



HERSCHEL SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

No. 3 – 27 February 2023

Dear Parents and Pupils

These past two weeks have been action-packed (and even that feels like an understatement)!

We held two Open Days, where we hosted prospective pupils and their families on campus. This served as a reminder of what a beautiful school we have and of how many opportunities for growth and learning there are at Herschel! Our tennis and basketball tours were successful, the 1st Tennis Team retaining the trophy at the Epworth Tournament. Also on the sporting front, we enjoyed a host of water polo fixtures and basketball fixtures.



On Friday 17th February we celebrated Founder's Day, marking the 101st birthday of Herschel with a wonderful morning of traditions: a special assembly where the guest of honour, Léa Weimann (the 2023 recipient of The Caroline Herschel Award) addressed staff and pupils in her capacity as an inspiring environmental activist. A beautiful day ended with Herschfest; a wonderful evening of acoustic music showcasing the incredible talents of our pupils, under the stars outside of the Inkwenkwezi Music Centre.

We also took a special moment to introduce Mrs Renee Swartz (incoming Head of Herschel Preparatory) to the senior school staff and pupils when the whole school congregated around the fountain to sing "Happy birthday" to Herschel, followed by the School Song. All in all, it was a heartwarming day. Listening to the memories of the year groups of Herschelians who attended the Founder's Day luncheon, served as a reminder to us all of the importance of friendship and connection.



The Summer Fun Day presented all pupils and staff with an opportunity to put work aside and focus on friendship, music, swimming and pancake relays. There was a great atmosphere! My thanks to all our House Directors and to Tracy Rousseau for the conceptualisation of this wonderful Summer Fun Day, and to the sports department for organising the gala.



The fun did not end there. Carol Alpert, accompanied by Wendy Paterson, Wesley Deintje and Jayne Euvrard, took a group of 40 pupils to watch *Midsummer Night's Dream* on Tuesday this week at The Maynardville Theatre and on Wednesday evening, the matrics visited the Baxter to see a production of *Hamlet*. The theatre brings to life an interpretation of text which inspires and enriches the learning experience and I am very grateful to our teachers for providing these opportunities.

Speaking of theatre, please note the advisory in the article on this year's Senior School production, *The Wolves*; it is not meant to alarm but is intended to be upfront and to give you a context for the play. It is a highly acclaimed, relevant and thought-provoking play aimed at extending our pupils and challenging perceptions. We want you to know a little about it so that you can make informed decisions for family members wanting to support it.

My thanks to staff for their incredible commitment and input into the extramural programme, including camps and excursions in addition to ongoing teaching and assessment, planning for the assessment requirements of the IEB, preparing pupils across a range of cultural activities, and assisting with functions at school. Term One is a particularly demanding term with respect to time commitments!

Equally, I want to applaud the pupils who support the rich extramural programme we have at Herschel and who engage with such positivity, commitment and focus. This collaboration is central to the success of Herschel – this meeting between the provision of opportunity and the taking up of it!

On Wednesday we celebrated Ash Wednesday, after which the Grade 8s departed on their grade tour to Tulbagh. They returned on Friday, having had a lot of fun and having become better acquainted with themselves and with friends and peers in their year group.



Aside from the amazing opportunities that we have at our school, I want to emphasise the need we have to be intentional in order to build a cohesive and caring community. In this regard, I am including an extract from my Founder's Day assembly address to staff and pupils:

Herschel is a vibrant, busy, moving space. It reflects the actions of growth and learning, and the opportunities for expanding our understanding of the world around us, as challenging as that might be at times. It is also a complex space; a microcosm of South African society, reflecting and engaging with the greater political, social and economic issues and dynamics at any particular stage in its development.

This serves to remind us of our need to stretch ourselves, to become socially aware, to get involved in initiatives that provide service – that action our motto – learning to make a difference – so that we contribute to making a difference in our communities. We also have an opportunity to widen our friendship circle through intentionally learning more about each other and nurturing connection, so that we can look out for each other and ensure that no-one is left out or left behind; we need to do the work that each of us needs to do to become a better human. This is not something that happens organically; it requires intention, effort and self-reflection. This is especially important if we are going to break down narratives that have previously dominated Herschel.

Bell Hooks, in her book: *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* reminds us: *To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination.*

As we set out into this next century, we need to be guided by the values that we have identified as core values: authenticity, empathy, respect, equity and equality, integrity and accountability. These need to be taken to heart and applied to the how, what and why of what we do. If we are purposeful and persistent, we can make a significant difference and grow Herschel into a place that we know for sure will support each person's being; each person's identity, experience and potential.

In closing, to love ourselves and support each other in the process of becoming real is perhaps the greatest single act of daring greatly. Brene Brown's words challenge us!

Let us dare greatly this year (our 101st birthday) and celebrate a growing, diverse and evolving Herschel; a school that is responding to the needs of our broader society, and preparing young women for the opportunities, challenges and changes that are shaping this new era.

This cannot be achieved by a single person, or even a small group; it requires 'buy-in' from each of us – as a collective we can create a dynamic, richly diverse and integrated community at Herschel. The African proverb, *If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together* springs to mind immediately. One could argue that the first part of this proverb is arguable. What does "fast" mean? What does this achieve? Certainly, when it comes to processes as complex as transformation, and systemic growth and community cohesion, one is cognizant of the time required to effect meaningful, sustainable and respectful change.

I referred earlier to a special guest of honour at our Founder's Day assembly. What an honour it was listening to Léa Weimann, the youngest recipient to date of The

Caroline Herschel Award. Léa is a climate activist who actions hope through her commitment to making the world a better place, and to safeguarding the planet for future generations. Her hands-on approach, grounded personality, commitment to holistic solution-finding and collaboration, tenacious attention to policy and academic rigour makes her a force to be reckoned with. Her anthology of poems chronicles her deep respect and love for the natural world and her capacity for self-reflection and accountability is incredible! I have connected with Léa on the LinkedIn platform and noted her updated post referring to her experience at Herschel on Friday where she was honoured with The Caroline Herschel Award:

I am the youngest recipient of the award, and it really is a strange but extraordinary feeling to receive a life-achievement award at the age of 24 when there is still so much to do in my life and in this world. However, this made it even more special to speak to so many fellow young girls who also want to make our stories and lives on Earth count towards something greater, who want to make a difference and secure a future on a habitable planet.

Furthermore, I feel very grateful that many of the teachers that taught and inspired me in various ways during my time at high school were still there and I was able to also share this moment with them and with both my parents and my brother. I loved being back at school, walking along the corridors that were my home for so many years, the place where my activism blossomed, seeing many of my teachers again, exploring what has changed and improved and also talking with the Herschel community about the future and the road towards a sustainable school and society ...

... I accept the Caroline Herschel Award with a deep sense of humility and gratitude. This award is not just a recognition of my work but rather it is a recognition of the power of collective action, and a deep sense of love and care for our planet. My journey working for a future on a habitable planet continues, really it is just the beginning, and I believe that as long as we act, and we use our voices, and our passions, our talents, our brains, and our hearts – there is hope for our world & our future.

(Léa Weimann: LLM Global Environment and Climate Change Law | First Class MA (Honours) University of St Andrews & Principal Medallist 2021| Poet & Author| COP27 Youth Delegate| Stop Ecocide Ambassador| Eco Activist).

From this post, you will have learnt a lot about the values important to Léa; her grounded personality, heartfelt commitment to eco-activism and her warrior spirit. We are incredibly proud of her spirit and of the example she has set for our pupils. Léa's dedication to the planet is a living example of the school motto, *learning to make a difference* and we hope that she will inspire activists across multiple disciplines, because as she so rightly said: *there is an interconnectedness in all things and activism for the right cause is intersectional in impact.*

When passion, cause, personality and field of study intersect, there is amazing growth potential, and this is clearly evident in Léa's case. I would encourage parents and pupils to explore this intersect to see that intended fields of study align with personality, passion and purpose (as far as possible), as I am sure that this impacts on the richness of life's experience and on one's mental health and wellbeing too.

The Herschel Support Unit (HSU) will be starting up **COFFEE MORNING** again. This provides a thinking and talking space for parents to come together and grapple with the challenges and growth that come with parenting adolescents in this day and age. It is an opportunity for parents to share their questions, experiences and ideas with one another and to hear from others in an informal way. Please note the invitation extended to you in the newsletter. We would love you to join us for this!

In this regard, please note too, the invitation to join the parent **Prayer Group**. This group of parents meets in the Senior School on Wednesday mornings, and you are most welcome to join in. Both the Coffee mornings and the Prayer Group gatherings provide parents with a wonderful opportunity to meet new parents and to find connection at Herschel.

I know that matric pupils and their families are excited about the upcoming Matric Dance which takes place on Friday 3 March at the Kenilworth Racecourse. This is a much anticipated coming-of-age dance and we look forward to hosting the Class of 2023 at this elegant occasion. On Saturday, 4 March, the décor and setting will be repurposed for a very important Gala Dinner Dance. This annual fundraiser serves a very important function in providing funds for the Herschel Bursary Fund which is used to support a full Herschel experience for pupils who are bursary recipients. We invite you to book a table and invite friends to join us in our advocacy for an exceptional educational experience for all Herschel pupils. We hope that you will join us for what promises to be a wonderful evening for an excellent cause!

Warm regards

Heather

PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR SILENT AUCTION IS LIVE! THERE ARE FANTASTIC PRIZES TO BID FOR SO HURRY AND PLACE YOUR BIDS. CLICK ON THE LINK OR VISIT THE WEBSITE AT WWW.HERSCHELGALADINNER.CO.ZA TO VIEW THE LIVE AUCTION PRIZES WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE 4TH MARCH 2023 AT OUR DAZZLING GALA DINNER AND DANCE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT galadinner@herschel.org.za



GALA
HERSCHEL
GALA DINNER & AUCTION
Night

BID NOW!

THE ONLINE AUCTION is LIVE!
Don't Miss Out! This Auction is for a limited time only.

THE Andros
DELUXE BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Experience a night away
at the Andros Deluxe
Boutique Hotel

Treat yourself to a High Tea
for Two at
Cellars Hohenort

Kirstenbosch Garden Stroll
by Artist Kari Levett

Go to
www.herschelgaladinner.co.za

Gala Dinner Valentines Hamper

Congratulations to Anemae Smith (Grade 8) who was the lucky winner of the raffle for the awesome Valentine's Day hamper. Thank you to everyone who bought tickets, over R18 000 was raised in aid of the Bursary Fund!



Founder's Day 2023






#46 "SOMEONE DIED IN MY HOUSE..."

THE WOLVES

BY SARAH DELAPPE



14 - 16 MARCH
HERSCHEL THEATRE

Quicket
EXPERIENCE AWESOME

"THE WOLVES" IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CONCORD THEATRICALS ON BEHALF OF SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.



INTERACT

On Sunday 19 February, Interact joined four other local high schools in putting together a day of fun for children in need. Organised by the Rotary Club of Claremont, the event took place at SACS. We invited children from Kewtown Primary in Athlone who were thrilled to spend time with the 'big kids;' playing soccer, having their faces painted and competing on the obstacle course.

Our pupils were exceptional. They interacted beautifully with the children and even roped in some Bishops pupils to help draw spider man on a few faces. A great day was had by all!

SUMMER FUN DAY



Single Focus Day: Grade 12 Drama

Grade 12s began the day with an exploration of the questions, themes and ideas raised in their setwork 'Top Girls' by Carol Churchill. The pupils took the time to write, read and respond to each other's views on questions raised in the text and in their own lives, such as:

"Can women really 'have it all'? Can they be present, committed mothers as well as successful career women? Can women truly support each other in a hierarchical capitalist economy where they are all competing for the same jobs and positions? How involved are men in shaping the idea of female identity? What are the feminine qualities women have to hide in order to succeed in a patriarchal society?"

After a showing of the National Theatre's production of the play, the pupils concluded the day with a Q&A with playwright Mike van Graan, who created the play 'He had it Coming' which the pupils had the privilege of watching on Tuesday 7th. This discussion was a wonderful exploration of van Graan's work but also opened up conversations on the purpose and function on theatre in contemporary South Africa, and the power of it to challenge and change our society.



To all who have ordered a Centenary Book, please note that we are still working on the publication to ensure that each decade/era receives equal treatment in terms of images and text, and this is taking some time. We are enormously appreciative of the input of Herschelians into the text to provide such information and experiences had. We will keep you updated, and apologise profusely for the delay.

SUMMER SPORTS CAPTAINS 2023:

Swimming Captain – Kerry Benade



Favourite Sports Quote

“When times get tough just remember that somewhere behind the athlete you’ve become and the hours of practice and the coaches who have pushed you is a little girl who fell in love with the sport and never looked back... do it for her.” — Mia Hamm

Tennis Captain - Sam Gutsche



Favourite Sports Quote

“Sportsmanship for me is when a guy walks off the court and you really can’t tell whether he won or lost, when he carries himself with pride either way.” - Jim Courier

Squash Captain - Rachel Howie



Favourite Sports Quote

“Somewhere behind the athlete you've become and the hours of practice and the coaches who have pushed you is a little girl who fell in love with the game and never looked back... play for her.” - Mia Hamm

1st Team Basketball Captain – Suzy Whall



“The reason basketball is one of my favourite sports is because of the people who are involved in the game - everyone is there to have fun, support each other and to grow as a collective. Basketball is a community wherever you go and no matter what you always feel welcomed. This allows players to grow substantially and ultimately makes the basketball world better for it.” – Suzy Whall

Indoor Hockey Captain - Stella van Schalkwyk



Kobe Bryant's top 10 rules for success:

1. Have a champion's mentality
2. Outwork your potential
3. Learn from failures
4. Be a long-term thinker
5. Find your passion
6. Challenge yourself to grow
7. Keep going
8. Protect your dreams
9. Be driven
10. Achieve greatness

Head of Sport and Water Polo Captain - Tyra Penny



As a sportswoman, my philosophy is that, even though the scoreboard reflects numbers, you can never truly lose if you give your absolute best and go the extra mile. I feel that this philosophy is reinforced through my favourite sports quote:

"Winners are those people who make a habit of doing the thing losers are uncomfortable doing."

A pink promotional poster for a raffle. At the top is the Herschel Girls School logo with the text 'HERSCHEL GIRLS SCHOOL' and 'Founded 1910'. Below this, the main title reads 'HERSCHEL 2023 EUROPE HOCKEY TOUR RAFFLE'. Underneath, it says 'TICKETS: R100 ON QUICKET NO LIMIT'. Further down, it states '4 HAMPERS TO BE WON' and 'PRIZES VALUED AT OVER R74 000'. At the bottom, it says 'DRAW DATE: 6 MARCH 2023' flanked by two stars. The bottom section of the poster features a collage of various prizes including food items like 'Cinelli', 'Coppa', 'KOELLENHOF', 'SANA'S', 'SKECHERS', and 'LE CREUSET', as well as other items like 'CHARLOTTE RHYS', 'LAPA SIDE', and 'SULLETTE'.