St Mary's Matters

Volume 19 Issue 6

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Dear St Mary's DSG Community

The purple blossoms slowly appearing throughout the country are the symbol to students that year-end exams are close and indeed the final formal events of the year are close.

- In October we will celebrate the Debutantes Ball, and we ask that the monies they have raised will fall like "good rains" on the charities we support.
- In October we will say goodbye to the matriculation class and we wish them "good rains" for their final days and exams. They have been a wonderful group.
- In October the Senior School Prizegiving will take place and the new School Leaders will be announced. We wish them "good rains" for the year ahead.
- In October, the Senior School will end their academic classes. I wish all our girls "good rains" as they prepare for the final exams.
- In October the Junior School will perform their annual production. We wish them "gentle rains and good fruits."

October is upon us, with its shades of purple and green, as the vegetation miraculously sucks the last of the moisture from the parched earth. Pollens and dust challenge the hypoallergenic amongst us, and welcoming the end of winter has been replaced by a desperation for summer rains.

It is sadly ironic that the jacaranda tree and its wonderful blossoms, imported originally from Argentina, should have become so deeply entrenched and beloved in the lives of South Africans and especially this city, while our own families from outside South Africa should feel unsafe returning to this city and this country.

In his celebrated poem "*Oktober, die mooiste, mooiste maand*" C Louis Leipoldt paints a wonderful picture of the rejuvenation of nature during this month.

Viooltjies in die voorhuis -
Viooltjies blou en rooi!
Viooltjies orals op die veld,
En orals, ai, so mooi!

Dit is die maand Oktober,
die mooiste, mooiste maand!
Dan is die dag so helder,
so groen is elke aand,
So blou en sonder wolke
die hemel heerlik bo,
So blomtuin-vol van kleure
die asvaal ou Karoo.

However, the experience of schools is that October can be the most stressful of months. Not only are tempers frayed as the whole earth seems to await the summer rains but the impending end-of-year exams weigh heavily. Please pray for all our young people and their families at this time in particular.

"Pippa's Song" by Robert Browning is another short poem celebrating this time of the year:

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world!

This picture of hope, that it is "*all right*", is easy to miss in this complex and difficult world. It suggests that those things we see all the time yet overlook are the key to recognising the presence of the divine in the world.

In this School we see the divine in the hugs of our darling little ones, in the songs of our choirs, in the work on robotics and coding, in the academic achievements of our girls, in the improvements in swimming times and the passion in performance, in the laughter of celebration and the tears of empathy, in the improvement in marks and in the effort to improve, in the growth in health and the recovery in illness, in the smell of mown grass and in the delicate pink of our roses.

In short we see the divine all around us in our environment, girls, parents and staff. Even in the purple of an exotic invasive species.

That is what makes us different.

The Revd Canon A W Paterson
Head of School

Grade 1
#Smartgirl #Showcase
PICCOLLAGE
GRADE 2
#SMARTGIRLS #SHOWCASE
PICCOLLAGE
Grade 3
#Smartgirls #Showcase
PICCOLLAGE

Amazon Fires

Who will save the Rainforest, regarded as 'the lungs of the world'?

The Grade 2 girls have delved into learning all about the Rainforest. The wildfires caused great concern amongst the girls due to the knowledge of the rainforest absorbed thus far.

Did you know?

- Rainforests are home to more than half of the animals, plants and other living things in the world.
- Some of the biggest trees in the rainforests are over 1000 years old.
- The smallest mammal in the world is the bumblebee bat. It has a body the size of a bumblebee!
- A sloth only produces droppings about once a week!
- The poison in the skin of the one Poison Arrow Frog is so powerful it can kill up to 20 people.

As part of our Rainforest theme, the Grade 2s will also visit the Monte Casino Bird Gardens on Wednesday 9 October. The girls will walk along enchanting elevated wooden walkways within magnificent gardens and marvel at a variety of colourful birds, mammals, reptiles and unusual animals from around the world. The girls will also be entertained with an educational bird show 'Flights of Fantasy'.

Miss Kirsty Frigyik
Grade 2 Teacher

Grade 3 Camp & Science Expo

The Grade 3s started off the term with a bang. We have been so busy and having lots of fun too. In the first week of term, we went to Camp Discovery in Dinokeng Game Reserve. There we played in mud, went on a game drive and learnt leadership skills. The food was fabulous, and it was wonderful spending time with our friends. We came back tired but full of smiles.

Our next big task was to get our projects ready for our first Science Expo on 27 September. Our theme was "Keep calm, I'm saving the planet!" It was challenging thinking of experiments and applying the scientific process, but we came up with such great ideas: which take-away packaging is biodegradable, can tyres be used to grow vegetables in town, are earthworms effective in recycling household waste and many more interesting topics. We are very proud of the skills we have learnt in becoming young scientists.

Mrs Adrienne McVittie
Grade 3 teacher

School Play

Written by: Jess Schorr
Workshopped with the primary school teachers of St Mary's DSG

Title: *If She Believes*

Our Junior School play is on track. We are very busy piecing the production together. Our first Saturday rehearsal on 28 September was very productive having run through 6 of the 9 scenes with the main cast and practised all the Grade and Individual Cultural items throughout the morning.

The next few weeks are going to be hectic as we bring together all the elements of this magnificent stage production. Our girls are excited and committed to putting on a memorable show having learnt their lines, practised their dance moves and learnt the words of the songs they are singing on stage.

Thank you to all the teachers and parents who have helped build and design props, sew and source costumes, and who are still busy finalising outfits for each of the participants. A big thank you to all of our Junior School Staff and outside help who have been tirelessly coaching our girls to ensure that they are ready to perform.

Book your tickets online as you only have three weeks before we present "*If She Believes*"; a play about three girls: Emily, Tolamo and Kopano who dream of going into the arts: fashion, art and drama. They know they cannot afford it and imagine together what it would be like to walk though an art gallery that showcases everything they would like to do. They meet famous artists, designers, actors and playwrights along the way. They are taught to believe in themselves and to ensure that their dreams enrich their country, South Africa.

So, don't miss out, book your tickets online for either Monday the 21st, Tuesday the 22nd or Wednesday the 23rd of October and join us in the Diocesan Hall for a night of superb entertainment, from 18:00 to 19:30.

Looking forward to seeing you.

Mrs Jenny van Staden
Director

IsiZulu Olympiad Competition 2019

"Victory is in having done your best. If you have done your best, you have won." By Bill Bowerman

A group of twelve IsiZulu High school Girls had the opportunity to participate in the National IsiZulu Olympiad Competition. The girls that participated in the competition were from Grade 8 to Grade 11. The competition was held on the following dates:

- First Round Term 1: 13 March 2019
- Second Round Term 2: 15 May 2019
- Third Round Term 3: 18 September 2019

It is with great pride that I can say that nine out of twelve girls who took part in the competition managed to get a total score of 70% and above. The highest achiever at our school in this competition achieved an aggregate of 93%. Well done to all the girls.

Miss Cynthia Mbhele
IsiZulu Department

Sepedi/ Zulu Cultural Evening

"We are all different, which is great because we are all unique. Without diversity life would be very boring." By Catherine Pulsifer.

On 17 September 2019, the IsiZulu and Sepedi girls from Grade 7 to Grade 12 participated in the Sepedi/Zulu Cultural Evening. The evening displayed a variety of talents from learners including cultural dancing, reciting poems, role-playing, singing and directing the entire programme. The guests and our girls learned a lot about the importance of African languages from the guest speakers. The evening was a huge success; thank you to the parents for their support.

Miss Cynthia Mbhele and Mrs Daisy Phahlane
IsiZulu Teacher and Sepedi Teacher

Senior Afrikaanse Olimpiade

The senior learners performed well in the Afrikaans Senior Olympiad. Five of our girls received certificates for their outstanding results. Ilana Jacobs 89.23%, Marié Pretorius 89.23%, Nicole de Jager 88.46%, Isabella Pretorius 88.46% and Denìell Nel 86.92%, were all in the top 100 learners nationally. A special thanks to Mrs le Roux, Mrs Neser, Mrs Booysen and Mrs Jorissen who worked so hard and inspired the girls to reach their full potential and develop their skills in the Afrikaans language.

Students on the Top 20 Provincial List:

- Ilana Jacobs 89.23%
- Marié Pretorius 89.23%

Students on the Top 100 National List:

- Ilana Jacobs 89.23%
- Marié Pretorius 89.23%
- Nicole de Jager 88.46%
- Isabella Pretorius 88.46%
- Denìell Nel 86.92%

Students that got 80% or more for the Senior Afrikaanse Olimpiade

- Ilana Jacobs 89.23%
- Marié Pretorius 89.23%
- Nicole de Jager 88.46%
- Isabella Pretorius 88.46%
- Denìell Nel 86.92%
- Eryquin-Mor Ferguson 86.15%
- Gisela Ligthelm 80.77%
- Quinnlyn van der Merwe 80.77%
- Miché de Wet 84.62%
- Mary Anne Gutter 83.85%
- Carlé le Roux 85.38%

Getting Our Learners Ready for the 4th Industrial Age

With the advent of advanced technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, 3D Printing, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics, teaching and learning has naturally been forced to embrace these technologies as we enter the "4th Industrial Age". At St Mary's DSG, we are privileged to be one of the few schools to champion a program to stay abreast with the ever-changing environment. We have done so by introducing "Digital Technologies" as a subject at Grade 8 level and building up to Grade 9.

The subject involves a well-structured curriculum to provide our students with much needed computational, problem-solving and other 21st century skills such as Innovation, Collaboration, Digital Literacy, Communication and Creativity. Most first-world countries have moved in this direction. Students are given problems as part of project based learning (PBL), they design robot models to solve the problems, apply algorithmic thinking, code solutions and present their thought process and findings to an audience. They are further instructed about the theoretical aspect of mechanical systems (gears), basic electronics, and basic artificial language processing taking into account the socio-politico-economic implications of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

We proudly participated in the first round of the First Lego League and secured a position in the top ten. Due to our three-term calendar overlapping with other schools, we missed the final round involving the engineering design. The Digi-Techies participated in the St Mary's DSG 140th birthday celebrations by taking part in an internal competition using the current World Robotics Olympiad tasks. It was all fun as we got support from the I-SET Robotics Community. The event was organized by Mr C Gatsi (Digital Technologies Facilitator) and Ms Bothma (IT Manager and HOD).

Mr Chris Gatsi
Digital Technology Teacher

In the year 2020, Grade 9s will begin using the Arduino kits to build electronic gadgets that mimic those found in smart homes, industries and smart devices. This is meant to challenge them at the next level. At the time of writing, our robotics and a few mathematics learners were set to participate at the 2019 Geexpo IT and Robotics Expo hosted by North West University, Serious Games Institute in the Vaal Triangle. All our Grade 8 and 9 learners continue to take computer literacy additionally to harness their word processing, excel and digital citizenship knowledge and skills.

Mr Chris Gatsi received an honorarium for successfully completing a training session with the NGO 'SchoolNet' sponsored by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and further training all Grade 8s and 9s on Digital Citizenship. The year has been a success!! – Thanks to the Digi-Techies ☺.

Mr Chris Gatsi
Digital Technology Teacher

World Challenge: Vietnam April 2019

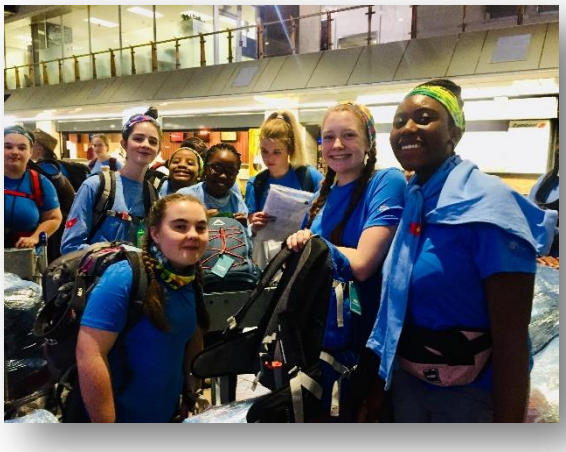
Disclaimer…!

I do advise you all to hold onto your seats:

Mot, hai, ba!

We have a lift-off!

We are off for an experience of a lifetime. Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you all to sit back, relax and enjoy our journey to Vietnam. You are about to find out about the responsibility of budgeting, being the group leader for two days and having to cope with circumstances in a community completely foreign to you.



We are all filled with anxiety, excitement and curiosity of what lies ahead of us for the next two weeks. I think that the reality of leaving my parents for two weeks only sank in at the Gautrain station. This is where we all got emotional. For one second, we were all five years old and afraid to leave Mum's hand. It was quite funny to see it play out.

Landing in Vietnam we soon learnt what it means to be a leader. Being a leader is not for the faint hearted; you also need to be mentally strong. To be a leader means being a selfless servant to those you lead. The responsibilities of being a leader in a foreign country are quite stressful. You should show patience and tolerance towards your team even though you are unsure within yourself! You also need to have good organisational skills to ensure that you don't start panicking amidst all your tasks and fellow challengers whom you need to guide. Being a leader in a foreign country taught me the value of good communication, patience and to take a deep breath before reacting. It also taught me to be calm and collected in sticky situations. (The temperature was rather sticky too!)

The responsibilities that go with budgeting for the whole team with foreign currency require the brain cells of Albert Einstein. I am usually not comfortable working with numbers. However, this responsibility taught me the skills of budgeting for food, transport, accommodation and getting the best deal for the team. I would not have learnt this skill anywhere else and I consider it a very valuable asset for adulthood.

Budgeting in a foreign country taught me the value of money. However, having $200 for a self-splurge made me a millionaire in Vietnam. Throughout my whole trip I only exchanged $50 which gave me about 1 500 000 Vietnamese Dong. Just imagine if I exchanged the rest of the $150. I would have been a multi-millionaire in Vietnamese Dong!

I learnt from the community engagement in Khai Chai village that I am fortunate and have a lot to be grateful for. I have become more grounded and learnt to appreciate the little things in life - like a shower! I was especially surprised to see how happy the people in the community were with the little they have in life. They were so welcoming and kind-hearted. They made their humble homes available to us and served us wonderful local cuisine.

The Vietnamese people were as fascinated with us as we were with them. Everywhere we turned, we were asked to pose for photos. At first it was nice to get the attention; however, later, it got quite annoying. It almost felt like our personal space was being invaded. When time passed by, we eventually all got used to it as we saw that nothing could be done to stop all the little glances and stares at the beautiful girls from Africa.

The hike, on the other hand, taught me something that I will keep with me for the rest of my life. I am stronger than I thought I was. I just learnt that the thoughts and words you think and say have power and meaning. If you tell yourself that you can't do it, you won't do it. I have learnt to become more positive in life and appreciate the little things in life. I have learnt that it is good to challenge yourself occasionally. It does not hurt to try - the outcome might just surprise you!

Dr Wayne Dyer once said, "It is my belief that you are not given the power to dream without the equivalent power to manifest that dream into reality." Powerful positive manifestation is the law of attraction for all things good in life.
I guess that I came back to South Africa with a changed heart, mind and soul.

Nyeleti Rikhotso (Grade 10)
Member of the Lotus Flower team for Vietnam 2019

World Challenge

St Mary's DSG

Next World Challenge expedition

April 2021

St Mary's has a long relationship with World Challenge, a company based in the United Kingdom:

- In 2013 a small group of 7 visits India.
- In 2015 two groups of 13 each visit Nepal.
- In 2017 two groups of 16 each visit Borneo.
- In 2019 two groups of 16 each visit North-Vietnam.

These expeditions consist of an **adventurous journey** (hike) a **community project** and **rest and relaxation**. The challengers plan the tour themselves, under the careful guidance of a World Challenge expedition leader and two school leaders (St Mary's staff members). This is a 16 – 21 day backpacking adventure – without technology, in a foreign country where leadership is tested and challengers get to find themselves and also serve the community, either at a village or by working in conservation.

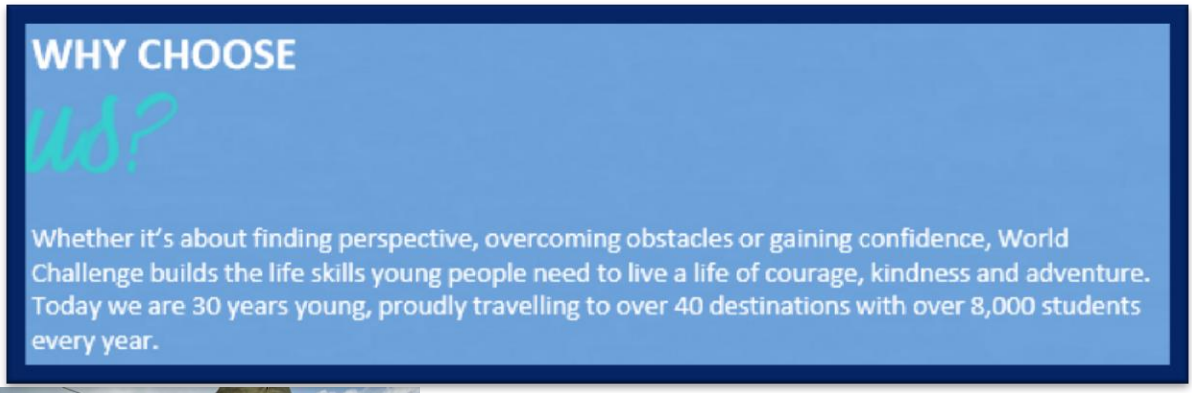
This expedition supports The President's Award and assists the awardees in completing their community hour service and adventurous journey.

The next destination will be voted for during assembly on 21 October. The launch of the new destination will take place in January 2020. This will give new Grade 8 learners an opportunity to join in too. This expedition is open to all Grade 9 – 12 learners of 2021.

The programme starts shortly after the launch in January, as a lot of planning goes into the expedition. The challengers have to choose their project and hike in the chosen country. Fundraising for the charity also starts in January 2020. Payment towards the expedition is staggered over 14 months for the benefit of the parents. Challengers are also given the opportunity to work towards contributing to these costs and to buy their own kit.

Parents (prospective Grade 8 too) are welcome to direct any queries to :

Mrs Lizelle le Roux
lleroux@stmarys.pta.school.za Cell : 0825459294



Senior School Basketball

The third term is always a busy part of the basketball programme as teams prepare to play in the Johannesburg league and also trials. Our girls had an earlier than normal start to the term with trials held during our school holidays. This is a great opportunity for our girls to measure up against their counterparts from different schools. Congratulations to the following girls for being selected for their respective teams:

District Team:

Lara Potgieter U15

Tshwane Team:

Neo Seleke U15

Chevonne Sujee U15

Nonjabulo Mathebula U18

Martha Mumba U18

The following girls and coaches have been selected to represent Gauteng at the South African Summer Games, which will be held in Pretoria from, 5 December 2019 to 10 December 2019:

Onkarabetse Koikanyang U15

Hannah Palane U18

Thando Mothiba U18

Mr. Mlungisi Shongwe (U18 Coach)

Ms. Phuti Mosehlane (U15 Coach)

Neo Seleke and Chevonne Sujee have been selected to represent Tshwane at the OR Tambo Soncini Social Cohesion Games which will take place on the 26th to 27th of October 2019.

Squash

SA Top 10

Congratulations to Ashton Weir and Deneil Beukes for being selected for the top 10 in South Africa. Their positions are number 4 and number 9 respectively.

St Mary's DSG Girls Open Squash Tournament

Well done to all the winners:

U11

1st Ioanna Apostolides

2nd Keabetswe Manyane

3rd Kuhlekonke Mazibuko

U13

1st Jenna Loubser

2nd Julia van Jaarsveld

3rd Thakgi Nokaneng

Senior Open

1st Ashton Weir

2nd Deneil Beukes

3rd Danica Capazorio

Junior School Basketball

This year has seen yet another increase in the number of girls that participate in basketball. The popularity of the sport has grown tremendously over the last five years.

This term started with our U13 girls team participating in the qualifiers for the Gauteng Summer games. The won all their games at the Tshwane regional games to qualify for the Gauteng Championships. On Saturday, 21 September 2019, our girls took part in the Gauteng Championships, which were held at the Chris Hani Sports Complex, Orange Farm. Our team won all their games and were crowned Gauteng Champions. Well done, girls!

St Mary's
DIOCESAN SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS

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