personal sacrifice, both in time and financially. All this was done without fanfare or public displays of returned gratitude.

We have been fortunate to have had Gina at the helm for nearly 8 years, where we have been learning and growing from her extensive educational knowledge. Although we are sad to be losing her to Reddam House Consatntia, we know that she needs another new challenge for her own growth.

We wish her and her husband, Michael, much happiness in Cape Town, and we thank him for his support of St Mary's DSG. May she teach a new group of children to believe in themselves, so they too, can fly.

Because of You

written by Heather Price

Because of you a child will feel loved.
Because of you a child will believe they can reach the stars above.
Because of you a child will find laughter and smiles.
Because of you a child will feel worthwhile.
Because of you a child will learn to love and not fight.
Because of you a child will want to read every night.
Because of you a child will learn patience when someone is driving them crazy.
Because of you a child will learn the value of work and not be lazy.
Because of you a child will learn persistence when the going gets rough.
Because of you a child will learn the gift of kind words and love is enough.
Because of you a child will find comfort in loving arms.
Because of you a child will be safe from words and hands that harm.
Because of you a child will learn as they "play".
Because of you a child will make a difference along life's way.
Because of you a child's life will be forever touched in ways you may never see.
Because God uses YOU to help them become the person, He wants them to be!

Mrs Louise Whitelaw
Deputy Academics: Junior School

Grade 4 & 5 Coding Club

In coding club we first learnt our basics on Scratch junior. We got to create our own Knock Knock joke which taught us how to code a conversation using the "wait" function while the other person was taking. We then got to explore the app and create our own code. We then went onto Tyner and we did Space Cadet. On Space Cadet we learnt a lot more coding skills. Coding this term was very fun and interesting. I would definitely do it again. We still did not get to go to coding every Monday because of the school play but I would say I learnt a lot of different types of codes in Coding Club.

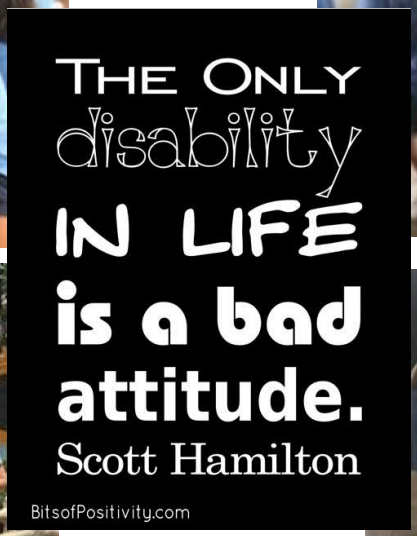
By: Amogelang Khomo 5G

Grade 4

Knowing how to approach a person with a disability removes the fear or embarrassment able-bodied people often feel when dealing with someone who has a disability.

The Grade 4 girls enjoyed a visit from PADI – People for Awareness on Disability Issues as part of their Character, Ethics and Communication education. PADI conducts "Experiential Learning Life Skills Programmes" utilising roll play exercises, depicting sensory disabilities. Their facilitators, all who are people with disabilities, conduct these workshops.

Our girls are now fully educated on how to approach blind people, people with a speech impediment and people in wheelchairs. They learnt that people with disabilities lead happy, fulfilled lives and can do everything that able-bodied people can do. They came away from this seminar feeling empowered and more confident to approach people with disabilities, and more knowledgeable on how to assist them.



Grade 4-7 Eco Club

When we found out we could be in Eco Club we were over the moon. In Eco Club we did multiple things, one of our favourite activities was making Eco bricks. An Eco brick is a plastic bottle that is filled with tiny pieces of plastic. These pieces of plastic make an Eco brick hard and solid. You can use Eco bricks to build houses, buildings, furniture and many more creative things.

By: Nikita Jadrijevic Grade 4

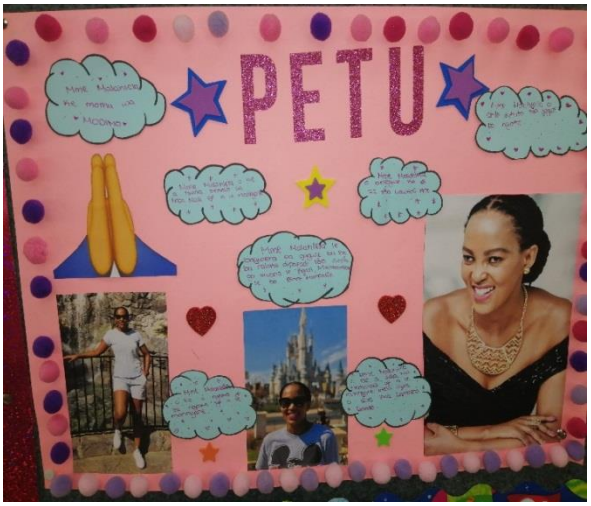
Grade 5 Sepedi

This year has been an eventful year for the Sepedi Department. The girls participated in their school work and engaged actively with each other. Good progress has been made by the girls and we are all looking forward to the year 2020. Wishing all the girls a happy and safe holiday season from the Sepedi Department.

- *Miss NE Masengi (Subject Head – Sepedi FAL)*

In Sepedi I got to learn so many things like, "Borrowed words", but the best thing I enjoy doing was our project. We had to decide what we want to be and find someone who already does the job, then you interview him or her but when you interview them you need to make sure you have your questions ready.

- *Tekano Phago Grade 5*



I enjoyed creating the school that we made during the Sepedi lesson. I also loved sharing ideas and new things with my team. And also learning new things. I had so much fun doing the hip hop song with our noun classes and what I loved the most was the interview I did with a doctor. I learned a lot from them.

- *Keamogetse Thalakgale Grade 5*

This year in Sepedi I had fun. We learnt new things like tenses. I really enjoyed being in the class. My favourite thing in the whole year was doing the interview and building a new school. Grade 5 Sepedi was the best plus we had one of the best teachers in the whole world, Miss Masengi. Thank you for all that you have done.

- *Kitso Mosaka Grade 5*

Showcase

After many weeks of hard work, our Grade 5 girls held their Showcase. They invited their parents, family and loved ones to their Showcase evening. It was a very special occasion, where the girls showcase their work from 4 different subjects.

They are given the opportunity to explain and show many different aspects of the work they have leant, giving their parents and loved ones insight into their every day learning experiences at St Mary's DSG.

For many girls and parents, this was the highlight of the year!

Why kids need to play outside

The importance of outdoor play and discovery

We live in an increasingly technological society, benefitting from the amazing leaps and bounds we have seen in in this arena in recent years. However, alarming statistics indicate that South African children spend more than 3 hours a day in front of a screen excluding schoolwork-related screen time. The same study found that 10 percent of three to five-year olds are overweight, and that only 50 percent of South African children are getting the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. While screen time can open up a world of learning opportunities to children, too much of it can result in lower levels of creativity, imagination and playfulness in young children, coupled with the reinforcement of their expectation of instant gratification, and neglect of the development of important foundational skills such as gross and fine motor coordination as well as social skills, to name a few.

While screen time should not be removed entirely, experts recommend that it should be restricted by parents, and balanced by sufficient outdoor play time, allowing children to develop the skills that are so beneficial to their functioning in other areas. Outdoor play, whether structured or unstructured, offers advantages including higher levels of fitness and increased bone health, improved cognitive functioning and levels of creativity, better developed social interaction skills, lower levels of ADHD and depression, improved eyesight and better quality of sleep. These benefits extend to the adults who spend time playing outside with their children!

The following outdoor activity ideas are suggested, in conjunction with the limiting of screen time:

- Commit to a green hour each day, where each member of the family spends time outside where possible (remember sun protection).
- Introduce your children to gardening.
- Consider investing in outdoor equipment such as swings, bicycles/scooters, a trampoline, jungle gym, etc.
- However, items such as large boxes, old tyres, rope, balls of varying sizes, rocks, wire, old cake tins, mud, hula hoops, wheelbarrows, old mattresses, tree clippings and newspaper can also be used to create obstacle courses and games of the children's own invention. Allow them to create their own games!
- Plan a weekly family walk or hike.
- Encourage and teach your child how to climb a tree.
- Don't shy away from bad weather! As long as there is no lightning risk, children can play in the rain.

- Teach your children to play traditional outdoor games such as hide-and-seek, capture the flag, blind man's bluff, 'What time is it, Mr Wolf?', hopscotch, Red Rover, jump rope games, 'duck, duck goose' and Four Square.

Books for further ideas:

- How to Get Kids Offline, Outdoors, and Connecting with Nature – Bonnie Thomas
- 101 Fun Outdoor Activities for Children – Fiona Bird
- Balanced and Barefoot – Angela J. Hanscom
- The Outdoor Life of Children: The Importance of Nature Study and Outside Activities – Charlotte Mason
- Seasons of Joy: Every Day is for Outdoor Play – Claudia Marie Lenart

Useful websites:

- www.rangerrick.org
- www.mykidsadventures.com
- www.redtri.com
- www.casholman.com
- www.pintsizedtreasures.com

Miss Lesley King
Educational Psychologist

St Mary's
DIOCESAN SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS

Contact Us:

www.stmarys.pta.school.za

Tel: 012 366 0500

Email: dsg@stmarys.pta.school.za

Season's Greetings