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ST PETER'S GIRLS PREP SCHOOL

Weekly Newsletter of the Girls JP

FROM THE RECTOR

We learnt with sadness this week that Anthony Parnell, the fourth Headmaster of St Peter's, passed away on Tuesday. Anthony led the Boys School from January 1981 to July 1995. He was truly a renaissance man: a gifted sportsman, amateur dramatist and singer. He taught English to the Standard 6s (Gr 8). In those days, the Prep was based on the English model with classes from Grade 0 to 8. He was the first Head in South Africa to establish an on-site academic support centre with remedial and occupational therapists. He was a tough Head and a stern disciplinarian who had very high expectations of the boys. The Staff Variety Show, too, was his inspiration.

Many Old Boys will remember him with affection. Anthony is survived by his wife, Fiona, and his children Giles and Julia.

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 or dradloff@stpeters.co.za

Greg Royce
(Rector)

FROM THE JP HEAD

DAY OF INNOVATION; A DAY OF PLAY!

Why learning, through opportunities - to make, create and play, matter!

As teachers, we talk of risk-taking all the time, of the importance of learning through our mistakes and encouraging values of resilience as well as the critical life skill of collaboration and, finally, we try to add the essence of 'wonder' into learning. If parents were around, they would bear witness to the extraordinary experience that took place, at the JP at St Peter's Prep, which managed to include all of these and more. It was the 'Day of Innovation', a day of play and exploration. Teachers were given the following brief:

- Clear the timetable for the day!
- Collect boxes and other recyclables
- Inspiration will include the book: *It's not a box*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nif94VQ4Xsc>
- Provide the problem and establish some ground rules

- Create teams/pairs etc.
- Teach methods of joining etc. as teachable moments (as they arise)
- Provide brain breaks, snack breaks etc.
- Make sure the timing is managed i.e. set guidelines and keep them on track
- Specialists will be allocated to specific grades, to assist
- Involve interns/teacher assistants
- Have fun!

The day was an incredible success! It incorporated creativity, problem solving, collaboration and wonder! In the following paragraphs, I will attempt to explain the rationale behind the day, the skills that it developed and the reason why we will have more of these days in the future.

This idea that *play matters* is not new. However, with the increasing pressure on schools to educate for a growing technological and ever-changing world, as well as the need to develop 21st Century skills, the concept of play has been seen as a luxury children don't have time for. Play's positive contribution to learning is not new, but at St Peter's we have become increasingly aware of the impact of play on learning.

The teachers took on the task and went about collecting boxes and recyclables in order to facilitate the day. We ordered glue, tape, string, pegs and other materials. The corridors in the school began to look very full! On the day, the magic began almost immediately. The girls sprang into action and the projects, scaffolded through the grades, created an energy and concentration, which was so focused that the girls barely stopped working and building. They had to be encouraged to break for snacks and lunch and did not seem to need any play time. There was attention to detail and the learning was unmeasurable.

I recently came across a book (*The Power of Play* by David Elkind) that endorses play in a way, which I feel endorses the need to provide scheduled playtime for our children. As I read the pages of this, easy to access, book I was reminded of the concern and struggle, in school systems, to find a balance between the need to develop skills and curriculum expectations. The trend is to focus on testing and overscheduling is common in schools. This book about the importance of play in a child's life interests me greatly. It endorses that *'During the early years of life, the child does not learn by 'watching,' 'absorbing,' or 'looking harder.'* *The young child learns by constructing and reconstructing the world through his play-generated learning experiences.'*

The importance of play in a person's (especially a child's) life cannot be underestimated. The passion we feel for a subject i.e. playing with ideas and working to find solutions, are what drive people and any time in which we can combine the three, life becomes good. In our *Day of Innovation*, we attempted, as a school, to make the importance of learning through play more understood and the value of passion and the concept of work come together.

It is clear that this day was a tremendous success and we are scheduling more of them in the term ahead.

'Love, work and play are three inborn drives that power human thought and action throughout the life cycle. Play is our need to adapt the world to ourselves and create new learning experiences.' David Elkind

WATER WARRIORS

Wow! The girls were amazing in their efforts to help save water. Parents, you made sure that the girls were able to complete their water passports. The first two classes to bring back their passports were Grade 0, Mrs Hall and Grade 1, Mrs Lidgley! Well done girls. We hope you enjoyed your Civvies Day last week. Now the real challenge - is to continue with the new behaviours!

PARENT CONSULTATIONS

This term-end sees parent/teacher consultations. Through a process of observation and focused assessment, we will discuss your daughter's success, areas of growth and goals for Term 2. There is no formal report this term. We invite you to participate in your daughter's journey.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

Please be reminded that Wednesday, 11 April is a short day and there is no Afterschool Programme. Girls need to be collected between 10:30 and 11:30.

THANK YOU AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS

What an amazing term we have had. Thank you to the parents who go the extra mile, the teachers who drive best practice and make sure we are learning, loving and playing hard and to the girls, who make every day joyful! We look forward to seeing you all on Thursday, 3 May.

Heather Kissack (JP Head)

BIRTHDAY CHAPEL

On **Tuesday, 10 April** the girls who celebrate their birthdays between **5 April and 8 May** will receive their birthday cards in Chapel and will receive a blessing too. Girls can donate a book to the school for their birthday and we do hope to see parents there.

PIZZA DAY REMINDER

'Pizza Friday' tomorrow: **Friday, 6 April.**

SCHOOL SHOP

The School Shop will be open on Wednesday, 2 May 07:00 to 16:00, the day before the start of the Trinity Term.

It is recommended that you try to use the few days left this term, before we break up, to come in and get winter uniform items.

READER'S WAREHOUSE BOOK SALE

When: 5 and 6 April
Where: Boy's JP Hall
Time: 07:30 – 14:30

FORTHCOMING WEEK

Thursday	4/5/2018	14:00:00	17:00:00	Parent Consultation Afternoon	Classrooms
Friday	4/6/2018	09:00:00	10:00:00	PIZZA DAY (R25)	Keys Pavilion
Wednesday	4/11/2018	10:30:00	10:30:00	Term Ends (NO AFTERCARE)	

ANTI-WASTE

We are building up our stock of recycled materials for all grades to use in STEAM lessons for exploration and design. Please can you send in any small recyclable material you collect at home such as polystyrene trays, bottle tops and lids, yoghurt tubs, toilet rolls, small tubs and boxes, etc.



JP APRIL HOLIDAY CLUB GRADE 0, 1 AND 2 GIRLS



Mrs Buck, Mrs Steyn, Mrs Montagu and Ms Peake are excited to be running a holiday club in the April school holidays. Come and join us for lots of baking, crafts, a treasure hunt and a bike day. Girls may sign up for all days or selected days on the sign-up sheet that can be found on the Holiday Club board at the JP. Please can parents include their email address with their child's name and take a sign-up sheet and information letter. Payments by EFT to Mrs Buck by the end of term.

Cost: R220 per day and the club runs from 8:00 – 12:00.

Dates: 12-13 April; 16 – 20 April; 23-24 April

Limited numbers. Register soon!

