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HERSCHEL SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

No. 5 – 24 June 2021

Dear Parents

“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it.” (H.E. Luccock)

Term Two has passed by, not without its challenges. I am enormously grateful to the teaching staff for their stoicism in the face of a long and busy term. Their professionalism and commitment to the pupils is something that I appreciate and value. Likewise, we are fortunate at Herschel to have excellent administrative staff who support the academic process and daily operations. A school of Herschel's size requires ongoing upkeep and attention and the Grounds and Maintenance Staff, Cleaning Staff and Security Staff, together with the staff of Origin, who provide catering to the school, are critical role-players in ensuring that the school runs smoothly. Special mention must be made of Mrs Cornish and Ms McCarthy whose roles in Arderne House are greatly appreciated. Covid-19 protocols in the boarding house have become second nature! The pandemic has highlighted the importance of each and every aspect that contributes to running a school and I would like to express my thanks to all of the staff for their efforts and commitment this term.

FATHER'S DAY 2021

Sunday 20 June was Father's Day and there were several articles, interviews and video clips with various Fathers expressing their views. It is a difficult day for many people in different ways and so being mindful of that I tried to find a viewpoint that would

resonate with a wide audience. I came across an article by KOJO BAFFOE – a writer, poet and blogger who recently released a collection of essays: ***Listen to your footsteps*** in which he recounts his transcontinental heritage. His father is Ghanaian and his mother, German. When asked what his approach to child-rearing is, it became clear that for him it is about the values you have and about how you show up in the world. “I teach my kids the same values I was raised with – respect for yourself and others and knowing that there are multiple plans open to you.”

How does he go about raising his daughter in a society plagued by patriarchal norms and misogyny? “There's no easy answer. We live in a patriarchal world and systems are built in a particular way. It's important to me to teach my daughter that she can do anything she decides she wants to do. Sexism and misogyny are a man's problem, not a woman's problem because women are the victims of institutionalised discrimination. To change it we as men have to change.” Baffoe added that he was very close to his father, explaining that he lost his mother early on in life and his father was his only parent for most of his life. “He influenced greatly the man I am, and how I view the world.”

I thought that Baffoe's viewpoint supported the educational premise of girls' schools – that we consciously combat viewpoints that restrict or limit the role of women to certain domains – his message is clear and one that definitely gets my vote:

It's important to me to teach my daughter that she can do anything she decides she wants to do.

To all Dads, guardians and dad figures, it is so important for you to be involved in your daughters' lives and to show an interest in what interests them, affirming, respecting and celebrating their being. I hope that you embraced the notion of fatherhood last Sunday.

STAFF UPDATES

Sadly, there are some staff members leaving Herschel this term and they go with our immense gratitude and every good wish for happiness and success in the next chapters of their respective careers.

Mrs Monique Nyback has been at Herschel since 2008. She has managed academic support and career guidance at Herschel, playing a significant role in providing support for pupils who have sought it and processing the extensive administration required for accommodations granted by the WCED. Mrs Nyback is leaving Herschel to take up a position as an Educational Psychologist at the Neurodiversity Centre in Claremont. We wish Mrs Nyback every success in this next chapter of her career.

Ms Chelsea van Lieshout's contribution to the English Department has been enormous and her source creation, conceptualisation of tasks and feedback has enriched her students and colleagues. She has an incredible opportunity for continued professional growth and leadership at Bridge House in Franschhoek and we wish her well for this change. Bridge House's gain will most definitely be Herschel's loss. We will remember Chelsea as a teacher who has focused on intellect and heart. In the words of the Dalai Lama: ***"When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts."***

We will be saying goodbye to Liesl Kriel, who has been a locum teacher for Mrs Nuraan Barendse. We are grateful to Ms Kriel for the role that she has played, both as a teacher and tutor, and we wish her well in the next chapter of her teaching career.

Mrs Barendse returns next term having had maternity leave. Likewise, we look forward to welcoming Mrs Barendse back to Herschel, mindful of the fact that it will be quite an adjustment for her returning to school.

Dean Hoffenberg, Network Manager, joined us at the beginning of last year and has been responsible for overseeing the network infrastructure and maintaining the various platforms and systems that make up Herschel's network. Dean has always been greatly interested in cyber security, and an opportunity has been offered to him to work in this field. It is with a heavy heart that we say good-bye to Dean, but we wish him all the best for his new adventure.

Mr Etienne Terblanche has been at Herschel for 19 years overseeing the school grounds. He has taken early retirement and we wish him and his family well for the future.

Ms Hanneke de Bruijn will be taking her long leave next term and she will be replaced by Ms Alet Mihalik for Term 3. We wish Hanneke a fantastic break from the busyness of school life and we hope that her plans to travel to Zanzibar materialise. Either way, she will make the most of this time, travelling locally and having the time to do those things that she most enjoys such as reading and exercising. We wish her a relaxing and restorative time away and will welcome her back in Term Four.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY TERM 3

On Tuesday 10 August (following directly on from the long weekend celebrating Women's Day on the 9th August) the entire staff will be attending a full day workshop with Lovelyn Nwadeyi as a follow-on from last year's course. This was supposed to take place earlier in the year but had to be postponed owing to Covid-19 and restrictions with respect to numbers. Depending on the status of the pandemic and lockdown level restrictions the workshop is scheduled to take place between 07h30 and 15h30

on Tuesday 10 August. All pupils will have an independent work day on the 10th August and will not attend school on this day. A reminder will be posted on the d6 nearer the time, but please accept this as an early indication.

PARENT HUB

I do want to draw your attention to The Parent Hub – an online portal which has been created as an ongoing educational space for parents. We invite you to explore this space! I would like to thank Jo Frater and the Parent Education Group (PEG), as well as Stuart Levey (IT Manager) for their commitment to seeing this task through. We hope to cover a range of relevant and interesting topics as part of an ongoing awareness and community-building campaign. We hope that this will bring people together, encourage discussion and debate, create awareness and provide useful information to parents. The link to the portal is <https://herschel-dat-peae.blogspot.com/>

We have had to become responsive to the pandemic which continues to affect us and we are aware that we have not always got things right; however, we keep evolving and finding new ways, one of which is the new Covid-19 reporting mechanism which Tracy Rousseau and Stuart Levey have developed to facilitate accurate and easy reporting. We are extremely grateful to the doctors who continue to advise us with respect to protocols and who ensure that we are consistent in our implementation. Their input has been invaluable.

A reminder that while staff return to school on Monday 19 July, **pupils will return on Tuesday 20 July for the start of Term Three.**

Enjoy the holiday break with your families. Keep safe and take care.

Heather Goedeke (HEAD)

YOUTH DAY 2021

June 16th. A day synonymous with youth, struggle and loss of life, but also of change.

The theme for Youth Day 2021 is “Channeling youth power for nation building”. In assembly on Monday 14 June we reviewed the way in which injustice and disparity in education (having regard specifically to language policies) has led to student action throughout South Africa’s history. We did this by spotlighting major moments in South Africa’s history from the events of 16 June 1976 through to the anti-racism campaign of 2021. The iconic photograph by Sam Nzima showing Mbuyisa Mahlubi carrying the body of Hector Pieterse, and accompanied by Hector’s anguished sister, Antoinette, provides a sombre point of departure for an overview of the events that unfolded on 16th June 1976.

Moving rapidly through a period of social injustice, police brutality, inequity, and political instability, we focused on the way in which the youth (and adults) spoke out against xenophobia in 2008, many of them experiencing victimisation when there was a spate of xenophobic attacks countrywide.

In 2013 the #BlackLivesMatter movement trended on Twitter and social media platforms after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2012. Students spoke out against police brutality and social injustice, including specifically, systemic racism and the abuse of power. The movement spread across the United States and became known worldwide.

Student voices rose again shortly after this with the #FeesMustFall student movement which started in late 2015. The #FeesMustFall movement unleashed social and political power that challenged the established political order, held university managements to account, and changed the social fabric of universities and of society.

The movement led to a total reconsideration of foundational values; a close look at political and socio-economic ideologies and a casting off of previously held/accepted practices. Policies were changed and institutions transformed. Authorities learnt of the power of direct action in achieving radical results. Student voices revitalised the decolonisation narrative, opening up rich debate in relation to curriculum and Afrocentrism. The voices of young South Africans were heard far and wide in organised student protests.



In February 2016, Lovelyn Nwadeyi was invited to deliver the convocation address at Stellenbosch University. It was dubbed “the speech that won’t go away”. It laid down serious challenges for the university leadership and for higher education more generally. Lovelyn engaged directly with the issue of language and I shared these points in assembly:

“The elephant in the room is the issue of language. The thing with language and how we use it is that it is never neutral – especially in the context of South Africa and Stellenbosch, where language is as personal as it is political. For me it is important to recognise that the University of Stellenbosch is a South African university. It belongs to all South Africans and not to a single group. Unless we want another Codesa, we cannot now start to delineate and decide who gets to study where on the basis of what language”.

As South Africans, we have the choice to reclaim our humanity. Both apartheid and colonisation dehumanised us all by giving white people a superiority complex and black people an inferiority complex.

We must dismantle this inhumanity that we are all products of by reclaiming our collective humanity.

We must reclaim our histories so that our children will know exactly the truth about themselves. We must reclaim our languages so that those who choose to speak them do so out of pure love (as I do) and not out of obligation.

I look forward to the day when I won’t have to talk to my children about racism or sexism. That is really my dream for South Africa and Africa as a whole. To accomplish this, we need to know about the roles we need to play.

Those who listen, must listen. Those who need the chance to cry, must be allowed to cry. Those who need to be angry, must be allowed to be angry. Those who need to talk, must be allowed to talk.

But none of us gets to claim an easy victory. Because there is no victory in our collective pain, there is only closure. And South Africa desperately needs closure”.

This speech opened up a massive debate around language and power.

We moved from the impact of Lovelyn Nwadeyi’s speech to the presence of 13-year-old Zulaikha Patel who became a symbol of the fight against hair policies regarding black girls’ hair in 2016. The demonstration that she and her classmates led, resulted in changes to policies at many schools.

The young activist is quoted as saying: *“asking me to change my hair is like asking me to erase my blackness.”*

You will remember the senseless killing of Uyinene Mrwetyana. Brutally assaulted at the Claremont post office, her murder spotlighted South Africa’s struggle against sexual and gender-based violence. The youth responded with protest marches and silent vigils, taking a stand against societal injustice and gender-based violence.

#yousilenceweamplify and the anti-racism social media campaigns focused on the injustices, inequity and systemic racism in schools across the country. Herschel was specifically mentioned as being performative and this has resulted in several concurrent initiatives, including the anti-racism statement, an independent inquiry, the operationalising of Transformation, Equity and Belonging and a focused effort on addressing the injustices of unequal experiences in the Herschel community.

Frequently in South Africa’s history, young people have brought the country to a level of awareness that forces action.

At this juncture, the youth share major challenges - historically, the notion of causes is tied up with young people whose passion, anger, commitment, energy and vision has forced change. But in South Africa we have so many historically inherited social justice challenges. We all need to commit to working towards a more just and equal society which enables access to fundamental human rights.

As a girls’ school, we need to empower and equip our pupils. They need our support, love, encouragement, and belief so that they are emboldened to take steps towards becoming who and what they want to become and to ensure that the foundations for legacy are laid. We looked at the confidence of DJ Zinhle who says: “Women are as

capable as men and this needs to be the focus of our education; that women can be whatever they want to be” and of Indian-born Canadian writer, Rupi Kaur: “Our work should equip the next generation of women to outdo us in every field. This is the legacy we’ll leave behind.”

Both of these women have powerful messages to share with the youth of Herschel. We need to bear in mind that legacy is only possible because of what has gone before. On Youth Day, 2021 we remember those who have gone before, and we remember them with deep respect. *(Heather Goedeke)*

The Hub

The Hub is an exciting new online space for parents and guardians to connect. This parent portal is a place to share, learn and brainstorm together. It is parent driven and we want you to be a part of it.

Our aims are:

- To support our children in having a happy, healthy experience of school imbued with a sense of pride and belonging
- To create a greater sense of community amongst all Herschel parents and guardians
- To educate ourselves on topics that relate to our children and to share our journey of learning

Today’s world is very different from the one we grew up in - and that is before Covid-19 is added to the mix. It is our duty to our children to keep informed of their reality, whether it be understanding the latest social media trends, grasping the complexities of gender, dealing with eating disorders and the pressures for perfection, or facing our own role in racist constructs and the legacy that has created.

Last year’s social media campaign, #yousilenceweamplify was a wakeup call to many of us, that not all girls feel valued or nurtured at Herschel. Our initial theme for The Hub is “Belonging” and our intention is to promote healthy discourse amongst parents, around what creates a

sense of belonging. As caregivers, we know that our lived experiences discussed around the supper table are absorbed by our children. I hope by creating a greater sense of inclusion and belonging for the whole family, no girl will have to feel the pain of discrimination on the grounds of her race, sexual persuasion, religion, physical ability, socio-economic status or culture again.

We warmly welcome all comments and contributions from you, as long as they are respectfully presented. We will be moderating prior to publication to ensure this. The Hub is run by parents, for parents and is dependent on your input to be a success. We really look forward to hearing from you! (*Jo Frater, Parent*)

Matric Dance Invitation Ceremony

Our Matrics were in for a wonderful surprise this week when they were handed their invitations to the Matric Dance!

The girls were in for a special treat with a beautiful performance from South African singer, songwriter and storyteller Zolani Mahola, who also had a wonderful, personal message for the Class of 2021. Zolani also handed the girls their exquisite, personalized invitation gift boxes, containing amongst other things the traditional gift of a pearl necklace, which the Matrics wear with such pride!



Grade 9 Elective - "Masters of Disasters"

Grade 9 pupils taking the elective "*Masters of Disasters*" had fun seeing their volcanoes come to life and emit lava.



Arderne House

This term we saw "Team Arderne" heading out after supper for a surprise fun evening watching "*School House*" at Bishops final dress rehearsal for their fund-raising cabaret evening. We have been invited in previous years but thought it would not go ahead this year due to the ongoing pandemic. But it did, and it was definitely one of the best performances so far. In the audience we were joined by the boarders from Katherine House from St Cyprian's Girls School.

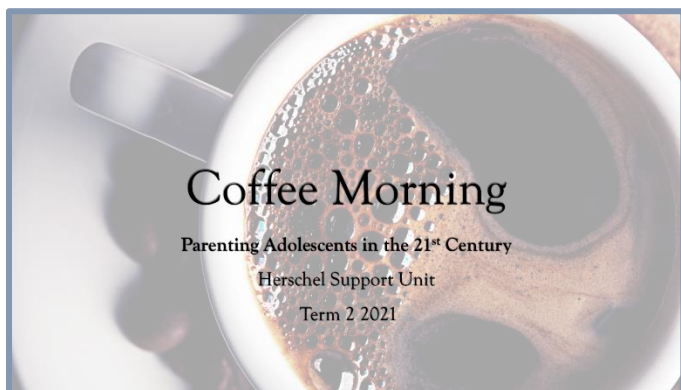
The boys out shone themselves with comedy skits, solo singers, and grade group percussion pieces to name a few. The Grade 11s in their swan lake tutus were fabulous, and a definite hit!

On our return the girls were inspired enough to burst into spontaneous singing all the way from the bus to the house and this continued for quite a while thereafter....hope we didn't upset the neighbours!

It has been an interesting and challenging year so far for boarders and staff. But, as a family, we have weathered it together with a balance of hard work and fun.

With focused prep time, music practices and sporting activities, with the odd movie night and quizzes thrown in along the way.... we even coped with a ten day lock in due to me contracting Covid. Luckily, everyone else stayed healthy or at least asymptomatic. We are looking forward to more adventures as a house as we navigate our way through the rest of 2021. (Gaynor Cornish)

HERSCHEL SUPPORT UNIT COFFEE MORNINGS



During the 2nd term, the Herschel Support Unit hosted three coffee mornings. In this space, we encourage informal and relaxed conversations between the Herschel Senior School parents. The theme was **'Parenting Adolescents in the 21st Century'**. Parents were given an opportunity to share their questions, ideas and experiences as well as make connections with other parents.

These mornings are an opportunity for the counsellors to hear the challenges and successes Herschel parents are facing while parenting adolescents. The objective is to provide a thinking and talking space for parents. They were guided by broad themes relating to parenting adolescents; these included the *challenges of parenting teenagers, boundaries and limit-setting and dealing with unexpected life crises.*

Open ended questions were provided to guide the small group discussions.

These mornings have been richly rewarding and beneficial for parents as well as the HSU. We have walked away from each session with many issues to reflect upon. The feedback has guided our work with the pupils and is shared anonymously with Management.

A dominant theme that immersed during our first two coffee mornings was **Anxiety**. Parents voiced their need for guidance in supporting their teenagers. We shared the feedback with Anita Bardenhorst (Clinical Psychologist) and invited her to address the parent body on **'Teenage Anxiety at Herschel'**. Anita provided parents with an overview of anxiety as well as some skills and tools that empower parents in dealing with their teenager's difficult feelings. As a community outreach initiative, parents were encouraged to bring along donations for La Culla Baby Safe Haven. (*Tasneem Variawa*)

MUSIC

On Tuesday evening the 8th June, our Grade 8 and 9 Subject Music students performed for each other and their teachers in an informal Music Workshop. This was the first time many of them have performed for an audience in months and it was so encouraging to see them all on stage.

The students certainly rose to the occasion and performed with confidence and grace and we hope to share more performances with a wider audience as soon as circumstances allow!

Brava Grade 8 and 9's! (*Petra Conrads*)



An abstract painting with vibrant colors including red, yellow, green, and blue. A prominent diagonal streak of yellow and orange, resembling a rainbow, runs from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is composed of various textured brushstrokes and splatters of paint.

Wishing all our students
and staff a most
enjoyable and relaxing 3
week break.

Term 3 commences on
Tuesday 20 July.