



HERSCHEL SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

No. 5 – 23 March 2023

Dear Parents and pupils

Today is Human Rights Day, and as I write this I am aware of how incongruous it is in relation to other public holidays, in that unlike Heritage Day, for example, which provides an opportunity for everyone to celebrate who they are and where they come from; Human Rights Day is a sombre day, especially since we live in a country where so many basic human rights are denied. In assembly last week, I referred to this, in addressing pupils and staff. Not only does the 21 March commemorate the establishment of the South African Human Rights Council (SAHRC), but it is also grounded in the Sharpeville Massacre in which people lost their lives standing up against the Apartheid government, actioning change despite the odds against them in terms of violent recourse. We need to applaud their courage and conviction as we commemorate this dark day in our country's history. Were it not for such action, and for the courage of those who fought for freedom, we would not live in a democratic country.

Despite the many challenges facing South Africa; systemic inequity, poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence, poor service delivery and load shedding (to name but a few), the constitution upholds fundamental human rights that reflect the value placed on respect, dignity and equality. It is important to acknowledge the noble ideals embodied in the South African Constitution even if, as a country, we are a long way off from attaining these rights for all South Africans.

Our single most important challenge is to help establish a social order in which the freedom of the individual will truly mean the freedom of the individual. We must construct that people-centred society of freedom in such a manner that it guarantees the political liberties and the human rights of all our citizens. (Nelson Mandela - Wits Justice Project).

Privilege is not in and of itself bad; what matters is what we do with privilege. (Bell Hooks)

Recently, some experiences within the school environment brought about some reflection on the issue of privilege – what is privilege and how does it impact our school environment – as well as on power dynamics, and how the failure to consider power dynamics in situations that require conversation often results in bullying and micro-aggressions, exclusionary tactics, implicit biases and blind spots, breaking down communication as opposed to enabling effective engagement. Kevin Leathem makes white privilege a very tangible concept within the context of our society: *For me privilege is simply a preference for whiteness that saturates our society. I guess if you are white, it's sometimes hard to see the privilege because you're in it and it's all you've ever known. It's like asking a fish to notice water. (Kevin is the Deputy Head at Jeppe in Gauteng. He wrote an extended article published in *The Sunday Times* on 16 June 2019).* I include this because we all need to be conscious of this privilege and to understand how it impacts the way in which we interact with one another.

Ijeoma Oluo is an American writer, whose sentiment having regard to **intention** is on point: In her book, *You Want To Talk About Race*, she says: *You have to get over the fear of facing the worst in yourself. You should instead fear unexamined racism. Fear the thought that right now, you could be contributing to the oppression of others and you don't know it. But do not fear those who bring that oppression to light. Do not fear the opportunity to do better.*

Do not fear the opportunity to do better. I reflect on this line each time I read it and I am not sure exactly what it is about the line that I find so compelling, but it is a line that motivates me to keep working and to do better. Each of us has the opportunity to do better. It has to be taken on board; no amount of intervention by way of workshops, courses, seminars and so on, will evoke consciousness in an individual or organisation if there is not a genuine desire to engage, reflect, read, learn and grow towards doing better.

Being defensive, or even worse, ignorant about privilege and power dynamics does not allow one to enter into a conversation in a genuinely empathetic and receptive manner. It does not make space for people or take into consideration context. More often than not, people who enter conversations unaware of their privilege or of the power that they hold, end up bullying people, offending people and not even being aware of this because they have always held a position of privilege and with that, social power. Their blind spots, implicit biases and need to resolve a situation to their liking means that in such situations they will listen to respond, rather than to understand, and they will employ threats, posturing and bullying tactics entrenching their power and reinforcing their privilege, making it very difficult for a person to meet them at the point where an equally weighted conversation is possible.

We need to be conscious of our social and moral responsibility to respect, engage and accept people as equals, deserving of the dignity, equality and respect that our constitution advocates for all and mindful of

our capacity to represent those who do not always have the power to represent themselves in a society that has such systemic injustices. By being conscious of privilege and aware of the power dynamics in situations, we will facilitate greater equality and ensure that not only do all people have a seat at the table, but that all people are able to participate in the conversations around the table.

Some sporting news:

This past weekend, the Preparatory School hosted the All Girls Sports Festival and what an incredible job they did of this, despite some inclement weather! This is a national festival and involves 14 schools from around the country, playing hockey, netball, squash, tennis, water polo and chess. Please see our social media pages for some wonderful photographs and action shots! My thanks to Liane Karsten and the Preparatory School Sports Department and the many staff who assisted with the planning, organisation, hosting and supervising of the various codes. It was all hands-on deck and a clear example of *teamwork (making) the dream work*!



In the senior school, our basketballers ended their season on a high note, with the U16s and 1st team winning the top schools tournament hosted at Settlers High School – well deserved results and a fitting exit for the matrics in the team who played their final game for Herschel. Thank you and congratulations to Suzannah Whall, Chelsea Park, Peta Duckitt, Nina Kabalin and Montana Manas. You have been stalwarts! Thank you for your contributions to basketball at Herschel. Congratulations to Onathi Peter (U14), Chloe Taylor (U16) and Suzannah Whall (U18) for being selected as the Most Valuable Players (MVPs) in your respective age groups – a wonderful way in which to round off the season!



The touring hockey teams are preparing hard ahead of their tour to the Netherlands and Germany and on a very positive note, the much-awaited astroturf has been delivered to Herschel – in time for the season ahead. We wish the touring team a happy, successful and fun-filled time abroad and hope that they return

having grown their skills, their friendships and their horizons and ready to transfer their honed skills in the domestic league. My grateful thanks to Andrew Scott, Maryke Eloff, Denzil Dolley and Pamela Bowren for accompanying the group as coaches and managers. We wish them safe travels and an unforgettable tour.

On the local front this weekend, we wish the U14A Hockey Team every success as they travel to Roedean, in Gauteng. We wish the 2nd XI success in the Milnerton Festival and the 1st XI success as they head to Bloemhof in Stellenbosch to participate in a 1st XI Hockey Festival. This will, of course, stand them in good stead for the overseas tour, providing them with a pre-season opportunity to practice combinations, work on set pieces and find their outdoor game after a very successful indoor season.

The Wolves

This powerful production enjoyed a successful run over three nights. Bravo to Sarah McArthur (Director) and to the cast, all of whom delivered compelling performances in a powerful, relevant and challenging play. Participation in such performances can be life-changing and I have no doubt that the cast will reflect on their participation in the play, on the issues that it raises and the interplay between characters which is part of its power! The standard of Herschel Drama productions is exceptional, and I am very grateful to Sarah McArthur for her leadership in this space; her skills and vision and the incredible connection that she enjoys with the girls. Herschel is indeed fortunate in this regard. To parents, thank you for your commitment to the play – for transporting your daughters back and forth, for the late-night pick-ups, snacks and moral support. Productions of this calibre cannot happen without all parties being on board!

Speaking of productions, SACS High School are presenting ***Footloose the Musical***, featuring our very own Rhodah Martin and Francis Hathorn! Ticket information can be found further down in the newsletter...put on your dancing shoes for Footloose!

OISESA – Term Two

We have started an OISESA (Office of Independent Schools Evaluations Southern Africa) quality assurance evaluation which will involve all stakeholders at Herschel. OISESA began operating in May 2022 to re-establish the process of quality assurance in ISASA schools, following the rather disruptive period of the pandemic. ISASA's vision, "Boldly leading the independent school sector in its pursuit to provide quality education" holds its member schools to high standards and requires them to undertake a whole school self-study/reflection every six years. There is always room for improvement and this process promotes strategic thinking and encourages adaptability.

This is vital in a rapidly changing educational landscape: "Working through a process of critical reflection and self-evaluation enables schools to affirm and celebrate their strengths and identify areas of vulnerability. Participation in the process also demonstrates the school's willingness to be held professionally accountable and enhances the school's credibility with its stakeholders and the wider community."

Part of the process involves the collection of evidence which requires feedback via surveys and I would ask that you please respond to the parent surveys in earnest, as the more feedback we receive the more valuable and meaningful the process will be. The surveys will be distributed next term to allow us to collate the feedback and to form focus groups for further discussion. Three OISESA mentors (one for each phase of the school) will then visit Herschel in July (upon return to school in Term Three) for a verification visit and to assess the efficacy of our process. A final OISESA Quality Assurance Self-Study Report will be written for their review, after which they will produce their own report to complete the process.

The holidays are fast approaching ...

This is my last newsletter for Term One. It has been an action-packed and productive term across all areas of school life, and I would like to thank teachers, administrators, grounds and maintenance staff, catering and cleaning staff and all service-providers to the school for their commitment and the roles that they play in operations at the school. Without this multi-faceted team, we could not operate in the way that we do, and I am very appreciative of the contributions of each staff cohort to the smooth running of the school. I also want to thank you – the parents – for your supportive presence, for ferrying your girls to and from school to participate in the vast co-curricular programme and for supporting our events and activities so wholeheartedly. Post pandemic, I am starting to get a sense of a Herschel in full force and it feels good!

Ramadan starts on Friday and ends on the 20th / 21st of April. We wish all families observing Ramadan, a blessed and enriching month ahead: *As the auspicious month of Ramadan starts, may the crescent-shaped moon brighten your path toward enlightenment, and may Allah bless you with peace and grace. Wishing you a Happy Ramadan!* (Source: S Khan – social media post shared message). This Friday evening, 24 March, we will celebrate the annual MSA Iftaar Evening in collaboration with SACS. We will be hosting children and staff from Vision Child Care Centre as well as staff and students from SACS on the night.

Easter Weekend falls on the 7th of April (Good Friday), and ends on the 10th with Easter Monday. In the words of Stephen Cottrell, *I Thirst: I pray that, as you read this, you will experience, as if for the first time, the scale and wonder of God's love; and come, at the end of Lent, to the great festival of Easter knowing afresh what it means for God to love you and what it means to serve him in the world.*

Wishing all Herschel families celebrating Easter a blessed Easter weekend. We will celebrate this important event in the Christian calendar upon our return to school in Term Two with our traditional Easter Service on the 19th of April.

May you enjoy this holiday period with your family and friends. To those travelling, please take care and we wish you a safe return. To those staying in beautiful Cape Town, enjoy the warm weather before we start experiencing cooler days with the approach of Autumn and Winter.

With warm regards

Heather Goedeke

The Wolves

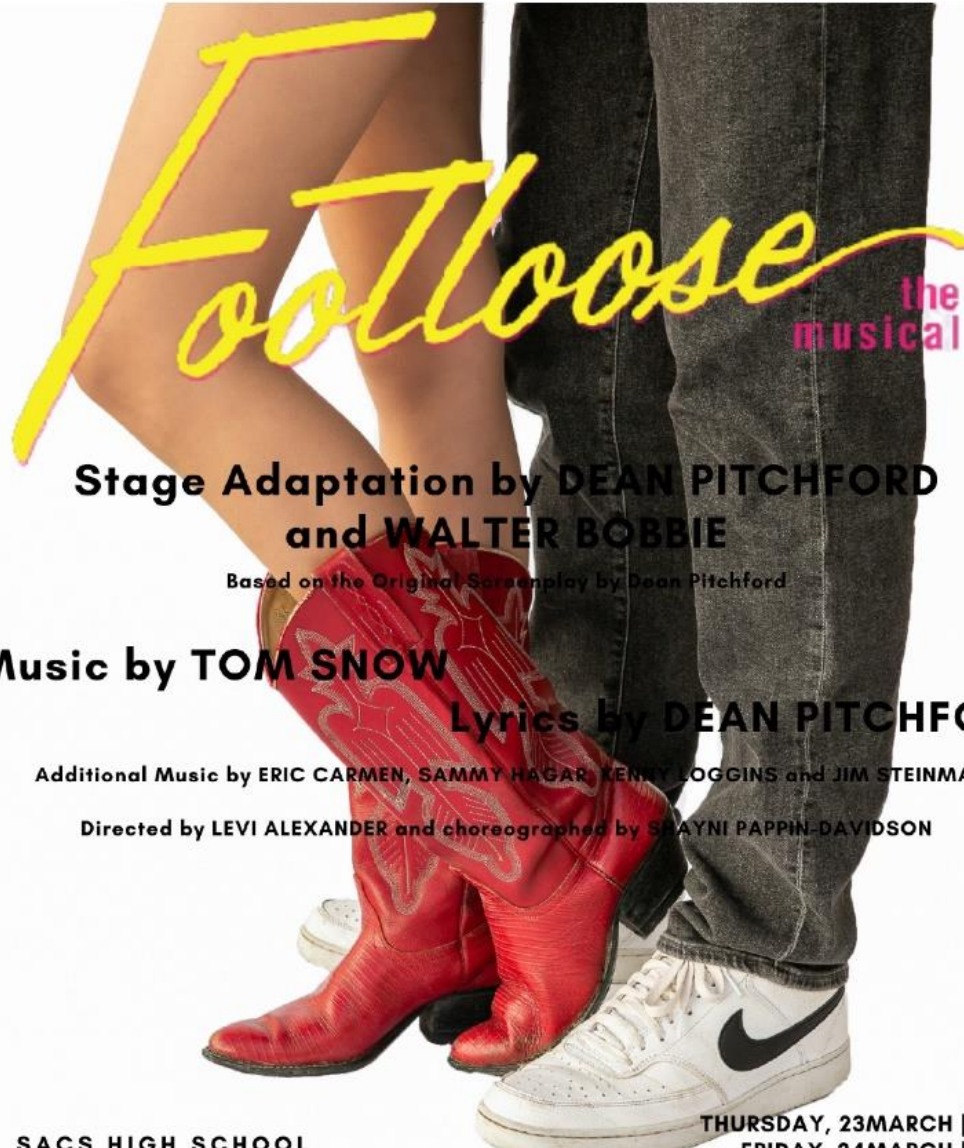
On 14-16 March, the Senior School staged its annual production. This year, we chose to put on Sarah DeLappe's thrilling Drama 'The Wolves', which featured a tight-knit cast of ten of our senior students, Grade 10-12s. The play is set across six consecutive Saturdays in the life of a competitive girls' soccer team somewhere in central America, and follows the conversations, concerns and conflicts of nine girls who often have little in common but who learn to come together as a team - and perhaps even as sisters.

The cast worked tirelessly and courageously to bring these real, complex characters to life and while the process was not easy, the warm and genuine reception of the audiences made for three enormously fulfilling performances. It has been an honour to work with this incredible, unparalleled cast and to create something of which we are all incredibly proud. *(By Mrs Sarah McArthur)*



SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

by arrangement with DALRO (Pty) Ltd. presents



Footloose

the musical

Stage Adaptation by DEAN PITCHFORD
and WALTER BOBBIE

Based on the Original Screenplay by Dean Pitchford

Music by TOM SNOW

Lyrics by DEAN PITCHFORD

Additional Music by ERIC CARMEN, SAMMY HAGAR, KENNY LOGGINS and JIM STEINMAN

Directed by LEVI ALEXANDER and choreographed by SHAYNI PAPPIN-DAVIDSON

SACS HIGH SCHOOL
| HOFMEYR HALL |
MAIN STREET, NEWLANDS

THURSDAY, 23 MARCH | 19H00
FRIDAY, 24 MARCH | 19H00
SATURDAY, 25 MARCH | 14H00
SATURDAY, 25 MARCH | 19H00



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FRENCH DAY

The Grade 9s had a wonderful Single Focus Day. They made chocolate mousse, played a competitive game of boule and even watched Swiss-French pastry chef, artist and chocolatier, Amaury Guichon. The day concluded with the pupils writing their first French essay.



GRADE 10 SINGLE FOCUS DAY

Our Grade 10 biologists did their annual pilgrimage to the Soetwater Environmental Education Centre, accompanied by the stalwarts of the Life Sciences Department.

The focus this year was counting rocky shore organisms using the quadrat method. This formed a part of the youth citizen science LIMPET marine monitoring programme.



SPORTS WRAP

FINAL INDOOR HOCKEY GAMES

Congratulations to our 1st and 2nd teams who won their respective leagues for the 2023 Indoor Hockey season. Both teams played an attacking brand of hockey scoring 28 and 38 goals respectively which was 10 more than the second-placed teams in their leagues. In so doing they remained unbeaten in the league!

A special thank you to our Matrics for their service and commitment to Herschel Indoor Hockey over the years. (Ashleigh Silberbauer is absent from the 2nd team photo below)



TENNIS

Our 1st Team competed in the Girls Super League. After being unbeaten this season, they lost to Curro Durbanville 4-8 in a nail biting final.

Congratulations to Jessica Schilz for winning her single match against Curro's number one player, as well as Erin Meyer and Georgia MacKay for winning their doubles match.

