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# HERSCHEL SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

No. 13– 26 November 2021

Dear Parents

We are nearing the end of a busy term and there is a buzz on campus, despite the toll that exams has taken on energy levels! In my final elective lesson (Leadership and Women), the Grade 9s seated before me were visibly exhausted and 'flat' and so I taught them the art of the power nap. I hope that they will take this forward as a 'go to' strategy in times of pressure or exhaustion. I was impressed at the speed with which some of them acquired the skill!

*"Nature breeds curiosity; it helps to grow explorers rather than robots. It reminds us that we are part of something bigger. It grounds us, calms us."* Ben Palmer-Fry

The Grade 10s are on Stepout and by all accounts having a wonderful time, especially now that the weather has lifted a little and the sun is shining.

Hopefully they have had some grounding moments amidst the adrenalin rushes of cycling, paddling and hiking. There is substantial literature attesting to the value of being outdoors, especially with respect to the relational skills it instils, to say nothing of increased physical health, enhanced mental and spiritual health, enhanced spiritual, sensory, and aesthetic awareness and developing the ability to assert personal control and increased sensitivity to one's own well-being. This incredible adventure week gives the Grade 10s the opportunity to get to know each other and to develop new friendships, discovering more about who they are in the process.

As I write, from out of one of the many windows of my office space, I can see a film crew, working hard at capturing what it is that we do. They are highly relational, creative and talented people and it is wonderful seeing the energy and conceptualising what happens within the group. We are producing a video welcome for our new Grade 8s joining Herschel in 2022 just to let them know how excited we are about meeting them in January. In creating something like a video, one is forced to think deeply about what it is that we are wanting to achieve at Herschel.

As a society we often raise critical questions in a time of crises because we recognize a need to respond if we wish to survive. In the pandemic and in response to #BlackLivesMatter, we have looked long and hard at ourselves and we are intent on fostering relevant, holistic and forward-thinking education at Herschel, underpinned by strong values and the fostering of an environment which centers itself on belonging.

Our duty of care to our students needs to start from this base and we are committed to this.

The senior grades have completed their exams and we hope that students have achieved their goals. I have spoken to some students who have said that they "did okay" or "some good, some not so good" and comments that suggest that they could have done better, and I have told them that they should not be hard on themselves, that they are experiencing the second year of a pandemic and that they should focus on areas that require a little more

focus, areas that challenge them and see that as real learning and an opportunity for growth.

When you discuss year-end reports with your daughters, please be mindful of the challenging context within which they have worked. Discuss learning as opposed to marks! Look at the teacher comments and affirm and encourage them to keep giving of their best and to know that that is enough. Ensure that they are finding balance and that they continue with activities and sport that they enjoy. The relational, social and emotional growth that takes place through participation is more important than the achievement of academic goals. Academic goals achieved at the expense of wellbeing, and of holistic education exist in isolation and are certainly not a pre-determiner for success. Encourage communication, support creativity, talk about the values that your family upholds, connect with your daughters beyond the report that they receive and know that this means the world to them! How they define themselves holistically is our collective goal!

There are so many thanks due at the end of a year, and I am conscious of people who have given so much of their time, expertise, love and support to our school. We have occasion at school to thank all staff members for their contributions across all areas of operation. This Herschel team is a phenomenal team! I want to thank you, as parents, for your continued support of Herschel and especially of your daughters. Our partnership (and I hope that as we learn to live with the pandemic we will see more of you on campus) is essential for the holistic growth and development that we are striving towards. Thank you!

It is always sad to say farewell to members of staff who have served Herschel. To Dumisani Nomsobo (6 ½ years) and Luvuyo Mbaleki (5 months) who have worked as members of the grounds staff team; we are grateful for your input into the beautiful gardens and surrounds that enhance the work space at Herschel. Thank you! To Sheila Moolman (5 years) and Ingrid Sadler (15 years) both of whom have held

relational roles as receptionists in the Herschel Support Unit and Inkwenkwezi Music Centre respectively. Thank you for being the first port of call in two busy spaces!

To Toni Harding (English Department, 8 years), Sue Stein (ICT, 9 years), Nicolene Poggenpoel (Life Orientation, 15 years) and Kathy Burden (Physical Science and AP Mathematics, 15 years), all of whom have taught at Herschel for a number of years, making a difference and having an impact on the lives of many students. We also say goodbye to Gaynor Cornish, Arderne House mother and mentor who has contributed significantly in her time at Herschel. She will be missed in so many ways, especially by the boarders. Her assistant, Nicky McCarthy, is also leaving, having completed her PGCE at Stellenbosch and we wish her well in the travel plans that she has.

Both Jocelyn Taylor (Head of Music) and Sue Grové (History, Curriculum Development) leave Herschel after 19 and 20 years respectively. Jocelyn has headed up the Music Department and we are deeply grateful to her for the role that she has played in creating a dynamic music department and for her input into the development of the beautiful new Inkwenkwezi Music Centre. Sue Grové's leadership of curriculum development is legendary! She has championed the advancement of academics, insisting on the development of skills (both by teachers and students) and she leaves a legacy in this respect.

Ros Bouwer has served as Deputy of Academics at Herschel for the past 7 years and has directed the core business of academic operations and administration, performing a number of consecutive roles. Her advocacy for the Independent Examination Board NSC has been invaluable and I am hugely appreciative of the groundwork that she did in preparing for the move to the IEB. We thank Ros for her commitment to Herschel and for her sense of fun and good humour.

Connecting with friends, family and loved ones akes our hearts full! I wish you all a happy, healthy and safe holiday season with your families and friends.

To our Jewish families celebrating Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of the Lights, we wish you love, light and peace as you honour this special time between the 28 November and the 6 December.  
*Chag Sameach!*

To Herschel families celebrating Christmas, we wish you a blessed and peaceful time on the 25 December as you celebrate with loved ones. May the spirit of this season lift you and hold you. Happy Christmas!

With kind regards

Heather

**ADIEU**





## STEPOUT 2021





## PROTESTING TO RAISE AWARENESS

The idea to protest against the Shell Oil Company's planned seismic testing for oil along the Wild Coast, South Africa, came about when the Grade 9 Economics of Happiness class embarked on their "Think Global, Act Local" project. Students considered the many global issues the world is facing and then looked at some issues affecting our communities and country. The news of the impending seismic testing along the Wild Coast happened simultaneously as the project - inspiring a class project instead of individual work.

The class researched what was happening and learnt about how to protest responsibly. We then made posters, obtained permission and notified relevant authorities to go ahead with the protest.

On Thursday, 18 November, the Grade 9 Economics of Happiness students, the Herschel Earth Matters Club, interested Grade 8s and 9s, teachers and one grandmother walked to the Shell garage on Paradise Road to create awareness and express their disapproval of the planned seismic testing.





What a way to end the **Grade 9 Around the World** elective, with a festive celebration of Cuisines from across the globe 🌎





## MUSIC NEWS

Our hearty congratulations go to the Herschel Flute Ensemble who won the Epworth Medal for Best Senior School Woodwind Ensemble at the recently held Cape Town Eisteddfod. (Ruby Paterson, Diyara Govender, Kasey Peterson (Grade 11); Esther Couves, Leah Burns (Grade 10); Jessica Ratcliffe (Grade 9); Rebecca Hewat, Carla Lampe (Grade 8)

In addition, Rebecca Hewat and Carla Lampe won R200 for Best Duet in the Woodwind category.



## Herschel Parent Hub

Check out the latest articles on the Parent Hub - this week we are looking at Girls and Sport and the pressure on them to perform. We also have some tips on how to deal with stress in competitive environments. Please post your comments or ideas on the Hub and contribute towards this aspiring vibrant community.

<https://herschel-dat-peae.blogspot.com/>

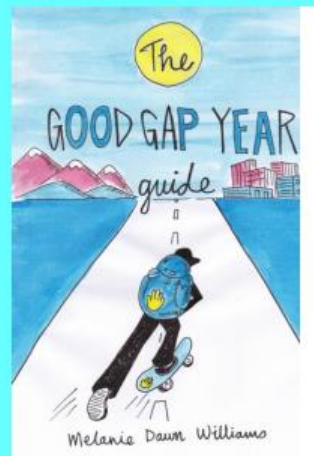
## Gap Year Guide

Melanie Williams has produced an excellent guide to a structured gap year.

There is value in a gap year and if your daughter is considering this, you will find this guide, produced by Melanie Williams, very insightful.

### A Great Christmas Gift

This 80-page, easy-to-read guide is for young people taking a structured Gap Year. It is full of practical guidance and relevant topics.



The six elements needed in a Gap Year are addressed:

- Being mentored
- Generating an income
- Studying as skills development
- Job shadowing
- Volunteering
- Travelling

*"If education, society and traditions no longer provide what our young people need, I am convinced that a creatively crafted gap year will increase the young person's competence and confidence. This is precious and perhaps sufficient to inspire a young person to venture into the forest of adulthood." - Melanie Williams*

Price: R250 (book) R200 (pdf version)

Contact: Melanie Williams [mel@optimyze.co.za](mailto:mel@optimyze.co.za)

## FROM THE DESK OF THE OLD HERSCHELIAN ASSOCIATION



**The OHA 100 website has just been launched!**  
<https://oha100.co.za/>

In anticipation of Herschel's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations to be held in February next year, the Old Herschelians' Association has been hard at work creating a website to communicate events and to showcase memorabilia for sale to commemorate Herschel's Centenary.

The OHA's vision is to sell these items to Old Herschelians and current pupils alike, in order to raise funds that can be used to support the OHA network and provide financial relief, when required, to pupils and their families in the course of their studies. We made sure we supported members of the Herschel family and all the items, except the rose, have been proudly procured from Herschelians.

You will find a wonderful variety of items for sale. Most items will be available for collection from the Herschel Heritage Centre at the Senior School. Jewellery by Kirsten Goss needs to be collected in person from a local outlet. Certain items can also be sent by courier to a destination within South Africa. Unfortunately, international shipping is not available. Please contact us if you need our help in terms of delivery of the beautiful commemorative items.

Please visit our website and give us some feedback on [oha@herschel.org.za](mailto:oha@herschel.org.za)

