



The Junior Primary book character parade was a huge success last term

FROM THE HEADMISTRESS' DESK

Dear parents

A warm welcome back to all our families, especially to the families of the new girls who have joined us this term: Zara Kana (Grade 0); Gabrielle Marcos-Zambakides (Grade 2); Phathutshedzo Mareda (Grade 4); Vianka Chetty (Grade 7); Emma Lowndes (Grade 7). We wish you a happy and rewarding time spent in the Junior School.

In our first Senior Primary assembly last week, the girls and I considered the topic of holidays, and what other opportunities they present us with, besides the chance to change our routine and, in some instances, to travel. I suggested that time away from school allows us to change our habits of thinking and seeing, not just ourselves, but our place in the world as well. What holidays afford us is the luxury of distance and more time or, at least, the luxury of being able to make use of the time we have differently.

Even though shifts in habitual behaviour are not achieved instantly and are not always warmly received (many of the Grade 7s admitted to spending long days in their pyjamas watching TV – a change in routine few parents celebrate for long) some way into the holiday, you begin to sense a difference in your perception of certain things. In some instances, a softening of adamant opinions and preferences is even achieved.

In my case, predictably, the experience often relates to reading, and what I feel I can read instead of, perhaps, what I know I should.

It was in this way that I came to read my first ever sports autobiography,

something, frankly, I never seriously imagined myself doing. The book, Andre Agassi's *Open: An Autobiography* was recommended to me last year by a parent in response to my questions about competitive sport and the role that parents and the school play in the nurturing and cultivation of young talent.

Once I overcame my initial resistance to reading the book (not only was it about a sports celebrity about whom I felt profoundly ambivalent, it also came highly recommended – two potentially fatal barriers to my making any progress with the book), I became completely engrossed in its narrative about a young boy's brutal experience of growing up with and through the sport he was supposed to love.

The book's title, *Open*, is fitting for many reasons; in the context of my discussion with the girls about the value of holidays, it serves to remind us of the desirable state of open-mindedness we all seek to achieve and the distance we must cover, again and again, to get there. Holidays help – so does reading, especially the kind that questions our assumptions, including our assumptions about what is worth reading, instead of confirming them. Towards the end of *Open*, when Agassi acknowledges the assistance he received with writing his autobiography and reflects on his reasons for writing it, he comments, "I was late in discovering the magic of books. Of all my many mistakes that I want my children to avoid, I put that one near the top of my list." Or, after the style of Nike, Agassi's erstwhile sponsor, *Just read it.*

DR SARAH WARNER
HEADMISTRESS: JUNIOR SCHOOL

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

A sincere welcome back to the second term of 2018! As you may be aware, from our Facebook page or from what your girls have mentioned, our chapel theme for this term is "Fruits of the Spirit", based on Galatians 5:22-23. I have introduced the theme in chapel assemblies and Eucharists to most of the girls, and we will look into several of the fruits individually, throughout the term.

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba has encouraged all to participate in the annual "Thy Kingdom Come" initiative, which runs from Ascension Day (Thursday 10 May) until Pentecost Sunday (20 May). This initiative was started by the Church of England in 2016, and is rapidly growing to become a global and interdenominational prayer movement.

The aim of those involved in the initiative is to pray for friends and family members that they may come to know God, and deepen their relationship with God.

Many age-appropriate, well-presented and accessible resources are available on the Thy Kingdom Come website, to assist churches, families and individuals in praying each day for 11 days. These resources include set prayers and ideas for praying that are not time-consuming and can be part of your daily lives, as well as creative and fun prayer ideas, and short stories and video clips. Do have a look at the website and consider being part of this initiative.

REVD CLAUDIA COUSTAS
CHAPLAIN

We would appreciate your assistance with our admissions process:

- Should you have a sibling who you would wish to be admitted into St Mary's in 2020, please ensure that a completed application form is sent to Tracy Hagen at tracy.hagen@stmary.co.za so that we can prioritise a place
- Please remember that if you are leaving St Mary's, at least one term's notice, in writing, is required in order to avoid being levied fees in lieu of late notice. Notice will only be recorded once received in writing.

If you are considering alternative plans around schooling, we would really appreciate it if you contacted Sarah Warner (sarah.warner@stmary.co.za) and Maryanne Lansdown (maryanne.lansdown@stmary.co.za) to advise them of your plans as early as possible. This information greatly assists with our planning and will be kept confidential.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Competition

Remember to have some good clean family fun plogging (picking up litter while jogging) or plalking (picking up litter while walking).

Girls can earn points for their houses by collecting litter and emailing the proof in a photograph to robyn.richmond@stmary.co.za. Please include your name and the name of your house. Every two weeks, all the names of the girls who have entered will go into a lucky draw.

ROBYN RICHMOND
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER

IKUSASA LETHU

From Alex to Paris – a success story: Charles Masegela

Charles Thabiso Masegela, who attended the Ikusasa Lethu Programme, was in Paris during the Easter weekend. “It is the most amazing place on Earth,” he says. Masegela did six weeks training at the company AF Compressors in Liège (Belgium). He returned to Johannesburg just in time to attend his graduation ceremony as a BTech mechanical engineer, at the University of Johannesburg on 25 April.

“I joined the St Mary’s Saturday school and Sizanani mentorship programme in 2011, when I was in Grade 11. St Mary’s supported me academically. I managed to improve my results and to be accepted at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). I thank St Mary’s for making it possible. Sizanani provided me a mentor, Marlene Pappas, from KPMG, in 2012. She really motivated me to succeed in my studies, regardless of my background. I thank Valerie Hirsch, who made my life easier. Without her help, I would not have been admitted into the Faculty of Engineering.

“Thanks to the Sizanani group, and keep on showing *ubuntu* to our future generation of students. Two companies also played a major role: the RATP group (Paris), a sponsor of Sizanani, paid for most of my university studies. AF Compressors allowed me to do my third year practical. They found me educated but practically unskilled. They completed my circle as a mechanical engineer, and hired me at the end of my studies.

“My family is proud as I fulfilled my dreams; despite obstacles, I was the first one to go to university. With God, everything is possible. Be a motivation and a role model to others,” says Masegela.

If you would like to become a mentor or want to know more about Sizanani mentorship programme, please contact Valérie Hirsch on valou.hirsch@gmail.com or 083 750 7725.

LINDA GIURICICH
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS



Charles Masegela at the AF Compressors site in Liège



A selfie at the AF Compressors site in Liège



Charles Masegela in Paris



Charles Masegela graduating

FROM THE SPORTS DEPARTMENT



NETBALL

Netball camp

A selection of Grade 5 and 6 netball players went on an amazing netball camp to Raloka Ranch in Brits.

We had various training sessions, developing our ball skills and our ability to attack and defend. We learnt lots of new techniques and had fun completing team-building activities. The coaches were outstanding. We also played some tough matches against very skilled opponents.

It was a great experience. We are so glad we had this opportunity to go to an excellent netball camp!

NATASHA MAIN
GRADE 6



TENNIS

The A and B tennis teams participated in the St Stithians Prep Easter Festival from 5 to 7 April. The tournament consisted of doubles and mixed doubles with The Ridge School.

Excellent tennis was played by the A and B teams, and the girls enjoyed participating in this tournament.

Thank you to Mrs Lowndes and Mrs Vermeulen for taking the girls to the festival.

CECILE MURRAY
TENNIS COACH



Back: Alexia Bakos, Natalie Simon, Jasmin Vermeulen, Michaela Lotto, Catriona Pinnock, Tara Hammond
Front: Abigail Rigby, Tayla Gibbs, Ava Economakis, Sarah Hewat, Natasha Jenkins, Grace Faber

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

The St Mary's Invitational will be held tomorrow Saturday 12 May, from 08h00 to 18h00. All girls who do rhythmic gymnastics will be participating, including the Grade 1s.

The following rhythmic clubs will be attending: Toccata (Pretoria), Sasol (Secunda), Dolfyn (Witbank), Aerials (Johannesburg), Empress (Alberton), Resilience (Johannesburg), Dimamika (Vaal), Gymagic (Kempton Park) and Prima (Randburg, Bedfordview and Edenvale.) Spectators are most welcome.

LINDA GIURICICH
RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS COACH

FROM THE PTA CHAIRPERSON

I have been chairman of the Parents' and Teachers' Association for a term now and thought it would be appropriate to share some of my thoughts.

Firstly, I am even more aware of what a privilege it is to have my daughter at St Mary's. This role has allowed me to glimpse behind the scenes into what makes St Mary's such a great school, and it has been an experience I wish that everyone could have.

The best example of this was the Board of Directors' strategy morning, where board and senior staff members spent a Saturday morning starting to plan for success in 2030! The morning was a step towards answering strategic questions, and the leadership team will keep you posted as the strategy emerges over the next couple of months.

From the dedication and experience of our Board of Directors, to the passion and commitment of the staff, a huge amount of effort goes into providing our daughters with the best possible environment and education. I feel more comfortable than ever, that St Mary's is an exceptionally well-managed school, and that our decision to educate our daughters at here is the right one.

Secondly, I have realised what an amazing parent community St Mary's has. Thank you for the part you all play in creating this culture - by staying for a coffee after drop-off, by welcoming parents you don't yet know at sports and cultural events, or by thanking the support staff for the work they do. This fosters the positive environment in which our daughters develop.

Parental support is critical to the activities of the school. The St Mary's Investec Hockey Festival was one of the most visible examples: it was a great success in part because of the participation of so many parents. There have been many other events where parents have helped, from galas to cultural activities, and I thank you for your contribution and reiterate how important it is.

The main work of the PTA is done through the class and house representatives, and I specifically thank Candice de Bruin and Cindy Jackman, as well as all the other parents who have volunteered, for their contributions. The PTA committee, with its various sub-committees and portfolios, contribute further to the thriving parent community we have at St Mary's: your work is greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I have seen what a huge difference we can make to our daughters by being involved.

The school's educational philosophy is premised on a good working relationship between girls, the school, and parents. This is where the HOPE (Hearing Other Peoples' Experiences) committee comes in. The better we parents handle amongst ourselves diversity and inclusion, the better our children will be equipped to thrive in this complex and challenging world. The HOPE committee has created a space for parents to listen and learn from other parents. The HOPE committee also hosted Justice Edwin Cameron whose talk was a great success, and provided insightful feedback on the diversity survey conducted last year. The parents' feedback and views have been taken on by the Board and form part of the strategic deliberations which are underway.

When parents are involved, children thrive. Reach out to these members of the PTA via your class representative to be part of the following upcoming PTA initiatives:

- o Battle of the Bands (17 May - Cindy Jackman)
- o Junior School fun day (26 May - Candice De Bruin)
- o Golf day (28 September tbc - Andrew Millard)

I feel incredibly blessed to be part of this school and hope you do too. Let me know if you would like to join the PTA or the HOPE committee as we are always keen for new members, or just drop me an email (pta.chairperson@stmary.co.za) if you have ideas, questions or suggestions.

Yours sincerely

Dale Vice
PTA chairperson

