



# Take Heart

Old Girls' Newsletter

December 2021

## Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of our St John's D.S.G. Old Girls'

As we leap towards the end of 2021, it's a good time to reflect on what this year has given us... It's been interesting (to say the least!) and full of challenges and uncertainties, but I would like to think that as things slowly start to return to some normality, we can look forward to a new year with positivity. We hope to see as many Old Girls as possible at the Old Girls' Day scheduled for May 2022.

As we say cheers to 2021, we also say a sad goodbye to the school basher. Many of us may feel sentimental about this; however, a lot of thought and debate from many stakeholders has gone into this decision and practically, it's the right one.

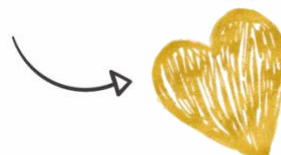
Wishing you all a safe and happy Christmas and a fabulous 2022!

**Lucy Kewley (Chairlady of the Old Girls' Association)**

## Heart-to-Heart

For our monthly "Heart-to-Heart" feature, we catch up with an Old Girl to find out where she is in life and what she has been up to since leaving school.

These features are published on the St John's D.S.G. website: [www.stjohnsdsg.com](http://www.stjohnsdsg.com) under the "Old Girls" tab and links to these articles are shared on our social media pages. Below are two snippets of recent articles. To read more of our "Heart-to-Heart" features, please click on the heart:



Lucy and her daughter, Mary (Grade 9)

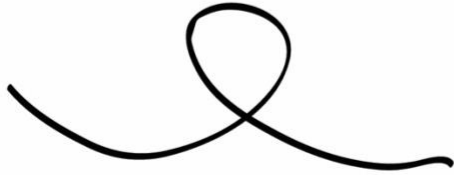


## HEART-TO-HEART WITH ALINASWE LUSENGO

Currently in her 3rd year at UCT, studying Media & Politics, Old Girl, Alinaswe Lusengo (Class of 2018) has been focusing her passions on freelance writing, with one of her poems recently being published on the "Button Poetry" YouTube channel. "Button Poetry" has over 1.3 million subscribers and is an American-based organisation dedicated to developing a coherent and effective system of production, distribution, promotion and fundraising for performance poetry. Alinaswe has also started a podcast titled, 'Hectic', with two of her friends, where they speak about what it means to be young black women in South Africa. Alinaswe is an Allan Gray Candidate Fellow so working with that fellowship keeps her busy. She loves living in Cape Town and is often found practicing yoga, reading a book or just enjoying the company of her friends, whom she loves dearly. Alinaswe dreams of a world where everyone can experience freedom. It was lovely to catch up with this inspiring young woman. We are so proud of what she has achieved in the short time since leaving St John's D.S.G.

What did you love most about St John's D.S.G.?

I loved the people that I got to meet at St John's D.S.G., some of whom have become my best friends to this day. I also really loved the opportunities that I got there. I was able to explore so many parts of myself and learn so much about what I am capable of.



## HEART-TO-HEART WITH SUSAN SMYTH

Having only been at St John's D.S.G. for two years before contracting polio, sadly only 5 months before the vaccine became available, St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Susan Smyth (Class of 1961) spent her Grade 6 year in an Orthopedic Hospital and only returned to school in Grade 7. For Sue, this was a pivotal point in her life, as it helped her adapt to normal society, despite her significant physical handicaps. St John's D.S.G. went to great lengths to enable Sue to be as ordinary a schoolgirl as possible. The teachers made sure all her classrooms were on the ground floor and even though she was granted additional writing time and other concessions, St John's D.S.G. integrated her into the busyness of school life.

The impact that the staff made on Sue's life and the coping mechanisms taught, helped her to complete her tertiary education, obtaining her degree at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg which she followed with a post graduate year at the University of Cape Town. Her interest in learners with special educational needs led her to further post graduate studies, specialising in Remedial Therapy. The 26 years that Sue spent dedicating her time to learners was innovative and rewarding - she loved assessing and teaching young people who had been able to make their way into a wide variety of careers, despite their academic vulnerabilities.

Currently living at Woodgrove Retirement Village in Pietermaritzburg, Sue enjoys catching up with the other St John's D.S.G. Old Girls in the area. They recently enjoyed each other's company, laughing and reminiscing over coffee and delicious brownies, lovingly sent from the St John's D.S.G. Old Girls' Association.



What did you love most about St John's D.S.G?

I can testify to the reality that St John's D.S.G. truly is a 'small school with big heart.' Despite my obvious physical handicaps, the wider St John's D.S.G. community of teachers, girls and parents never made me feel different in any way. I was included in all activities where I had the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe and caring environment. This, in turn, enabled me to have the satisfaction of giving back varied and exciting openings to the young people with whom I have worked.

# Area Ambassadors



## SOUTH AFRICA

Hilton/PMB: Mary Millward (née Quicke - 1985) [info@dusi.co.za](mailto:info@dusi.co.za)  
Nombulelo Zulu (2014) [bulelombanjwa@gmail.com](mailto:bulelombanjwa@gmail.com)

Midlands/Kamberg/Notties:

Kelly Sivright (née Gaylard - 1999) [kelly@glengarry.co.za](mailto:kelly@glengarry.co.za)

Winterton/Bergville:

Lindsay Du Plessis (née Carte - 2002) [lindsaycarte@gmail.com](mailto:lindsaycarte@gmail.com)

Durban:

Puvithra Naidoo (1991) [puvithra@me.com](mailto:puvithra@me.com)

KZN North Coast:

Kirsty Heath (née Bowles - 2002) [bowlzie@hotmail.com](mailto:bowlzie@hotmail.com)

KZN South Coast:

Geneé Kilgour (née Liedenbergh - 1987) [kilgour@mweb.co.za](mailto:kilgour@mweb.co.za)

Gauteng/JHB:

Grace Buthelezi (2014) [fanelegrace@gmail.com](mailto:fanelegrace@gmail.com)

Nombulelo Zulu (2014) [bulelombanjwa@gmail.com](mailto:bulelombanjwa@gmail.com)

Candice Seggie (née Leo-Smith - 2000) [candiceseggie@gmail.com](mailto:candiceseggie@gmail.com)

## INTERNATIONAL

U.K. (London):

Christina Haralambous (2000) [christine.haralambous@gmail.com](mailto:christine.haralambous@gmail.com)

USA & Canada:

Paula Owen (née Munro - 1996) [info@paulaowen.ca](mailto:info@paulaowen.ca)

Australia (Sydney):

Lauren Tischendorf (1998) [lm Tischendorf@gmail.com](mailto:lm Tischendorf@gmail.com)

## UNIVERSITY REPS

Wits:

Nana Mwenechanya (2017) [nanamwene@gmail.com](mailto:nanamwene@gmail.com)

Nombulelo Zulu (2014) [bulelombanjwa@gmail.com](mailto:bulelombanjwa@gmail.com)

Tuks:

Michelle Niebuhr (2017) [michelleniebuhr@gmail.com](mailto:michelleniebuhr@gmail.com)



We are still on the lookout for more Area Ambassadors, local and International, so if you are interested in assisting us with organising Old Girl gatherings in your area, please contact Jane Cole-Edwardes on [oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com](mailto:oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com)



# What our Old Girls have been up to...

## OLD GIRLS ON UHAMBO

Each year, our Grade 9 girls embark on a three-week adventure known as uHambo, which means “journey” in isiZulu. uHambo has been running at St John’s D.S.G. since 2007. The girls spend their three weeks hiking, riding horses and cycling. They carry their tents, mattresses, food and clothing, which can weigh up to 14kg, in their backpacks. This year was slightly different as we had the Grade 9 girls, as well as the Grade 10s, who missed out on their trip last year, relishing the uHambo experience. What made this year even more special was that 6 out of the 19 team leaders were St John’s D.S.G. Old Girls! No doubt the memories of their time on uHambo, as St John’s D.S.G. school girls, came flooding back.

### Team Leaders for 2021

- Natalie Esteves (Class of 2014)
- Kelly-Ann Fjellvik (Class of 2017)
- Sarah Kidgell (Class of 2014)
- Brenna Stewart-Burger (Class of 2020)
- Katy Usher (Class of 2015)
- Laura Marx (Class of 2018)



## CHRISTINE QUICKE TURNS 80!

One of our oldest St John’s D.S.G. Old Girls celebrated her 80th birthday on 13 July. Christine Quicke (née Jamieson, Class of 1958), attended St John’s D.S.G. from 1954 - 1958 and was a valued member of staff from 1972 - 1984. Christine was Chairlady of the Old Girls’ Association from 1979 - 2016 and was the Old Girls’ Representative on the St John’s D.S.G. Board of Governors from 2010 - 2015. Both Christine’s daughters, Jill Quicke (Class of 1983) and Mary Millward (Class of 1985) attended the school and now Christine has the pleasure of watching her granddaughter, Derryn Millward, currently in Grade 6, follow in their footsteps.



## KERRYNN GETS MARRIED!

After having to change dates and venues numerous times, St John’s D.S.G. Old Girl, Kerryann Haupt (née van der Westhuizen, Class of 2014) married Paul on 10 July at their beautiful family farm in the Midlands. They celebrated their special day with close family and friends. Kerryann looked gorgeous and we wish her and Paul many happy and healthy years together.





## DELICIOUS DELIVERIES

St John's D.S.G. Old Girls' Liaison, Jane Cole-Edwardes (née Rogers, Class of 2002) recently delivered special gift packs to all our local Old Girls residing in nearby retirement villages. Each pack contained a special message, the 2020 edition of our 'Heartbeat' school magazine, the latest Old Girls' newsletter, a beautiful print of the school as well as some extra goodies for our special Old Girls to enjoy. As we weren't able to meet these ladies in person, we provided them with a cappuccino and decadent chocolate brownie to enjoy in the comfort (and safety!) of their own home.



## MIDLANDS MAGAZINE FEATURE

Old Girl, Stephanie Szecsei (née Poltera, Class of 2002), was recently included in a Midlands Schools' alumni feature in the popular Midlands Magazine, celebrating the accomplishments of past pupils and what they have achieved since leaving Matric.

To read Steph's story, please click on the heart below and go to page 62 of the Midlands Magazine online edition.

Click here to  
read more



## BEAUTIFUL JEWELLERY BY KIM AKTINS

St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Kim Atkins (née Ridgway, Class of 1982) is the proud owner of Kim Atkins Jewellery. Her collections include beautiful beaded and sterling silver items. Her jewellery pieces showcase inspiring and encouraging Biblical themes that speak to the inner beauty and dignity of women. Kim offers opportunities within her business for students and young jewellers to make pieces of jewellery, encouraging growth and confidence in an industry that is very difficult to get started in. We are so proud of Kim's fantastic achievement and her amazing desire to help others. To read more about Kim's journey, please click on the heart below.

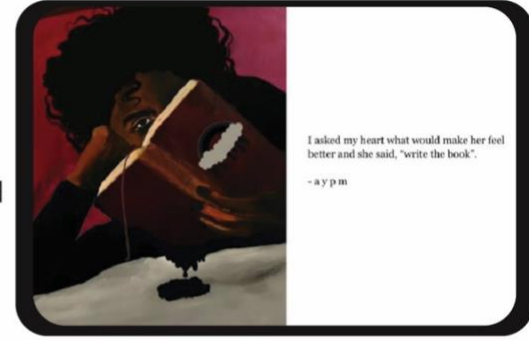
Click here to  
read more





## A PUBLISHED POET

St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Nonhlanhla Siwela, (Class of 2020) who is currently studying Medicine at Wits University was approached for her poetry writing based on her Instagram account: A Young Poet's Mind. She has now published a poetry anthology entitled, *The Rainbow Nation is Black*. Congratulations, Nonhlanhla. This is an amazing achievement. Well done!



## KIM MCCONNACHIE GIVES ADVICE ABOUT SAFE SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

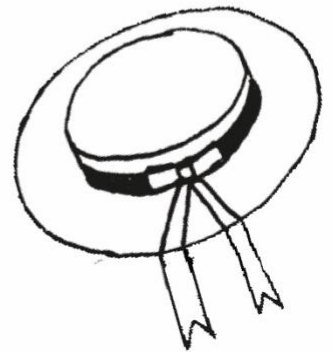
With almost 15 years' experience within human resource management and specialising in global executive search, talent management and human resource operations, St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Kim McConnachie (née McCallum, Class of 2002), took some time out of her busy schedule to come and chat to our Grade 11 girls about why it's so important to stop and think before posting anything on social media. Kim is currently a director for a technology company that develops software deployed in clients across UK, US and SA. She heads up all HR functions, gets involved in marketing and branding, client operations and software solutions design.



Kim has vast experience in recruitment and explained to our girls about how future university and employment opportunities could potentially be ruined due to inappropriate social media usage. She gave relevant examples and great advice which made a big impact on our Grade 11 girls.

## Farewell to the basher

2021 has been an eventful year to say the least. It will be remembered for many things, however, in St John's D.S.G. history, it will be remembered for the year that the basher was hung up for the last time. After much consultation with many school stakeholders, the decision was made to remove the basher from the 2022 uniform list.



St John's D.S.G. has had a vast array of headgear throughout the decades, from the tri-corn to the yellow summer hat and the panama basher, to the more updated basher that we know today.

So, as we say farewell to the basher, we look back over its time with (mostly!) fond memories.





# Welcome to the Old Girls' Association

The Matrics of 2021 recently attended their Valedictory Service - their final Chapel Service of their school career.

It was a beautiful morning full of heartfelt messages from Rev Di (Chaplain), and Lucy Kewley (Chairlady of the Old Girls' Association) formally welcomed the Matrics as 'old girls!'

They each received a beautiful silver bracelet engraved with "SJS 2021" as a gift from the Old Girls' Association. We wish these young ladies all the best as they leave St John's D.S.G. and embark on new and exciting adventures ahead. We look forward to seeing them at future Old Girls' functions.



## Reunions

We were delighted to have welcomed back two Matric year groups (2001 and 2011) to enjoy a walk down memory lane around the school's campus and catch up over a light finger lunch on the Chapel Lawn. Both groups of ladies commented on what a lovely day they had, how awesome the school is looking and that hopefully one day they can send their daughters to St John's D.S.G. Thank you to Sandy van der Waal (née Collings, Class of 2001) and Bianca Hillermann (née Wittig, Class of 2011) for organising the reunions.



Class of 2011



Class of 2001



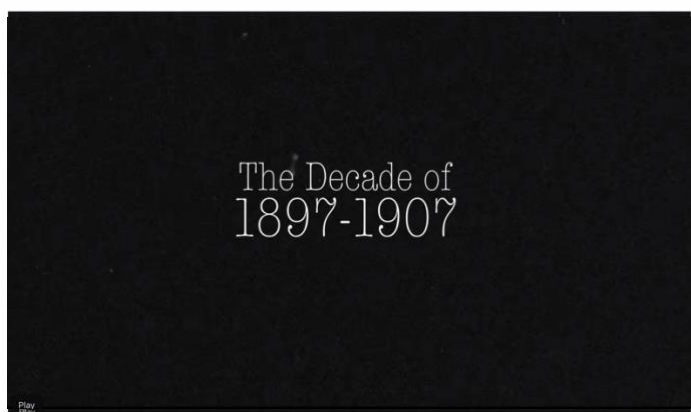
We love hearing that Old Girl's are meeting up on a regular basis. A few special ladies from the class of 1971 enjoyed a relaxing lunch in Cape Town for a mini 50-year celebration. They thoroughly enjoyed their time together reminiscing of their days spent together at St John's D.S.G.

Pictured here is: Cindy Taylor (née Bultitude), Fiona McLeod (née McAllister), Dalene Potgieter (née Raubenheimer), Angela Wessels (née Joyner) and Jackie Plimsoll (née Titren).

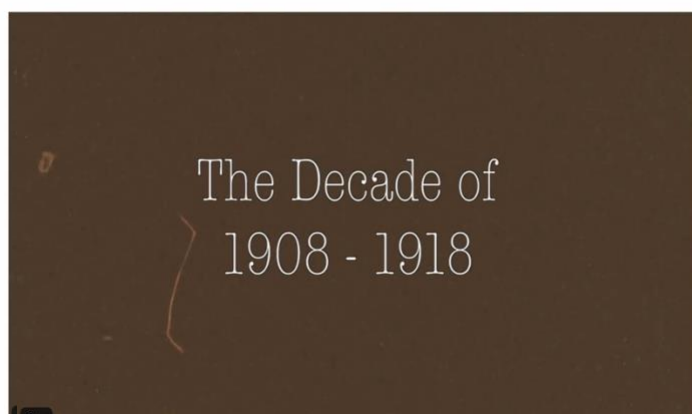


## 125th Celebration. The countdown has begun...

The countdown to a significant milestone in our special school's history was launched in August. In the lead up to St John's D.S.G.'s 125th birthday celebration (in August, 2022) we will be taking a look back over the decades at what made St John's D.S.G. the small school with a big heart that it is today. Enjoy the first four instalments of a collection of twelve videos, where we take you back to where it all began (click on the links below). These snapshots of history launch every month and will continue to do so until our 125th birthday on 20 August, 2022.



Video One



Video Two



Video Three



Video Four



It's going to be an exciting and action packed year, and we can't wait for what is to come. There are lots of exciting functions being organised for 2022 and we would like to encourage Old Girls to return to school for these events. Details will be released soon and will be published on the school's website and our social media pages. Please keep an eye out for these so you can plan accordingly. Here are a few of the dates for you to diarise now.



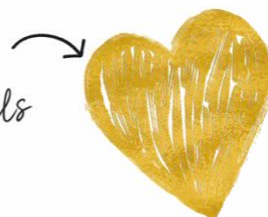
## Running Club

The world's biggest, oldest and most famous ultramarathon, the Comrades Marathon will be going ahead in 2022 and as St John's D.S.G. will be turning 125 next year, we would like to encourage as many Old Girls (and family members) who plan to run in 2022, to do so for St John's D.S.G. Running club. For more information, please contact Jane Cole-Edwardes on [oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com](mailto:oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com).

## Update Contact Details

We would love to get in touch with all our special Old Girls. Please take a minute to follow the link below to update your contact details.

Click here to  
update your details



## Not Online?

We know that not everyone has access to online resources so if you know of an Old Girl who is not online and who would benefit from having information posted to her, please email Jane Cole-Edwardes on [oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com](mailto:oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com) with their name and postal address.

## Link to current news

If you aren't already following our St John's D.S.G. Old Girls' social media pages, please do so by clicking the link below. This is where we keep you up to date with what our Old Girls are up to as well as any important information with regards to reunions, date changes and future events.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sjsoldgirls/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/stjohnsdsgoldgirls/>

If social media isn't your thing, The Old Girls' section on the St John's D.S.G. website allows for easy access to any past Heart-to-Heart posts, newsletters and upcoming events.

<https://www.stjohnsdsg.com/old-girls-association/>