



# Newsletter - 02 Feb 2024

## *From the Head's Desk*



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### **WCED Awards Ceremony 2023**

*On Tuesday, 30 January, I had the privilege of attending the WCED NSC Awards Ceremony hosted by Premier Alan Winde and his wife, Tracy at Leeuwenhof. The event offered the Premier and the WCED an opportunity to pay tribute to top-achievers across all schools and to acknowledge the collective efforts of the Department and schools in working hard to address the knock-on effects of the pandemic on education, and especially on literacy and numeracy.*

*It was an honour to watch the Dux of Herschel, Emma Lewis, receive an award for being in the Top 30 matriculants in the province. She did herself, her family and the school proud! In addition to this, Herschel tied with Bishops to achieve the Excellence in Mathematics Award and was placed 2nd overall in the Province (with Bishops placing 1st this year). We are so proud of the Class of 2023 and the Herschel staff!*

*Premier Winde's address provided food for thought. He touched on the concerns that we face as a country when it comes to literacy rates (reading for meaning). The decline in literacy post pandemic has been alarming and South Africa's performance in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2021 reflects this. For further reading on the PIRLS findings, please click here<sup>1</sup>*

*Our girls are fortunate to have access to incredible resources and to be able to read and explore texts critically. The deconstruction of a text, recognition of bias, awareness of audience and use of diction enables a nuanced understanding and grants the reader access to a text. The introduction of 'reading for meaning' sessions in the junior grades this year is aimed at honing reading for meaning skills. There is a notable decline in the visibility of girls reading and sadly, in many instances, cellphones have replaced books. That said, our library is a busy place and we are fortunate to have a passionate and knowledgeable librarian in Carmelita Prins who sources a range of books for the girls and teachers, and who encourages reading at Herschel. Many of the teachers are also avid readers and share their recommendations with the girls. The proliferation of new voices and texts is also indicative of a market-related interest in reading across a range of genre, with self-help books rocketing in sales (perhaps not surprising post-pandemic).*

*The Premier encouraged the 2023 matric students to acknowledge the challenges facing our country and to see themselves as being role players in finding creative solutions to unemployment, the energy crisis, the ethical application of AI technology – to issue in a new economy – and exploring new ways to mitigate the risks facing not only South Africa, but many countries around the world: failing democracies, climate change and political strife being critical challenges.*

*Given the widespread discord, inequity, poverty and uncertainty, when it came to the 'how' in terms of how they might do this, he asked that they do it in kindness.*

*He also encouraged students with an interest in politics to pursue it with intention and tenacity alluding to the fact that there is a lot that needs doing and plenty of scope for making a difference.*

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### **IEB Heads' Conference**

Last week, Kerri-Lyn East and I attended the IEB Heads Conference, hosted at Reddam, Constantia. It was an informative and focused feedback session, and we will be sharing some of the details with you in a focused communication soon. Teachers have attended Regional User Group Conferences in their respective subjects over the past two weekends and this weekend, a number of the teachers are flying to Jo'burg to attend the National User Group Conferences across a range of subjects. These conferences

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<sup>1</sup>[https://drive.google.com/file/d/11ygvZB2u3UsIJAW8FMqi2FeoHE8vBh\\_u/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11ygvZB2u3UsIJAW8FMqi2FeoHE8vBh_u/view?usp=drive_link)

provide direct feedback from the Subject Examiners and aspects of the subject, especially assessment practice, are discussed and debated. This is enriching and important feedback and will assist the teachers in focusing on the skills the girls require in preparing them for the year-end IEB NSC examinations.

CEO, Confidence Dikgole, was delighted with the pass rate in the IEB NSC for the matric cohort. (At 98.46% this was slightly up from the 98.42% achieved in 2022). She contextualized the matric results within the current affairs and status of our country, highlighting the impressive work ethic and commitment of many pupils, their teachers, families and communities in supporting their success.

In my last newsletter, I referred to Dikgole's concern about the pressure that is placed on pupils. This is real. While the IEB NSC examinations provide an exit point for high school, education does not end after matric. In the wake of the 4th Industrial Revolution many innovative and creative options exist alongside the university option, and there are new courses being developed in response to rapid change, not least in the field of technology. Smaller and more agile institutions such as Red & Yellow, Vega, SACAP, Varsity College, Cornerstone Institute and IMM, along with many others exist to educate and train students in theoretical and practical aspects across a range of disciplines. In addition to this there are outstanding online studying options with very focused content at affordable prices. While the traditional trajectory of school to university to the world of work is still intact, there are alternative routes and a number of new career opportunities in emerging industries and in tech-driven industries, or fields in which technology is increasingly being used. As Dikgole emphasized in her results speech: *We need to remove this pass-rate obsessed lens of competition, so we — and they — can start to see the success of their achievement with different eyes*".

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*We do hope that all new pupils and families to Herschel are feeling more settled after the first three weeks of this very busy term. Please do get in touch with your daughter's tutor should you have any concerns or queries about how things are going. We welcome this opportunity to work together towards supporting your daughters and helping them to flourish in this chapter called 'High School'.*

*The girls have come out of their starting blocks in all of the summer sports codes. Enjoy reading of their success in the sports section of the Newsletter. We are looking forward to a happy, healthy and competitive first term's sport and I look forward to seeing you at the games.*

*Rehearsals for Abba are well underway with staff and girls putting in long hours! I am grateful to you for your patience in lifting your daughters to and from school all week – and then on weekends too!*

*Whether part of the cast, or part of a team, the girls will benefit from being a part of something that is larger than themselves – and they will learn so many valuable lessons through this and more importantly they will learn more about themselves.*

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Let's get behind Bafana Bafana where they face Morocco in the quarterfinals of the AFCON competition!  
Enjoy the weekend!

*Heather Goedeke*

## ***Spirituality***



### ***From the Chaplain's Desk***

Our Bible reading for this week is Colossians 3:11-13 and the focus is paying kindness forward.

The joy of paying kindness forward to the next person is far more intense than being on the receiving end. It is so strong and uplifting that it will encourage us to do this again and again.

An act of kindness, regardless of how small, is more powerful than you know.

Rev. Lorna Lavarello-Smith  
Chaplain



Join us at the  
Herschel Parents  
Prayer Group



Scan to join the  
WhatsApp  
Prayer Group or  
**CLICK HERE**

We meet together every  
Wednesday in the  
Herschel Boardroom.  
7h30 - 8h15

**JESUS** said, “For where two or three  
gather in my name, there am I with them.”  
- Matt 18:20

1 - [CLICK HERE](#)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><https://chat.whatsapp.com/Cg6Yt4coSMEHz2lcSUKzhY>

HSU



Parent Talk

# "Nutrition 101 for Teens"

Presentation By Registered Dietician  
Minette Röth

13 February 2024  
7h30 to 9h00  
The Theatre  
Herschel Girl's Senior School

RSVP:  
At the link in the email

Enquiries:  
[fcerrf@herschel.org.za](mailto:fcerrf@herschel.org.za)

The poster features various fruit slices including oranges, grapefruit, and apples, along with green leaves, arranged around the central text.

*Sport Wrap*



## ***Swimming***

Cassidy Burgess took part in the Africa Aquatics Championship in Mauritius from 6 to 10 December. She also competed in Western Cape Long Course Swimming Champs from 14 to 18 December. During the Africa Aquatics Championship Cassidy qualified for 3 finals and she scored the highest FINA World Points for females in the South African Team. In the 50m backstroke, Cassidy set a new World Record for her age group. At the Western Cape Long Course Swimming Champs, she won 4 gold medals and 4 silver in the individual races as well as 3 gold medals in the relay events. Furthermore, Cassidy broke her own Western Cape record in 50m Backstroke and set a new Western Cape record for 100m backstroke and was announced as the Best Senior Female Swimmer in the Western Cape.

Congratulations Cassidy, this is phenomenal!!

## ***Ball Girls at International Hockey Match***

On Monday, 22 January and Friday, 26 January, a number of the Herschel Hockey players had the opportunity to act as ball girls at the matches between the South African Women's Hockey Team and the French Women's Hockey team. Katherine Featherstone and Emily Dickinson had the honour of carrying the French flag. What an awesome opportunity for the Herschel pupils to not only watch an International Hockey Match but to be involved in the match.





***Meet the Summer Sports Captains***

Leah Fairholm (Basketball) - "I'm better than I was yesterday, but not as good as I will be tomorrow. "





Ameera Yacoob (Chess) - "I like the moment when I break a man's ego" - Bobby Fischer



Mia Andrew (Indoor Hockey) - " You miss 100% of the shots you don't take" because it encourages players to never hold back. It is especially important to play an attacking game in a fast-moving sport like indoor hockey.



Matilda Loggenberg (Tennis) – “Even if I have already peaked, I have to believe I can improve. I wake up every morning and go to practice, with the illusion that I’m going to get better that day” ~Rafael Nadal



Bianca Ribeiro (Swimming) - I've been swimming competitively since I was 7 and using my years of experience in the pool, I can't wait to take my incredible swim team to new levels this season. With our new Coach Alex, and Vice-Captain Sophie, I am so excited for our team to have more opportunities than ever before.



Amy van Breda (Water Polo) - “Play for the love of the game.”

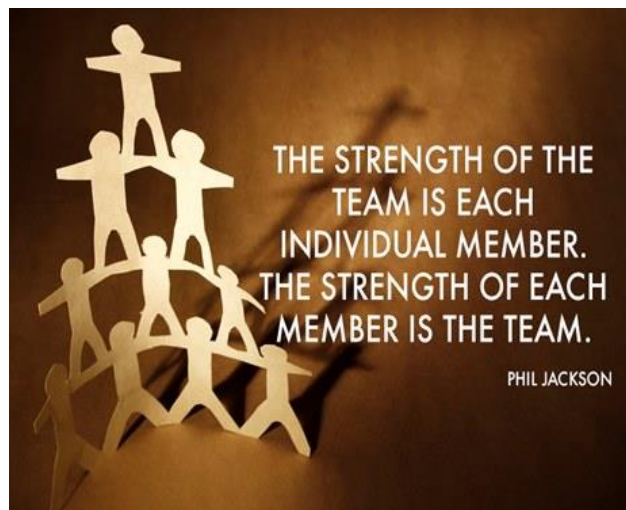
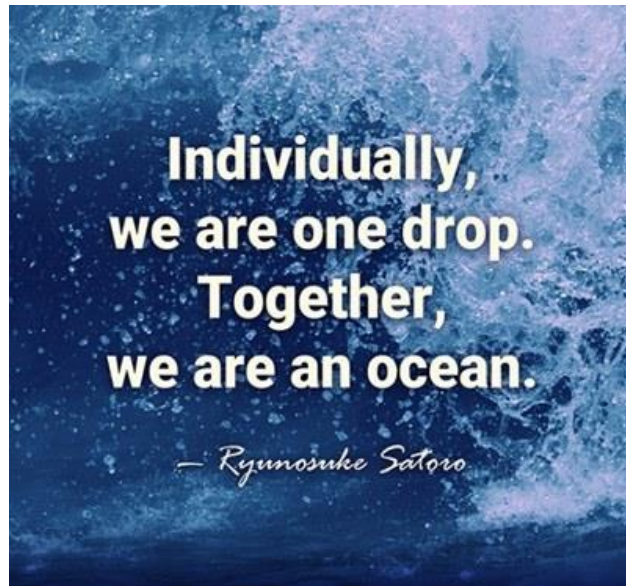
### ***Team Comes First #HerTeam***

During the school holidays, I had the opportunity to watch the documentary 'Chasing the Sun,' the Springboks 2019 World Cup journey, one aspect stood out for me—the emphasis on the importance of 'The team comes first.' As young athletes and sometimes as parents, it is easy to fixate on the idea that being in the starting lineup is everything. However, this documentary emphasized that every team member plays a pivotal role.

Whether your role involves being on the field for the entire game or coming in as an impact player for just a few minutes, remember that your contribution is crucial. The documentary showcased how even those brief moments can make a significant difference. If your role is to give your all in those few minutes, understand that doing so is essential because, in those moments, the team relies on you and team comes first.

I want to encourage all the Herschel athletes to focus on your specific role within the team this year. Instead of fixating on factors beyond your control, such as the starting lineup, channel your energy into giving 100% effort when you are on the court, or on the field, or in the pool. Your commitment to your role contributes to the team's success.

*Ms Maryke Eloff  
Director of Sport*



**Culture**



Join us on the 16 February from 17:00 - 21:00 for 'Herschfest' - a magical musical celebration on our 102nd Founder's Day. This largely student-organised event is magical musical celebration of Herschel's talent and is an event for the whole family to enjoy.

Come and experience a wide variety of contemporary acoustic music performed by the talented students from Grades 7-12. Enjoy refreshments from one of our exciting vendors - Pizza, Sushi & Boba Tea, Chip n Dip, Coffee and Baked Treats - or bring a picnic basket for your family.

In addition, performers from the Herschel Rock Band, 'High Maintenance' and the Marimba Band will add to the ambiance whilst you unwind under the fairy lights and the stars. Bring your friends and family in support of this special Herschel Community event!

[CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS<sup>3</sup>](#)

*Sarah McArthur*  
*Director of Culture*

## *Herschel Bursary Fundraising*



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<sup>3</sup><https://qkt.io/p07n8t>