



No. 14 – 8 September 2023

HERSCHEL SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Pupils

His Grace, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba led the Confirmation Service held in the Herschel Theatre on Sunday 3 September. It was a well-attended service and proud moment for parents of confirmands from Bishops Diocesan College, St Cyprian's and Herschel. The Music Department staff accompanied a group of Herschel choristers who performed beautifully, and I would like to thank Buhle Lekoma, Daniella Böttger, Carla Plenge-Mantell, Enqi Du, Grace Mulder, Rebecca White, Zarna Douglas, Zeah Douglas and Zoë West for their commitment, time spent and angelic singing. My thanks to Petra Conrads for overseeing the musical items despite not having the Grade 12 pupils available owing to their writing preliminaries. Music at such a service always adds a rich dimension, playing a role in uniting people and lifting spirits.



My thanks too, of course, to Rev. Lorna and Ms Juries for their organization of the Confirmation Service. The task of preparing the confirmands is a big responsibility and I am grateful that our pupils have this opportunity at Herschel, St Cyprian's and Bishops. Watching families and loved ones stand in support of each confirmand's laying on of hands and commitment was a moving experience, a demonstration of the act of faith.

Archbishop Makgoba's message to the confirmands was encouraging, supportive and relevant: While he referred to the examples in faith that both Moses and Peter provide us with (in Exodus and the Book of Matthew), respectively, he also spoke of the need for the confirmands to activate their faith through their abilities to make a difference in the world and to use their talents in this regard.

I have always admired the Archbishop's ability to call things out – to say it as it is – and his reference to the gas explosion on the 19th July on Lilian Ngoyi Street in Johannesburg, as well as the fire that gutted a building on the corner of Delvers and Albert Streets at 01h30 am on Thursday, 31st August 2023, portrayed his anger and disillusion at the drastic situation that many South Africans face living in a failing democracy; one which is not 'for the people by the people'. Archbishop Makgoba reflected on Albert Street being the very street on which black South Africans would have to go to have their dompas's stamped; granting them the right to pass through the area or relegating them to try to make a living in the bantustans well clear of the cities.

Not only is it clear that the building which caught fire, along with many others, has not been maintained to basic health and safety standards; it points to the wider degeneration and pursuant inequity, joblessness, crime, corruption and violence that has beleaguered South Africa under the current regime and seen municipalities across all provinces sink into decline. While the status quo provides the current generation with major challenges, it also presents an opportunity for activism; for active citizenship which works towards building a kinder, more united South Africa. This activism calls for being present; taking up the right to vote, insisting on accountability, participating in democracy and having faith in what can happen, what is possible despite the sometimes-overwhelming odds. Given the supportive educational spaces and family structures that the confirmands occupy, they have resources and knowledge and are well positioned to contribute meaningfully towards trying to turn South Africa around.

The front page of the *Financial Mail* this week carried a quote by EOH CEO, Stephen van Coller: *If I were offered the job again, I'd probably walk away.* This was his statement on accountability for corporate corruption.

(FM – Marc Hasenfuss, www.financialmail.co.za).

A couple of pages in and journalist, Natasha Marrian, described the political landscape in Johannesburg as *Chaos wrapped in a riddle inside an enigma*. Justice Malala's regular column carried the title, *Consumed by our past* in which he concludes that *we are stuck in debates about the past while the present overwhelms us*. If ever there was a time for faith, unity in purpose and a determined effort to "be the change", this is it and we need to support young adults in tackling these challenges through leading by example ourselves. In the Archbishop's sermon he urged the young adults to have faith:

To those of you learners who are disillusioned by what you see around you, who are disenchanted with the state of our country, who see no future in public life or the political process, to you I say: we your parents understand your disillusionment. But opting out of involvement in any kind

of public service or activism will not address the threats to our future. Doing nothing will not secure your future, or when you are older, your children's future.

No, the answer to our crisis is for you to roll up your sleeves and join us in embarking on a New Struggle for a new generation. Please, I beg of you, young people, dare to dream and work for a country in which there is justice, equity and equality of opportunity. I repeat the call I made at Easter: Organise amongst yourselves, and those of you who are old enough, register with the Independent Electoral Commission, then campaign and vote in next year's elections. We need a peaceful revolution in which young people stand up, reject corruption and self-dealing, and help get involved in the political process. And the older among us need to use our resources to help young people join in this process, for example by sponsoring voter education and workshops on our electoral system.

Read [HERE](#) to enjoy the Archbishop's full sermon on the occasion of Confirmation held at Herschel.

I also loved the message that the Archbishop had for teachers:

As I conclude, I want to thank all the educators, learners and families who continue to ensure that learning and teaching take place in all our schools. To those who teach, thank you for your dedicated work, you are among the most under-appreciated professionals in our society. Thank you for what you do to help our young people live in harmony with one another, to guide them away from simply fulfilling selfish ambitions.

As Head, I would like to echo Archbishop Makgoba's gratitude for teachers and to emphasise the importance of the role of our teachers in preparing pupils to be self-aware, independent critical thinkers who can solve problems using skills and knowledge, leveraging off each other's unique strengths to arrive at creative solutions together and making a difference. I also want to highlight the role that teachers play in promoting unity and encouraging pupils to learn more about each other, to challenge

social and cultural 'norms' and to strive to live authentically.

It is important that we, as teachers, partner with you, as parents to optimize the educational experience for your daughters. In this regard, I would like to appeal to you to observe the channels of communication as set out on the intranet both for pastoral and academic matters. It is important that these channels are observed because they have been established to hold space for the girls, to support accountability and to encourage conversations and communication between parents and teachers in support of professionalism and direct, open engagement.

When parents skip the channels, it serves to undermine teachers, disempowering them and often leading to the need for additional meetings, and I am sure that you can appreciate that when teachers are skipped over it creates distrust and uncertainty. If an issue cannot be resolved at the outset, then it can be escalated as per the tutor or teacher's referral, but when parents skip these levels and email the deputies or myself directly, the whole system is undermined, and it creates unnecessary stress. From time to time there may be an issue that is of such a serious nature that it requires escalation, and you may need to approach your House Director or a Deputy directly, and this is fine, but I would ask that this only happens when it is necessary – that it is the exception as opposed to the rule.

Over the past few weeks, I have had some cause for concern about incidences of disrespect, even rudeness towards teachers, in particular, via email communication. I often find myself wondering whether people would in fact say the things they put into an email, face-to-face. Our world can be stressful and busy, and people face various challenges, but I would like to appeal to the Herschel community that we model communication that is respectful, open and effective.

Some teachers have felt undermined by certain interactions they have had with parents, and I would ask that in the interests of building a community that is respectful, kind and genuinely supportive, we all try to work off the premise that we should interact with people in the manner we would like to be interacted with. Of course, there are occasions where conflict may well arise; this is real and we have different ways of responding; but if we can focus on how we respond (both teachers and parents) and look to discuss and find solutions or strategies together in support of a pupil, then we will contribute to a conducive growth environment. The 'blame game' can be an easy default – for both parties – it is not helpful.

I am not discounting accountability. It is important that we are all accountable so that we model this for the young adults with whom we work and live. Having had sight of disrespectful emails sent to staff members, I have advised that they not respond to such emails. Rather, when an issue is more complex, or when there appears to be concern/strong emotion, to 'press pause' and then to schedule a call so that the matter can be discussed and understood more fully, or even better, spoken about in person in a scheduled meeting.

Having discussed this at the recent House Representatives meeting, we agreed that a reminder regarding the channels of communication would probably assist in this regard. The starting point for any issue relating to pastoral care or pupil wellbeing is your daughter's tutor; and when it comes to academics, the relevant subject teacher – both of whom you may contact directly, via email or the school switchboard. Please click [HERE](#) to view channels of communication.

As I sit at my desk completing this edition of the newsletter, I can see the school fountain, draped in beautiful flowers and bathed in spring rain and intermittent sunshine – Cape Town's Spring.



And just as Spring denotes new beginnings and fresh starts, the stark reminder of the loss of a much-loved daughter, niece, grandchild, cousin, friend and pupil, serves as a reminder of loss and sadness and of a life taken way too soon. Zahraa Zalgaonkir (Class of 2022) passed away and was laid to rest on the 4 September 2023. She will be remembered as a quiet, beautiful, hard-working, intelligent and understated young woman; a good friend; authentic, humble and kind. Our sincere condolences and prayers for comfort, love and grace are extended to the Zalgaonkir family at this sad time. When grief gives you space in which to breathe again, may you be comforted by the many memories you have of Zahraa and may this in time, bring you peace.

With kind regards

Heather

2024 Executive Leadership Team



The process of appointing the 2024 Leadership Team has started, and we are proud to announce our Executive Leadership team (from left to right):

Deputy: Student Affairs – Zaynah Darsot

Head – Emily van Heerden

Deputy: Operations – Taskya Pillay

Each leader was presented with a protea. Not only is this a wonderful symbol of indigenous beauty and South Africa's national flower, but there are also a range of different meanings or symbolisms behind the protea flower and we have chosen just two for these leaders:

- The protea is a symbol of resilience and growth – may you have resilience as you grow in your role, as you grow as a person, as you help Herschel grow.
- Another message behind the Protea flower is to always be courageous and to never dim down your uniqueness – this is our wish for you as you lead.

BOK FRIDAY



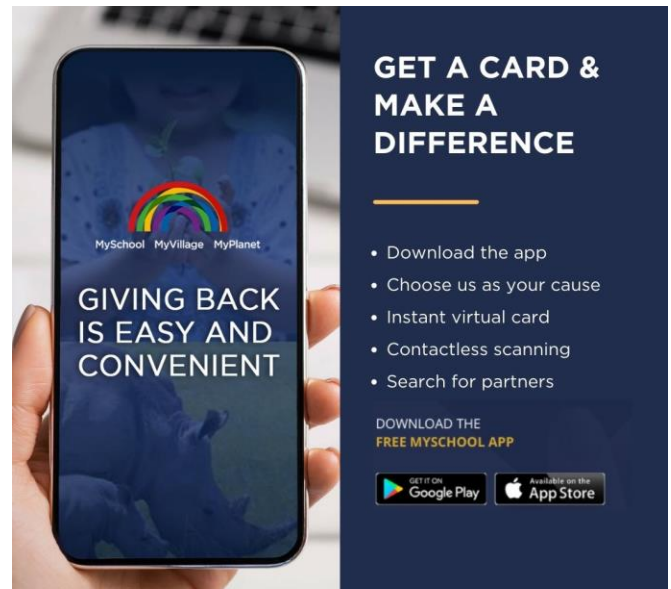
Baptismal Font

We have been gifted the most beautiful Baptismal Font for the Chapel that will be used for generations to come.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Gavin and Suzy Macfarlane, and Drew Smith.



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WHEN YOU SHOP AT WOOLWORTHS AND OTHER MYSCHOOL PARTNERS - PLEASE SWIPE YOUR MYSCHOOL CARD!

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MySchool raises over R8 million for schools, and charities, every month! The best part: it does not cost you as a supporter a cent to make a difference.

Support a beneficiary close to your heart! Scan the QR code below to join now.

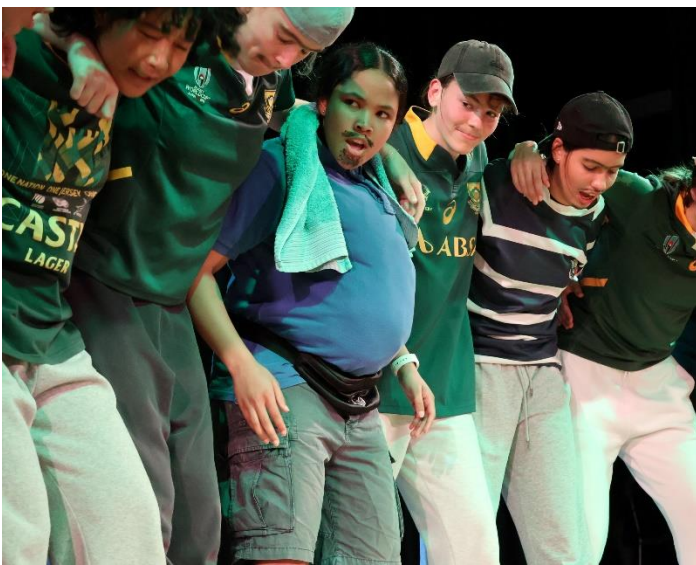


HERSCHEL INTERHOUSE PLAYS

After hours of hard work our four houses presented us with two fantastic evenings of wonderful plays that kept our enthusiastic audiences well entertained. Congratulations to Merriman for Best Play, Carter for Best Script, Francis Hathorn for Best Actor, Georgia Makin for Best Supporting Actor, Lucy Mulder for Most Promising Newcomer and Okuhle Sopam for Best Cameo.



Francis Hathorn: Best Actor



Merriman: Best Play



Georgia Makin: Best Supporting Actor



Lucy Mulder (right): Most Promising Newcomer



Jagger: Best Script



Okuhle Sopam: Best Cameo

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Herschel History Pupils Shine

On 24 August, four history students participated in the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) Interschools Newspaper Competition at Bishops. The students were Zahra Gouda and Layla Abrahams (Grade 11) and Eryn Van Vollenhoven and Hala Boomgaard (Grade 10).

52 teams from 30 schools competed in the competition. Participants were required to read The Times newspaper for ten consecutive days on a range of international topics from business to environmental to history to politics to geography topics. The questions were based on these newspaper articles.

The questions were tough, and our team did very well, finishing 21 out of 52 teams.



UCT Drama Workshop

The UCT 4th year Drama students came to share some knowledge and experience with the Grade 10 Drama class. They explored ensemble work and physical characterization, and kindly shared some insights into what it takes to study theatre and performance at UCT.



GRADE 10 GEOGRAPHY SFD DAY

The Grade 10 geography class went on a peninsula tour on Friday, 1 September, for their Single Focus Day. They observed geographical features en route such as change in settlement patterns, geology, biomes and importance of our oceans.



SCIENCE TALK

Professor Jeremy Simpson, the Dean of the School of Science at the University College Dublin (UCD), the most prominent Science faculty in Europe, was in South Africa to give an exciting talk on Biochemistry and to explore opportunities available to science graduates. He was joined by global citizen Prof. Eleni Mangina - Professor of Computer Science at UCD, whose PhD work is involved in software analysis, design and development for applied Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques.

Our pupils and parents were privileged to join them for this fascinating talk.



Eskom Science Expo

What exceptional results achieved by the Grade 11 participants of this year's Eskom Science Expo that took place at the University of Cape Town recently.

Congratulations to students in the following categories:

Bronze award in the Engineering category: Intando Taitai and Kirsten Stevens (in absentia): Harnessing energy from passing vehicles using a hydroelectric system.

Silver award for the Social Sciences category: Bianca Stewart and Gemma Prinsloo: Does load shedding affect anxiety in different school communities.

Gold award for the Social Sciences category: Cate Lea and Erin Meyer: Economic burden of malaria in line with climate change.



Cate Lea and Erin Meyer

GRADE 10 VISUAL ART SFD

The Grade 10 Visual Art pupils were treated to an exciting drawing workshop with parent and artist Jorge Sierra Rubia. The Single Focus Day saw them learning a variety of approaches to the use of charcoal on a large scale. Jorge skilfully led them through a series of exercises until they became increasingly relaxed using the new media whilst working on easels.



A special mention goes to Cate and Erin for their outstanding project which went on to be awarded the following:

- Best project in the Social Sciences category
- Best female project
- Both students were also each awarded full scholarships to study a BSc Degree at Rhodes University.

Sports Wrap

Swimming

The following Herschel Swimmers participated in the SA Short Course national championships held at Generations pool in Somerset West during August: Bianca Ribeiro, Gemma Jones, Samantha Nimb, Jemma Pearse, Sophia Trout, Cassidy Burgess, Amy Combrink, Sophie Vickers and Madison Franks.



Cassidy qualified to swim in four finals and placed 2nd in the 100m backstroke final. Sophie swam in the 100m backstroke final and in two relay finals. Amy swam in three finals and Madison took part in two relay finals. Congratulations to all the swimmers.

Surfing

Ava Moodycliffe has been selected to represent WP Province Surfing. Ava will compete at SA Champs in October, which is being held in Jeffreys Bay. She is one of only two u/14 girls selected for the team, with selection based on the girls placing first or second over three WP trials. Well done Ava!



Basketball

Congratulations to Zoë Huang, Julia Swain, Sophie Billimore and Grace Kropman for their selection to the Cape Metro Schools Basketball Squad.

In addition, we are proud to announce that our very own Ms Nicole Mangondo has been announced as the Head Coach of the u/15 Cape Town Metro Girls Team.



Netball Triangular

On Saturday 26 August a new and very exciting event took place at Herschel: Netball Triangular. The Herschel Netball teams, Phumza Foundation Team, American International School of Cape Town u/14 and u/15 teams, Into the Net (netball academy), Happy Feet, Herschel Coaches Team and Herschel Parents Team participated in the festivities. The day was filled with lots of competitiveness and fun.



PGSGU HOCKEY 2023 RESULTS



U14A Team - 2nd



U16A Team - 1st



1st Team - 1st

#PROUDLY PINK



Thank you matrics, for your contribution to Herschel Hockey