



Dear Parents,

**FROM THE RECTOR**

**RECENT ALUMNI: WHAT DO THEY THINK?**

St Peter's is no different from any other company or organisation in that it seeks to preserve and enhance its reputation and wishes to provide the best service possible.

The schools' mission statement opens with the commitment to "preparing children for senior school and the world". We aim to make the transition from our school as easy as possible for our pupils. As such, we place a great deal of emphasis on self-discipline, a strong work ethic, mutual respect and respect for staff and elders, independent thinking and the exercise of good judgement. The school is even structured to facilitate this process with housemasters, in the Boys Prep, and housemistresses (in the Girls Prep shortly to come) and vertical pupil pastoral structures: older children taking care of younger children as well as the house system from Gr 3 – 7.

Each year we approach the schools which we feed for constructive criticism as to how we can improve.

Of course, there is nothing like hearing it from the horse's mouth. Old Boys and Old Girls frequently visit the school (unusual for a prep school) and are quick to tell us what they value and what we need to improve. They compare their transition with those of children from other primary schools. Herewith a range of comments from pupils now at schools including St Anne's, Wykeham Collegiate, Pretoria Girls and Boys, Hilton, Michaelhouse, St Andrew's, Brescia, St Mary's Kingsmead, St David, St John's, St Peter's College:

- *Hate the petty rules but haven't been in trouble yet as we were taught how to behave.*
- *The workload is much heavier but was easy to understand. We had covered a lot of it already.*
- *My marks went up 20% during my first year.*
- *I miss Chapel so much (from many past pupils).*
- *Men teachers are different from ladies, but we were used to that.*
- *The St Peter's boys were ahead in Zulu even though so many others came from Natal.*
- *You need to teach more Design and Technology.*

And finally, from a St Peter's parent, the coach's response when the parent remarked that he had a few St Peter's boys in his team: "I wish they were all from St Peter's."

This feedback encourages us to work even harder at this critical aspect.

**Questions for the Rector:**

If anyone wishes any further information on any topic, please feel free to contact me at school or at [groyce@stpeters.co.za](mailto:groyce@stpeters.co.za) or [dradloff@stpeters.co.za](mailto:dradloff@stpeters.co.za))

**Greg Royce**

**FROM THE JUNIOR PREP**

**FAMILY SUPERSTARS AND UNDERDOGS: THE CUP AND TEASPOON THEORY**

One of the unwritten laws of family life is that talent and ability are unevenly distributed between siblings. I call it the cup and teaspoon theory. When God was dishing out talent He was very unfair. Some children get teaspoons of this and that while other children are given cups filled to the brim and overflowing.

In most families with two or more children there is often one who succeeds with greater ease than the other whether academically, on the sports field or culturally.

The seemingly 'less talented' child, or the 'underdog' so to speak, may struggle more or even live in the shadow of their sibling. They

need more encouragement and support than their sibling and may only obtain mediocre levels of success, no matter how hard they may try.

Some children need time and maturity before they find their wings and are able to make their mark. In some situations where children are living in the shadow of their talented sibling, parents may need to make radical changes to enable their seemingly 'less talented' child to shine. This can include changing schools or introducing them to more unusual or less mainstream activities. These have the advantage of enabling children to discover talents they didn't know they had and some activities may attract fewer participants giving your child more opportunity to succeed.

It's easy for parents, family members and friends to stand in awe of the talented child, but it can be frustrating and even heart breaking to watch your child battle along.

We need to be realistic about what each child can achieve. With the family's underdog:

- Keep your expectations in line with their ability and maturity.
- Try and avoid making comparisons between siblings.
- Focus on growth and progress, no matter how incremental.
- Teach your child to believe in him/herself.
- Remember that talents aren't necessarily cast in stone – a child's brain is plastic and elastic, capable of so much growth and development, and their bodies are a constantly evolving miracle.
- Encourage your child by praising effort more than outcomes.
- Remember that persistence counts a lot, it's a fantastic life skill.
- When they are struggling, fuss over even the smallest of successes and their contribution to their team's success too.
- Help them to identify their strengths – they will be able to put them to good use the older they get.
- Help them to see beyond their own limits – look for ways to stretch them, grow their capabilities and their belief that they can.

Even children who are superstars need for us to recognise not just their successes, but the **character traits** that underpin them. When they are not able to perform or deliver at their chosen activity, whether that occurs at school or in later years, it is these traits that will continue to help them to succeed in other areas of their adult lives.

Whether you are raising a naturally talented superstar or the family underdog, they both require equally balanced attention from their parents so that neither grows up in the shadow of the other.

#### NIKKI BUSH

Creative parenting expert, inspirational speaker and co-author of *Tech-Savvy Parenting* (Bookstorm, 2014), *Future-proof Your Child* (Penguin, 2008), and *Easy Answers to Awkward Questions* (Metz Press, 2009)

[Info@nikkibush.com](mailto:Info@nikkibush.com)      [www.nikkibush.com](http://www.nikkibush.com)

Parenting Matters/Vol 8 Issue 8

#### STAFF NEWS

Cheryl Vermeulen is leaving St Peter's at the end of the year. She will be joining her extended family in Sydney, Australia. Although Cheryl has been in the Boys JP for a short period of time, her creative flair and strong relationships with the boys, will be missed.

Lee-Ann Pickering, from St Stithians, will be joining the JP Boys team in January 2018. Lee-Ann comes with a wealth of knowledge and teaching experience in the UK, the East and South Africa. I am delighted to have Lee-Ann join our team and know she has much to offer St Peter's in the years to come.

#### SCIENCE WEEK

There is nothing that young boys like more than messy science experiments. The Grade 0 boys have been bringing their own experiments to class to explain to their peers. I have been most impressed with the level of explanation and the excitement they have generated in class.

Unfortunately the Grade 1 trip to the Bird Park was postponed due to avian flu. The Grade 1 boys have been involved in a number of experiments in class – Fairy Fizz, Elephant Toothpaste, Bottle Balloon Blowing and Moving Milk. They have so enjoyed being part of these activities, especially the discussions around why a reaction has taken place.

The Grade 2 boys are extremely proud of their Galaxy in a Bottle. This was created as part of their Space Theme. The trip to the Exploratorium in Pretoria remains a highlight of the Grade 2 year. Once again our boys enjoyed the experience and learnt so much through hands on, concrete activities.

#### GRADE 0 & DCS FUN DAY – 17 October

The Grade 0 boys will be hosting the Grade 0 pupils from Diepsloot Combined Schools on Tuesday, 17 October. The morning will include a puppet show "Traditions and Cultures," sharing lunch and participating in some physical sporting activities. Our boys are excited to spend time with their peers from DCS.

The regular volunteers will still go to DCS to teach the Grade 1 classes – please join them if you can.

**HALF TERM: 18-24 October**

School will close on **Wednesday, 18 October** for the Half Term break. Please take note of the staggered finishing times, to allow for traffic flow:

**Grade 0 - 10:00**

**Grade 1 - 10:15**

**Grade 2 - 10:30**

Due to the Senior Prep Eucharist Services, there will be **no Chapel** on Wednesday, 18 October. Birthday cards will be handed out on **Wednesday, 25 October**. There will be a supervised Waiting Class until **11:00**, but **no Aftercare** that afternoon.

School starts again on **Tuesday, 24 October** at **7:30**.

**GOLDEN MOMENT**

A Grade 0 boy was explaining his science experiment to me. He said he had to use *dieocarb* to make it fizz, so he had to be extra careful as it's called *dieocarb* because you can die from it. The ingredient was bicarb!!

Warm regards,

**Kenda Melvill-Smith**

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

<b>Monday 16 October</b> Grade 1 swimming commences – please send costumes & towels 13:30-14:00 Grade 1 Choir
<b>Tuesday 17 October</b> 8:30 DCS lessons 9:00 Grade 0 & DCS Fun Day – don't forget lunches!
<b>Wednesday 18 October</b> 8:00 No Chapel Service <b>Half Term closing times:</b> 10:00 Grade 0; 10:15 Grade 1; 10:30 Grade 2 11:00 Waiting Class ends <b>No Aftercare</b>
<b>Tuesday 24 October</b> 7:30 Boys return to school
<b>Wednesday 25 October</b> 8:00 Chapel (birthdays 16-29 October) in School Chapel 12:00-12:20 Grade 2 Choir <b>OR</b> 13:00-13:30 Grade 2 Choir
<b>Thursday 26 October</b>
<b>Friday 27 October</b> 9:00 HOT DOG DAY/Cartridge collection (R25-00) 13:00 Grade 2 Mini Cricket – St David's (away) details to follow

**DIVERSITY - DIWALI**

Hindus throughout the world will celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> and final day of Diwali next Thursday, 19 October.

Diwali is called the “**festival of lights**”. It is a period spent with friends and family, mending relations, reuniting, forgiving one for one's wrongdoings and renewing friendships.

It is also a time for deep reflection on the past successes and failures, and to look forward to the new year with greater energy and inspiration. During Diwali, Hindus exchange sweetmeats, fruit and sweets and wish each other well. The morning is spent in thanksgiving prayers and the evening is filled with fun, laughter, lighting of lamps and fireworks.



The lamps and fireworks signify the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance and the invitation of light and joy into our lives.

St Peter's wishes all Hindu friends, pupils and families a Happy Diwali.

**Vijay Maharaj**

(Director: Diversity)

**GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER**

**Jenny van Wyk**

Jenny joined St Peter's Schools Accounts Department in 2010 with her area of focus being that of debtors management. Prior to joining St Peter's, Jenny performed a similar role at Grayston Preparatory School.

Jenny's secret talent is playing the organ and she has a delightful sense of humour.

She is blessed with two beautiful daughters and four grandchildren.

Jenny also just celebrated her birthday this week – Happy Birthday Jenny!



Online ticket sales open in November (details to follow)

**Sunset Carols 2017**

Featuring: The St Peter's Choirs & Monde Msutwana

Saturday, 2 December at 18:00  
 Christmas Market gates open at 15:00  
 St Peter's Prep Schools: 105 Witkoppen Road  
 Entrance: R120 per adult & R60 per child  
 Tickets for sale in carparks

Bring family & friends / Blankets & picnic  
 Food will be on sale

Enquiries: [carols@stpeters.co.za](mailto:carols@stpeters.co.za)  
 All proceeds go towards the *Isematholen!* Intern Programme