



End of Term Newsletter

April 2021

Never ever underestimate the importance of having FUN – Randy Pausch

THE SUMMER FUN DAY – A DEFINITE HIGHLIGHT OF TERM ONE!

The Herschel Summer House day definitely had no shortage of fun. It was tangible – there was laughter, bright house colours, faces adorned with glitter and gorgeous outfits. Everywhere you looked, tutor groups were engaged in one of the many stations set up for the day.

Owing to Covid restrictions, the school could not have the much-anticipated annual House Gala. The House team was not going to be defeated and very soon the Summer House Day was created.

Each station engaged four tutor groups (one from each House) and their tutors in 20-minute activities at locations around the campus. The stations were varied as they each demanded different skill sets from the pupils. The camaraderie amongst the tutor groups and feisty competition allowed individuals to get to know their fellow tutees in ways they never imagined. LET'S JUST SAY THAT HAVING FUN BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ALL OF US!

The Beach bats activity was glorious for those hand-eye coordinated individuals. Just around the corner the water bucket challenge required a steady hand and eyes in the back of your head. The conundrum table had most baffled as their brains scrambled with the words.

The pool station not only allowed our talented swimmers to glide through the pool, but there were also hilarious fun swims – with Mrs van der Merwe and Mrs Paterson being great sports.

The Sports Centre was hopping with the latest music which most pupils recognised after just ONE NOTE and of course “Grease Lightning” which the tutors recognised first. (Let's just say that was all the tutors recognised.)

The Bingo station proved very quickly that this is not a game for just the oldies, as cries of BINGO! were heard. Dodge ball tested how quick and nimble you were and left only a few standing.

At the Sudoku station an atmosphere of deep concentration filled the air. “30 Seconds” lightened up the seriousness and everyone collapsed into fits of laughter.

The day ended with an online quiz - the last test of general knowledge.

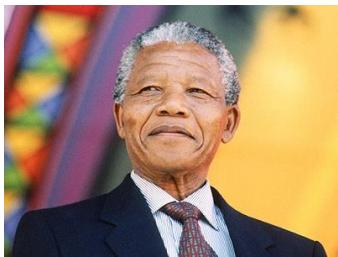
Everyone went home exhausted, and with sore throats and mouths from endless shouting and smiling.

THANK YOU TO EACH AND EVERY PARTICIPANT AND TO THE ORGANISERS (Carol Alpert – Rolt HD)

Summer Fun Day – 5 March 2021



Human Rights Day – 21 March 2021



Nelson Mandela



Thuli Madonsela



Hugh Masekela



Miriam Makeba

The theme for Human Rights Day, 2021 is ***The year of unity, socio-economic renewal and nation-building.***

The democratic government declared the 21 March **Human Rights Day** to commemorate and honour those who fought for liberation and the rights enjoyed today. This day is historically linked with the events of Sharpeville where 69 people died and 180 were wounded when police fired on a peaceful crowd that had gathered in protest against the Pass laws. It has become an iconic date in our country's history, marking the occasion on which ordinary people rose up against a violation of their human rights. It is important that we remember that the rights we enjoy today have come at great cost.

Whether we are at the workplace, within communities, at schools, with our partners and friends, and with our children we all need to demonstrate the kind of responsibility that we would like to see in our country's future. Social justice is everyone's concern. In schools we have a responsibility to demonstrate and to teach the principles that support positive change, growth, equality and belonging. Mr Nelson Mandela's famous words capture the critical role of education in supporting social justice: *Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.* This year Herschel's Humanities teachers have intentionally addressed matters of social justice through the curriculum and we intend to make far greater use of Life Orientation in the timetable in order to engage further. The pandemic has emphasised the vast chasm that exists between those who have and those who do not and the sheer scale of inequity in South Africa is overwhelming. If ever there was a year in which to pause and contemplate the meaning of a day titled *Human Rights Day*, 2021 is it.



Dr Imtiaz Sooliman is a respected humanitarian and founder of The Gift of the Givers Organisation, based in Durban. He is an advocate for social justice. He champions rights and access for all South Africans and is world renowned for his crisis response teams and field expertise. He is a humble, energetic and purpose-driven man whose service ethic is phenomenal. He has assisted many communities in our country and abroad. This term I referred to Dr Sooliman in a leadership elective that I am teaching the Grade 9s. His servant leadership style exemplifies a generosity of spirit and deep calling towards improving the lives of his fellow South Africans. His commitment to social justice and his upholding of human rights is unparalleled. He is a 'household name' in Durban and I realised (quite quickly) that among the Grade 9s at Herschel he is not known. In the week leading up to Human Rights Day, it felt good to introduce them to a South African who is making a profound difference to the lives of many people on a daily basis by insisting that their rights are met and actioning measures to support this.

"Our hopes for a more just, safe, and peaceful world can only be achieved when there is universal respect for the inherent dignity and equal rights of all members of the human family."

UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Transformation, Equity and Belonging Updates

Independent Inquiry: An Independent Inquiry into systemic racism was conducted at Herschel between September and December of 2020. The findings and recommendations have been reported to the Heads of School and Council. This term, meetings were held by Council and there has been extensive discussion with respect to the report. Further consultations on some of the matters raised in the report are in progress. A Council Sub-Committee has been appointed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the report, finalise any further processes and present final recommendations to Council. The actions and plans arising from these recommendations will be communicated with all stakeholders in Term Two.

TEB Committee: The TEB Exec Committee (Transformation Equity and Belonging) has met to finalise the structure of the TEB Committee. This Committee will ensure that all aspects of the transformation, equity and belonging policy are consistently applied and evolved to bring about change and to create a nurturing, safe and equal environment for all Herschel pupils. This is a key strategic imperative.

Anti-Racism Statement: The Anti-Racism Statement is available in English, IsiXhosa and Afrikaans and will be distributed and discussed with the Herschel Community in Term Two, as will the school's updated Anti-Discrimination Policy. It is important to us that all stakeholders support the zero tolerance stance to racism and that we, as a community, commit to the principles of dignity, respect and equality in the way in which we interact with each other.

Grade 12 Ethical leadership and Community Making conversations with Julie Nxadi: Grade 12s enjoyed spending the day with Julie Nxadi, social justice facilitator on Friday 26 March. As a result of Covid-19, the Grade 11s were not able to attend the annual leadership camp in 2020 and Julie workshopped leadership ethics and community making with the Grade 12s to support the collaborative and sustainable model of leadership that they are building. Further to this, a group of staff members presented hour long workshops on aspects of leadership in a four-session rotation on Monday 29 March. The sessions were interactive and will hopefully have enriched the girls' understanding of the context in which they are leading and the goals that they hope to achieve. They certainly have our full support!

Parent Education Group portal: This resource portal / parent hub will be up and running soon. Material covering a range of topics will be shared and we encourage parents to visit the portal and to access the resources. The theme for Term Two will be belonging, with the first topic being ***Unity in Diversity***. This examines how we are united by our desire for our daughters to have an excellent education in an environment in which they thrive, but we all have a different story that brought us here - and material will include Chimamanda Adichie's *Danger of a Single Story*. Watch out for the link!

Conscious Conversations: In Term Two, on the 28th April, Asanda Ngoasheng will be training members of the Senior and Prep School Executive Teams and PA and House Representatives in how to hold/navigate Conscious conversations. We are excited about this and the potential it has to allow for a widening of the circle in the conversation space. We see this as a way in which parents can get involved across a range of relevant educational topics. We look forward to learning and growing together.

Pupil activities promoting TEB: Vox is an active and popular space in the Senior School and I am extremely encouraged by the conversations / presentations that the pupils are holding. They are asking relevant and complex questions and the interrogative and deep learning that happens here is creating agile and intuitive thinkers. Debating is also a thriving activity, with a large group of debaters participating this year, thanks to last year's seniors, Anna von Willingh, Semane Reddy-Mbewu and Michaela Todd who have inspired the juniors. The Interact Club has also been reinvigorated through Jessica Prevost and Gemma Wellington's excellent leadership. Their efforts to host a meeting of the southern suburbs school interact clubs was most successful and they have a number of initiatives planned.

Herschel Student Council: Headgirl, Haadiyah Ebrahim, and deputies, Jenna Betty and Laura Formby, together with student leadership, and in conjunction with School Management are close to finalising the constitution of the Herschel Student Council. The input from the Student Transformation Mission document presented to School Management in 2020 by the student leaders has contributed significantly to the decision to form this council.

Uniform Committee meeting: A meeting was held to discuss the updating/refreshing of the Herschel uniform taking into consideration: body shape and comfort, practicality, gender identity, affordability, tradition and change. The

meeting generated much discussion with some fantastic ideas emerging. Further meetings will be held in the Senior School and the Prep School in Term Two.

Community Engagement

The community Engagement team have been busy with two big projects this Term:

Easter Egg competition:

Herschel community engagement and Art students were challenged to identify a theme and decorate a giant Easter Egg that is being displayed in Cavendish Square as part of a community outreach project. Any prize money won will be put into the initiative of the community engagement team.

Our egg:

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put all together that overwhelm the world." - Desmond Tutu

Together, the team created a piece which they believe encompasses the importance of environmental consciousness. They have covered the egg in newspaper to symbolise the throwaway nature of contemporary consumerism. Most newspapers are relevant for the day until newer news comes along, however, nature is forever and is constantly of paramount importance in our lives. The origami flowers, birds and butterflies made in recycled paper symbolise how nature and our planet are more important than the temporary and how nature, like origami, is both fragile and intricate. The recycled newspaper in the flowers is making use of what one already has and acknowledging that what is salvaged and repurposed can be as important as innovation and as exciting novelty. Each thumb print is symbolic of the students of Herschel's personal dedication to make a better future for this planet and the promise to devote their attention to what goes beyond instant visible rewards and aim to make lasting and meaningful change. Please support us by popping down to Cavendish to vote for our egg; this can be done using a QR code. The exhibition runs from 26 March to 12 April 2021.



Care packages for health care workers:

March 27th, 2021 marks 1 year since lockdown in South Africa. In recognition of this significant day, the Herschel pupils put together care packages for the healthcare workers at Victoria Hospital - to thank them, as frontline workers, who have worked so tirelessly this past year to restore the health of thousands of patients. The care packages were made up of a variety of items to spoil/pamper the recipients, and over 120 packages were delivered to Victoria hospital.



The latest **Department of Basic Education Gazette announcement** means that Schools are now permitted to resume the following:

- sport matches, physical education, extra-curricular activities, inter-school, district and provincial matches without any spectators.
- activities that require learners to travel to other schools or provinces like championships, tournaments and inter-school sport matches provided such activities are without spectators.
- choir practise or rehearsals, choir competitions and inter-school choir events without spectators.

Schools are urged to ensure compliance with hygiene and safety measures to prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19, and with social distancing measures pertaining to gatherings.

Similar regulations apply to cultural activities and pursuits too: "Subject to strict adherence to all social distancing, hygiene and safety measures, choir practise or rehearsals, choir competitions and inter-school choir events may resume, without spectators."

Covid-19 Herschel update: Although we are aware of some student who are self-isolating, we are pleased to report that none of our staff or students have tested positive for COVID-19, this term.

Staff updates: We are very grateful to Ms Keren Setton for teaching Art in Term One. She has served the Art Department well in a locum capacity and we wish her every success in her next post. Mrs Candice du Toit joins us from Reddam in a permanent capacity from Term Two and we hope that she will enjoy a long and enriching career at Herschel. Her experience in Design will add an interesting dimension to the Art Department.

Ms Chelsea van Lieshout has resigned and will take up a post at Bridge House in Franschhoek in Term Three of this year where she will head up the English Department, from July 2021. Our loss is indeed Bridge House's gain. Chelsea's move coincides with her having just received her Master of Arts Degree. Her dissertation was focused on the changing landscape of South African literature and the affective measures educators are called to put in place so that language around race, identity and nationality are received safely. Our congratulations to Chelsea on this fantastic achievement, undertaken over a four-year period, as a mother, wife and fulltime English teacher – no mean feat! We shall miss her!

Grade 12 Leadership Induction Ceremony: This took place on Monday 29 March after a morning spent in rotational leadership workshops. Ms Tracy Rousseau organised a simple, but meaningful and focused ceremony whereby the leaders made a pledge to lead the school and to accept the duties and responsibilities that come with leadership in a school environment. It is a pledge to give oneself in service for the greater good of the Herschel community. The teacher mentors responded in turn, pledging their support and guidance. Rumi's concept: *The candles are many, but the light is one*, provided an inspirational illustration of leadership and signified the sense of teamwork. We know that despite the challenging circumstances, this group of young leaders will demonstrate their skills and their commitment to growing and improving Herschel. They have our full support.



Governance workshop: Council and School Management attended a Governance workshop run by Sandy Sagar of ISASA. The three-hour workshop held on Thursday 25 March provided clarity with respect to governance and operation and proved highly beneficial.

House Representatives: I would like to thank House Representatives for the role that they play in disseminating information and communicating in the Senior School. I look forward to our next meeting and would like to see a more active partnership between parents and the school as we move forward. I know that our parent base is in and of itself a rich resource and I hope that we can work together in the interests of advancing the girls' education at Herschel.

The long-awaited opening of the **Inkwenkwezi Music Centre** took place on Tuesday 30 March. His Grace, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, dedicated the Inkwenkwezi Music Centre, unveiling the plaque in a moving ceremony. Sadly, the guest list had to be restricted so as to comply with lockdown restrictions, but those fortunate enough to attend were treated to a beautiful repertoire, starring a range of talented musicians. It was a magnificent concert. The Music staff at Herschel, led by Jocelyn Taylor, can be proud of their expertise and teaching. We hope that this centre brings our community joy, light and notes of peace, hope and promise in the years that lie ahead.



My thanks to all parents for their support of Herschel. We are grateful to you for the many ways in which you support your daughters. There are many levels of support. Showing an interest in and supporting your daughter's journey by allowing her to choose her own path and encouraging open-mindedness and curiosity; these are vital aspects of support and enable an exciting educational experience.

Last and certainly not least, I would like to thank the whole staff – all cohorts – for their efforts and commitment this term. The school does not just run itself and there are many people who play very important roles in ensuring that it runs smoothly. My heartfelt thanks to the entire staff team for a job well done this term! Rest well – you have earned it.

A reminder that the return date for Term Two for pupils is 20th April 2021. (Staff return on 19 April).

We have also tried to regulate the daily closing time (as requested via the House Representatives earlier this term) and therefore attach the revised day schedule for next term.

To those families celebrating Easter, we wish you a happy and blessed Easter.

To those who are celebrating the Passover, *Chag Pesach Semach*. May you be blessed during your celebrations.

To those families who will be fasting for the month of Ramadan, we wish you a blessed Ramadan.

Take care over the holiday period and enjoy this time with the special people in your lives.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "HG Goedeke". The "HG" is a stylized monogram, and "Goedeke" is written in a cursive script below it.

Heather Goedeke