



ST JOHN'S D.S.G.
PIETERMARITZBURG
Small school. Big heart.

the

yellow

pages

Edition Six - 2023



SOME OF THE EXCITING THINGS IN THIS EDITION...

- ♡ Junior School Robotics
- ♡ The Busy Grade 6s
- ♡ Junior School Sports Festival
- ♡ Old Girls' Day



GENERAL NEWS

Welcome back!

Last month, we welcomed back our much-loved Grade 3 Teacher, Mrs Huntley from her time off on maternity leave. The girls and Junior School staff were so excited to have her back, they set up a surprise for her with balloons and banners when she got to her classroom!



Wedding Bells

Congratulations to Ms Princess Madlala (Kitchen Team) and Mr Musa Sumo (Fleet Manager), who got married at home in Elandskop on 21 May.

We are so happy for you both, and wish you everything of the best for the future.



A New Arrival

A BIG congratulations to Mrs Jenna Dermick and her husband, Zac, on the safe arrival of their little boy, Daniel Graeme Dermick, on Sunday, 11 June. The St John's D.S.G. girls and staff can't wait to meet the next "high-performance" athlete!

The Faces Behind the Voices!

It is estimated that these lovely ladies collectively answer around 200 calls per day! Isn't it lovely to put a face to their beautiful voices? Last Friday, they all met for a quick cup of coffee to catch up and chat about the term.

From left to right: Mrs Debbie Parfitt – Junior School Secretary, Mrs Thandi Mtshali – Admin Clerk, Mrs Jenny Westwood – PA to the Principal and Admissions, Mrs Megan Jordaan – Admin Assistant, Ms Sbongile Mshengu - Senior School Secretary and Miss Pinkie Msomi – Receptionist.



The Ultimate Human Race

Congratulations to our awesome "Yellow Feet" for participating in the 96th Comrades Marathon on Sunday, 11 June with such BIG heart.

From our incredible staff to SJS family members and those running for the St John's D.S.G. Athletics Club - we are proud of you all!

We are pleased to say that all our running club members completed the race, with Mr Sanele Malunga (Landscaper) and Mr Mdu Zondi (Assistant Estates Manager) both earning another silver medal each. Mr Derek Mweli (Security Supervisor) finished in his best ever time of 08:40, which is a Bill Rowan medal, and the remaining club members all finishing well within the 12-hour cut off.

Well done to each and every one of you for all the months of training and dedication, you should all be so proud of completing 'The Ultimate Human Race'.



Nkume Primary

Last month, Ms Sam Evans (Junior School Resource Centre Teacher) and Mrs Lisa Akerman (H.O.D. IT & Curriculum Development) spent an afternoon sharing their experience and knowledge of Purple Mash (a digital vault of resources, games, tools and activities that are suited for Primary School curriculum in South Africa) with a few Nkume Primary School (Eshowe) teachers. A lot of learning (and excitement!) took place as their teachers engaged with this platform in order to use it effectively within their school and to better integrate technology into the curriculum. Many thanks to Mr Reg Zammit (Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors) for connecting St Johns D.S.G. with Nkume Primary, it was such a wonderful morning.



Old Girls' Day

We recently welcomed back over 160 Old Girls to St John's D.S.G. to celebrate Old Girls' Day. It was incredible to see ladies from across the years catching up and reminiscing about their special time at school. The day started with a Chapel Service, conducted by Rev Di Pickford, followed by a delicious tea, tour of the school and a champagne lunch. One of the highlights was spotting Old Girl, Mikayla Kingham (Class of 2022) chatting to Mrs Wendy Carter (née Bowman, Class of 1948) about her time at SJS – it was amazing to see their mutual love of the school regardless of their 73 year age difference!

A BIG thank you to our Old Girls' Liaison, Mrs Jane Cole-Edwardes, as well as to our Estates and Kitchen Teams for all their hard work involved in making this day the success that it was.



Professional Development

PurpleZA is a new era of professional development. The St John's D.S.G. Academic Staff have had the privilege of using this personalised professional development platform to enhance their digital skills and equip them to effectively manage the digital changes in the classroom.

A strategy was developed for the Junior and the Senior School where staff got to choose which course they wanted to embark on, that was suited to their subject and needs. During May, PurpleZA hosted a National Competition with other schools who use their platform, to see who could earn the most points. Much to our delight, the Senior School and Junior School placed third and seventh respectively in the country.

We are incredibly proud of the efforts that our staff members have put into their professional development and learning!

NIGHT OWLS
82 hours from January spent studying between 9pm and 10pm



STAFF WHO EARNED THE MOST POINTS IN MAY

Mrs Kidd 7400 points
Mrs Brown 6000 points

HOURS SPENT LEARNING IN MAY

70 hours

MOST POPULAR COURSE

"Transforming your Teaching with Teams and Time Hacks for Busy Teachers"

STAFF WITH THE MOST HOURS

Mrs Ingrid Evans: 51 hours
Mr Edmonds: 47 hours
Mrs Marion: 46 hours
Mrs Pillay: 39 hours

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWS

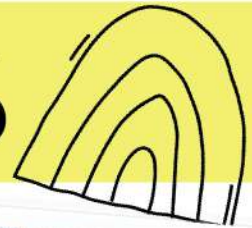
Turn on the lights!

Earlier this month we placed billboards at the Harwin and New England Rd entrances! This will serve as a great visual representation of how the fundraising efforts are going. If you have missed any of the communication, the Parents' Association is fundraising to install international quality flood lights for the school's Astro turf. They have already raised a million from activities in 2022, and require your support to raise a further R2 million by the end of Term 1, 2024.

To donate, please check the school app, scan the QR code or visit our website.



JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWS



Eaglets Botanical Garden Visit

On Thursday, 1 June there was a buzz of excitement in the air as the Eaglets set off for an outing to the Botanical Gardens. Their aim was to explore the gardens and look for signs of Autumn, and they were not disappointed! The girls were impressed by the numerous trees sporting their gorgeous Autumnal colours and a massive highlight was running up and down the avenue of London plane trees kicking the fallen leaves. The sunshine, fresh air, laughter and of course snacks all made for a fun and memorable outing.



Gentle Parenting by Mrs Michelle Gevers

FATHERS

Last Sunday we celebrated Father's Day, a day created by society for giving thanks and honoring our fathers. I am also so mindful and sensitive to the fact that we have a generation of fatherless children with deep 'father wounds.' Amidst this hurt and confusion, how do we honour the role of a father and how do fathers honour their children? Our greatest example is our Heavenly Father as He encompasses compassion, forgiveness, mercy and solidifies this with truth.

I recall several years ago working in the Jika Joe settlement with young 9 /10-year old's trying to survive in an adult world with no father. Today three of those young men are currently in their second year studying at UCT. They weren't removed from their community but rather had a spiritual father speak into their lives. He taught them the goodness of God and to turn their hearts to God and seek Him in all that they do, irrespective of their circumstances.

Fathers, physical or spiritual, have a responsibility to honour children. They are to care for them and their well being and treat them as God treats us, with love, care and compassion on an emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual level. There are fathers today that are deeply affected by their upbringing, a neglectful, abusive, addictive, controlling or non-involved father, which too bears repercussions on our adult life. Healing and forgiveness in the name of Jesus is what gets us through and restores us to a wholesome being, a complete vessel that can receive and give love with no conditions attached.

The societal pressures on fathers, and men in general, are enormous, as a large portion of this is found in materialism and status. A society that demands the 'best of' appears to be the measurement of success. Fathers, be kind and honest with yourself and make wise choices. Assess the true needs of your family. Spending time connecting on a deeper level creates intimate relationships, which further creates a sense of belonging in your children, which encourages them to look inward as opposed to measuring up to other families.

May you enjoy this upcoming holiday, using the time to build meaningful and honest relationships. May it be a pleasurable time together and may you be well rested for the start of Term 3.



The 'Pay it Forward' Board

Last week, the Junior School created a PAY IT FORWARD board to inspire and bless others with 400 sticky notes that included encouraging message. The instruction was to take a note and pass it on to someone. By the end of the day the notes had circulated around most of the school! A note spotted in the clinic read, "You are a good listener", given to Sister Kidgell by Abby Jones in Grade 2.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *"Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you are doing."*



Robotics in the Junior School

Robotics was first introduced into our Junior School six years ago, and has become an exciting and valuable part of the curriculum that we offer our girls. Our guiding focus in our Educational Technology learning and teaching remains, as always, our core values. We will have failed our girls if they become “hooked” on technology with no ethical understanding of its implementation or skills to use it to solve real-world problems. Technology can and should be used for good!

What is Robotics?

Educational robotics is a discipline designed to introduce children to robotics and programming interactively from a young age. "Robotics" is a branch of engineering that involves the conception, design, manufacture, and operation of robots - think of robots or machines we can control to perform tasks for us in our daily lives. Robots consist of sensors and processing units that help them perceive their environment, and motors which help them to move their limbs or wheels.

Why should children learn Robotics?

There are MANY reasons why children should learn robotics. Here are our top five:

- ★ **Futuristic Skills:** Our children need to be prepared for jobs that do not even exist yet. They NEED to be technologically literate - learning to code, interact with artificial intelligence, and automation.
- ★ **Creativity and Innovation:** Robots excite children and pull them into creative processes such as brainstorming, designing, testing, evaluating and innovating.
- ★ **Computational Thinking Skills:** Robotics combines the learning of critical computational thinking skills, which are important in teaching children how to leverage technology to solve real-world problems and think critically about them. These skills are abstraction, algorithmic thinking, decomposition, iteration, debugging and generalization.
- ★ **Facilitates STEM Learning:** Science, technology, engineering and mathematical skills are employed with a focus on hands-on learning and real-world application.
- ★ **Social Benefits:** There are loads of social benefits when children learn robotics. They learn to work as a team, be patient, persist when solving problems, how to fail, and how to compromise.

How is Robotics taught at St John's D.S.G.?

In Grades R and 1, our girls are introduced to skills they will need in an “unplugged” (meaning concrete learning without a screen) way. We have just excitingly purchased Sphero Indi robots, which we will introduce to these grades soon. From Grades 2 and up, our girls begin robotics during their weekly Educational Technology lessons. Our robotics curriculum follows the world-standard LEGO Education, exposing our learners to top tier robotics education. The curriculum takes our learners through various projects, each with a real-world problem to explore and solve through robotics. Each project also aims to teach our girls targeted, specific technical skills.

Last year some of our robotics club girls made St John's D.S.G. history as they competed in the World Robot Olympiad for the first time! Our Senior School girls are extended even further in Grades 8 and 9 with Mrs Lisa Akerman and Mrs Ingrid Evans. With this firm foundation, our girls have the grounding to go on to continue their coding and robotics journeys in their Senior Schools and beyond.

Ms Sam Evans (Junior School Resource Centre Teacher)

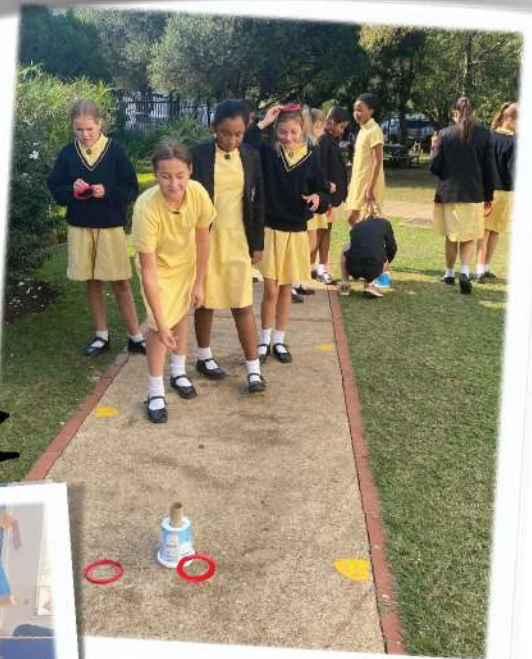


Our Busy Grade 6s ★

The Grade 6 girls have had a number of fun events this term. To round off a section in Maths, the class held a Fractions Party. In groups, the girls had to bring food and drinks to share - once they had divided it all up into different fractions.

Then, to reward the girls for their hard work in running the recycling programme, they were treated to a Waste-to-Toys Workshop by Mrs Julie Hay of Singakwenza. The girls had so much fun making and playing with toys made out of the "rubbish" that they collect each week.

This semester, the girls read "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry. Set in Denmark during World War 2, the story is based on the true story of the evacuation of the Danish Jews to Sweden. The Disney movie, "Miracle at Midnight" is centred around the same theme and the girls enjoyed a bring-and-share supper and movie night in their classroom.



SENIOR SCHOOL NEWS

Visit from Old Girl, Tyra Taylor

In the spirit of Youth Day, Tyra Taylor a proud St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Organisational Psychologist and Founder of Neurolift Psychology and Corporate Consulting spoke to the Senior School girls on Joyfully Thriving. It was an engaging and fun presentation.



Tyra began by affirming to the girls that neuroscience proves that our potential is endless, and by repeated effort, we can achieve whatever we put our minds to. She then zoned in on how to flourish with great happiness, debunking the myth of stressful and anxious goal achievement. Tyra proposed that if we align to our purpose and passion authentically, get comfortable with changing and growing, and manage our body's and mind's energy wisely, we can achieve our goals from a place of happiness, contentment and fulfillment.

Feel free to access Tyra's positive and inspiring content on any of her social media channels:

Apple Podcast: @Neurolift Talks

Instagram: @neurolift.za

Tiktok: @neurolift

Website: www.neurolift.org

Portrait Drawing

This term, the Grade 11 Art students had the task of creating a portrait drawing of someone of their choice. The girls had to consider a number of things before setting out on this exciting project - symbolism, scale, style, pose, artist/sitter relationship, use of charcoal and black and white.

We recently caught up with a few of the girls to find out who they had chosen as their inspiration for their piece, and this is what they had to say...

I chose to draw my mum because she has been a constant throughout my life. When I've felt misunderstood, she would understand and she always makes me feel enough and loved. She makes me laugh all the time with her corny jokes and stupid stories. She's adventurous and appreciates everything around her. I love her quite a lot. - Jamie Dahl

The reason why I chose to draw my mom was because she is a special person in my life and my best friend who is always there for me no matter what, and I wanted to convey that through my art. I also look like my mom and wanted to showcase our similarities. Anelisa Mkhulise



Speech and Poetry Evening

The isiZulu Department recently held a 'Speech and Poetry Evening' for all girls who are studying isiZulu FAL from Grades 8 – 12. The purpose of the event was for learners to be aware that doing isiZulu does not end at school and to give parents the chance to see their children's creativity in writing and public speaking.



Ms Thobile Dlamini, Chief Language Practitioner at KZN Department of Art and Culture, was our guest of honour for the evening. In her speech, addressed to the girls and their parents, she motivated for the girls not to be afraid to explore with the language and that there are many opportunities available for them if they decide to pursue with language studies in the future.



Mrs Londiwe Mkhulise (Head of isiZulu) says, "I feel this event was necessary for the girls because they got a chance to showcase their work without being concerned about marks. As their teacher, I was very proud of all the learners, and their performances."

The Speech and Poetry evening was delightful! It was so wonderful to see the girls expressing themselves so confidently and happily. It's a beautiful indication of the encouragement and support that they receive in the isiZulu department. I really enjoyed the variety of presentations, and the heartfelt emotions that the girls displayed. The guest speaker was also great. Her enthusiasm for language and her bold approach was inspiring. I came away with a very clear sense of the possibilities that bilingualism opens for all of us in South Africa. The meal was fantastic and the decor was lovey. Thank you so much that we could all be part of such a special evening. – Loretta Mecklenborg (Parent)



The evening was a great experience for us as isiZulu learners. We all had tasks to do. I was nervous because I had to write and present a speech. What made me more nervous was that the parents would be there too. I learnt how isiZulu can be of great benefit beyond the classroom and all the opportunities that are available. It was indeed a great evening. I wouldn't mind doing it again. Thank you to Mrs Mkhulise and the entire isiZulu Department. – Amahle Falala (Grade 10)



SPORTS NEWS

Squash

Congratulations to Cevana Naidoo (Grade 11) and Makayla Naidoo (Grade 8) who recently participated in the KwaZulu-Natal Growthpoint Regional Squash Championships. Cevana was the overall U17 Winner and Makayla the overall U15 Winner.

Both girls will be representing KZN at the National Growthpoint Championships in Cape Town at the V & A Waterfront from 17 – 20 August. All the best, girls! We can't wait to hear how you get on.

KZN Interprovincial Tournaments

Congratulations to the following girls who were selected for the KZN Squash Team and will be going to the National Interprovincial tournaments in the holidays from 24 – 28 June.

U11A

Kyra Singh (Grade 5)

U13A

Storme Hawkins (Grade 6)

U13B

Madison Boswell (Grade 6)

U14B

Rebecca Zammit (Grade 8)

U16A Girls

Makayla Naidoo (Grade 9)



U19 A Girls

Cevana Naidoo (Grade 11)

U19B Girls

Ruth Bromley (Grade 12)

* Missing from photo



Polocrosse

A BIG congratulations to Amy Cocker (Grade 12) and Lauren Heynes (Grade 11) who were chosen to represent the Polocrosse South African Women's team in an unofficial test match against a Barbarian side consisting of players from Zambia, Ireland and two older experienced South African ladies.

The objective of this test match was to give a young, up and coming team the opportunity to play against some top international players. It was also a selection tournament for the 2024 World Cup side.

The South African ladies won their first game and narrowly lost their second, but came back fighting to win their third game by ten goals. Lauren Heynes was absolutely outstanding in the goal scoring position and won best Number One, best horse and most valuable player of the tournament. Amy Cocker played extremely well in the Number Three position (defence) and was able to turnover many attempts at goal by the Barbarian team.

The girls out did themselves and we are all very proud of their level of play!



St John's Sports Festival

St John's D.S.G. recently hosted our annual Junior School Sports Festival and were delighted with the awesome participation from a total of 235 Hockey, Netball and Tennis girls from local, highway and Durban schools.

Thank you to our friends from Hillcrest Primary, Laddsworth Primary, Maris Stella, St Mary's, Kloof, Epworth, Ashton College, Our Lady of Fatima, Umhlali Preparatory and Winterton Primary for an awesome day of camaraderie, competition but most of all, fun!

A BIG thank you to all the coaches, officials, staff and parents who gave of their time and energy for this wonderful event.

