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## ST PETER'S GIRLS PREP SCHOOL

### Weekly Newsletter of the Girls JP

#### FROM THE HEADMASTER

During our Midterm break I finished a book called *The Happiest Kids in the World: Bringing up children the Dutch Way*, recommended to me by Mr Blackhurst. I am grateful to Mrs B for allowing me to use extracts of her summary.

At a time of the year when things appear to get frenetic for our children and ourselves, I thought it might be useful to reflect on some sound advice from the Netherlands.

Rina and Michele are two expat mothers living in The Netherlands. One is English and one is American. Rina and Michele report that, as soon as they arrived in The Netherlands, they were immediately struck by how happy Dutch children were. After a UNICEF report verified their perception, they decided to research this phenomenon and document their findings in a book.

The authors report that some of the things that set Dutch children apart from children in the UK and US are the following:

- Dutch children get more sleep
- They have very little homework until they are ten years old
- They are not just seen, but heard
- They are given independence
- They ride their bikes to school
- They play outside (in parks) unsupervised
- Dutch children enjoy regular family meals (twice a day)
- Dutch children spend more time with their moms and dads
- Dutch children are raised in a society that is not materialistic or competitive and which enjoys simple pleasures.

Like our UK and US counterparts, many South African parents are inclined to pressurise children to perform and micro-manage their children's lives. Sadly, the defining feature of these parents is often anxiety! Dutch parents, according to these authors, understand that achievement does not necessarily relate to happiness, but that happiness can cultivate achievement.

Rina and Michele experienced an enviable work-life balance in The Netherlands. They experienced Dutch mothers making adequate time for themselves, motherhood and work. Dutch fathers are absolutely equally involved with the household chores and the children. I quote from the book: *'We see British and American parents feeling constantly challenged and unsettled by their own unrealistic expectations and by other people's opinions. There is an assumption that children need all the money, resources and attention that a parent can*

*(superhumanly) provide in order to give them a head start in life. If mums do not live up to the ideal of self-sacrificing, Pinterest-savvy, bending-over-backwards Mommy, society is quick to wave a finger. At the very crux of the judgemental bandwagon is the way society measures and compares parenting expertise through the academic and other accomplishments of our children.'*

There seems to be an underlying belief that the time and effort (and money) that we put into celebrations, such as birthday parties, proves our love. Conversely, in The Netherlands, birthday parties and other celebrations are simple and more about the togetherness and the joy of celebrating the child.

In The Netherlands the pre-school focus is on teaching the child social and emotional skills such as taking turns, sharing, being nice and playing together. (Just like we do at St Peter's Prep!) Children are not taught to read early and the emphasis is on learning through playful activities and play. (Just like we do at St Peter's Prep)

A prep school report in The Netherlands has no grades, only an indication of whether the child is: behind the general learning pathway, far behind it, following it or ahead of it. The value of education lies in collaboration, communication, deep learning, critical thinking, creativity and social values as opposed to the rewards of competition, top grades and results. (If results and external rewards become a source of self-esteem, what happens in the workplace? There is surely a danger that figures, increases and salaries could be seen as a measurement of self-worth?)

The authors of the book met a professor from Rotterdam, Professor Veenhoven, who is involved in the research on happiness. He stated categorically that Dutch schools intentionally ensure that children *like* going to school (just like our girls at St Peter's Prep☺) investing more energy in motivation than in achievement. Social skills are also stressed as the professor says, *'They are much more important than IQ.'*

The book will be available in our library for parents to borrow in the very near future.

Have a good weekend!

Nibe nempelasonto emnandi!

Darrel Webb  
(Headmaster)

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## FROM THE JP HEAD

### NEW APPOINTMENT IN GRADE 1



Robyn van Ginkel has been appointed as our new Grade 1 teacher in 2018 at St Peter's Girls Junior Prep. She is a wife to Robin and they have two children, Cameron Jade who is three and Michael James who is one.

After teaching Grade 2 for four years, Robyn completed her postgraduate studies in Learner Support, in 2014. She has been working as a Remedial Therapist at Rivonia Primary School for the past three years and at St Peter's Girls Prep School since May this year. Robyn is a passionate educator and thrives on establishing new learning paths for those who are experiencing learning challenges. She does this using games and building solid foundations of core concepts on which the learners can build.

Robyn looks forward *'to working with the wonderful girls, teachers and parents at this incredible school.'*

We are in the process of finding a replacement Remedial Teacher for 2018.

### SCHOOL STAFFING FOR 2018

This brings me to the 2018 staffing at the Girls JP. What an amazing team they are!

Grade 0 team will include, Janet Buck, Shelli Golden, Chloe Hall and Lerato Mafatle. Supported by assistant, Charmaine Ndzwane.

Grade 1 team: Sheena Steyn, Leigh Lidgley and Robyn van Ginkel.

Grade 2 team remains the same with Catriona Montagu, Bronwyn Peake and Kerry Glass.

We have Zanele Mbatha in the Media Centre and teaching isiZulu in Grade 1 and 2, Lauren Keeve is our Afrikaans and Ed Tech collaboration teacher. Jess da Silva continues to teach music across JP and Leanne Fleming and Tshego Mashabela will grow our, now independent, Sports Department. We will continue to host a great team of Interns.

### WHY THERAPIES ARE RECOMMENDED

I know parents all react differently to recommendations to support their children with Speech and Occupational Therapy. The article that follows is hopefully helpful in illuminating why we need one or the other or both, as they are often interconnected - as far as creating positive learning opportunities:

*Speech and occupational therapy overlap in many areas, to include feeding, swallowing, cognition, body posture and awareness, and others. In our current medical model, the common practice is to divide the child into "pieces": physical therapy treating the lower body, occupational therapy treating the upper body and speech therapy treating the mouth (throat, tongue, lips, and jaw).*

*If only it were that simple. It is easy to forget that the body is connected and what we do with one part of the body directly affects another part of the body. The association between speech and language skills and occupational therapy is a perfect example of this interrelatedness. Occupational therapy has a lot more to offer children who have speech and language delays than just swinging to release energy or acquaint them with new textures. Many areas of difficulty that are addressed by an OT relate directly to a child's speech and language development. However, our proprioceptive (sense of body position) and vestibular (balance) functions are really what tie things all together.*

*Occupational therapists working from a sensory integration frame of reference focus upon how a child is able to take in information from the environment, organise that information, then respond, and adapt to their surroundings. We can think about a child's development as an inverted triangle with sensory systems on the bottom, precariously balancing all the rest of our higher-level functions, including speech and language skills.*

*Early sensory experiences help to shape our motor skills and how we respond to our environment. The input we receive early in life is extremely important. As infants, the connection between the hand and the mouth is one of the first things we learn. We then develop oral motor reflexes like rooting and sucking and eventually begin to regulate ourselves. Moving our arm and hand provides feedback from our muscles and joints and begins to give us our sense of “self.” When an infant cries and their needs are met as a result, this is our earliest back-and-forth interaction and the beginnings of communication.*

*The vestibular system receives information from within our inner ear, which travels in two directions: up to the cochlea and the visual system and down to our proprioceptive and tactile systems. This input helps maintain balance, affects our ability to sit still, and controls eye movement. The vestibular system coordinates and controls our movements, telling our body when we are moving, how fast or slow we are moving, and when we stop and start moving. Similarly, speech production involves motor control and motor planning of fine motor muscle movements.*

*The vestibular system works closely with the auditory system; both receive information from the receptors in the ear, and are separated anatomically by only a bony labyrinth. When sound passes through our ear, it creates vibration. This movement is what our body understands, not the sound itself. If a child’s body struggles to understand this movement, they may also struggle to process sounds. We need to understand what we hear before we can repeat it.*

*The nerve connections in the inner ear also play a significant role in the coordination of speech. There are four major cranial nerves that run through the inner ear. The trigeminal (V), facial (VII) and glossopharyngeal (IX) nerves innervate the face and mouth. If the vestibular system is under or over responsive, the input that these nerves receive is compromised, affecting the information the muscles of the mouth and eyes receive. The vagus nerve (X) controls all of our homeostatic functions such as respiratory and heart rate, and hunger and sleep cycles.*

*The proprioceptive system is the “position sense,” the unconscious awareness of sensations provided by our joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments. If a child has poor awareness throughout their body due to poor proprioceptive processing or low tone, they are going to have a much harder time coordinating their mouth muscles as well. To effectively communicate, a child needs to attend, maintain control of their body, and understand where their body is in space. Postural control is also regulated by the information that the vestibular and proprioceptive systems sends to our muscles. This can and does affect a child’s ability to use their breath support muscles for speech.*

*The coordination of our vestibular, visual, and auditory systems is how we begin to understand space and time. We use this knowledge for higher-level language skills like structure, sequencing, timing, and turn-taking in conversation. Once we are able to relate to the space around and within ourselves, we can begin to understand the world outside. We then become aware of personal space, facial expressions and cues, all of which greatly impact social skills.*

*Occupational and speech therapy are intimately linked. The skills that develop within properly functioning vestibular and proprioceptive systems relate directly to speech and language functioning in many ways, including fine motor movements, motor coordination and planning, auditory processing of sound, postural control, body alignment, and breath support. A mutually supportive relationship between OTs and SLPs, in which we share our knowledge and share our goals, will allow us to continue to learn from one another and more importantly, help to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children.*

By: Jessica Hunt, OTR/L

Kaufman Children's Centre for Speech, Language, Sensory-Motor, and Social Connections, Inc.

<http://www.pediastaff.com/blog/occupational-therapy-and-speech-therapy-why-we-need-each-other-2378>

Have a super weekend.

**Heather Kissack** (*JP Head*)

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## CHAPEL BIRTHDAYS

The following girls will receive their birthday cards on Tuesday, 27 October at 08:00 in the School Chapel. The birthday girls are welcome to donate a book to the library. Please note that it does not have to be wrapped.

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We look forward to seeing the parents, there!

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## PA NEWS

### VOLUNTEER NOW FOR 2018!

The St Peter's Prep Parents Association is planning the following events for 2018, and as always, we are looking for volunteers to participate in the organisation of these events. Please contact Robyn ([robyn@designoval.co.za](mailto:robyn@designoval.co.za)) or Caron ([cduplessis@stpeters.co.za](mailto:cduplessis@stpeters.co.za)) if you are interested in getting involved.

The planned events are:

- **Ladies Lunch:** this takes place every second year, in the first term, alternating with the Staff Variety Show. It involves the moms of the school purchasing tickets for a fun afternoon, involving lunch, drinks and some form of entertainment – the format and choice of entertainment to be decided by the organisers.
- **Winter Warmers:** we have decided to bring back the very popular Winter Warmers concert in 2018, as a change from Movie Night and Autumn Carnival. The format and entertainment to be decided by the organisers, but this typically involves an outdoor music festival/act coupled with an Inflatable Carnival, entertainment for kids, food and drink vendors. Families come for a relaxed afternoon on the field in the winter sun, listening to great music, while the children are busy with their own entertainment.
- **Family Soccer Festival:** as per the 2017 festival, this will involve an afternoon of friendly soccer matches between the children while parents relax and enjoy the matches.
- **Golf Day:** the annual Golf Day, held at Kyalami Country Club, will take place in the third term of 2018.



**NESPRESSO. ZENIUS** 

## WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE.

Win a Nespresso Zenius Machine just by using your MySchool Card.

Winning is easy at St Peter's Prep, all you have to do is swipe your MySchool card between 1 - 30 November 2017, save your slip from the MySchool partner, write your name and contact number on the back and pop it into 1 of 4 branded competition boxes, allocated in each of the schools' receptions. Remember multiple entries are permitted. So every receipt is an entry. One MySchool member from the St Peter's Prep community will be selected as the winner, by way of a random draw from all the receipts collected from the competition boxes, at Sunset Carols on 2 December 2017.

If you do not have a MySchool card and would be interested in joining please contact Gabby Cowling ([gabby@brandalivegroup.com](mailto:gabby@brandalivegroup.com)) or Anne Du Preez ([annedp@live.com](mailto:annedp@live.com))



MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet

T & C's APPLY THE JUDGES DECISION IS FINAL

## GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

### SOLLY SITHOLE

Solly Sithole is an intern in the Boys Junior Prep and is 24 years old. He was born in Randfontein, Johannesburg where he lived with both his parents. He has 13 siblings.

Solly matriculated in KZN in 2012 and then relocated back to Johannesburg. He secured employment at Sparrow Schools in Sophiatown, as a quality assurer.

Sadly, Solly's father passed away, after a long illness, in June this year. He has a great relationship with his mother and describes her as being 'extremely supportive.'

Solly says, *"When I heard about the St Peter's Intern Programme, I told myself that this is the 'big break' that I've been waiting for - I've always wanted to be a teacher. Being a teacher will help me change lives and be a good role model to my own children. I am so grateful for this opportunity and my life will change forever."*

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## HOME CONNECT OFFER

We have great news! St Peter's Prep Schools internet connection has been upgraded by an additional 1Gbps at no cost to the school. Home Connect has simply asked that we send a pamphlet home, with the children, offering parents great pricing for home fibre connections.

If you would like to take them up on their offering, the details will be on the pamphlet.

Dieter Glöss  
(IT and Project Manager)

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## CHRISTMAS BOXES

We will be sending a box home with your child, for our Christmas box appeal. These filled boxes will be distributed to vulnerable children and families in Diepsloot. Please encourage your daughter to get involved in the process of giving to others – and in so doing understanding the true meaning of Christmas. We are including the following suggestions (Sometimes this is the only treat these communities receive). Please include:

- Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Face Cloth, Soap
- Small toy (Maximum value R50 as the children will open their boxes in front of other children who have received a box and we don't want any disappointment)
- Packet of Sweets
- Crayons and blank book

If there is space, please fill box up with: tinned fish or beef, tinned fruit, baked beans, sugar, tea bags, long life milk, jam, biscuits. Please be so kind as to wrap them in Christmas paper. Please help us to build on last year's success by returning your box by the **17 November** (last year we collected over 800 boxes!)

Collection points: SP Reception  
Boys SP Reception  
JP Girls and Boys Reception areas  
Please contact Monica on [msloane@stpeters.co.za](mailto:msloane@stpeters.co.za) for any further info.

Father Richard  
Chaplain



## ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY IN SUNSET CAROLS PROGRAMME



The St Peter's Sunset Carols is a wonderful family event that attracts over 2000 people.

Each year a Christmas Carols programme is distributed on the evening. It is filled with wonderful photos of our choirs.

This publication is a perfect opportunity for your business to support the event by advertising in this glossy A4 magazine.

Please contact Monica Sloane ([msloane@stpeters.co.za](mailto:msloane@stpeters.co.za)) for further details.

Monica Sloane  
Foundation Manager



**WEEK AHEAD**

01/11/2017	18:30:00	20:30:00	Grade 0, 2018 and New Parents' Evensong and Cocktail Party	Chapel & Girls JP Hall
03/11/2017	09:30:00	10:00:00	Grade 4 Market Day	Girls SP
04/11/2017	09:00:00	10:00:00	Grade 0, 2018 Orientation Morning	Girls JP Hall