



LABORARE EST ORARE

ST JOHN'S D.S.G.
PIETERMARITZBURG
Growing girls with heart

the yellow pages

Edition Two



Some of the exciting things in this edition...

- ♥ Development Updates
- ♥ St Piran's, UK Exchange
- ♥ Business Studies Pop-Up Restaurant
- ♥ Championship Winners



GENERAL NEWS

Development Updates

It's been wonderful to see several exciting improvements take shape at St John's D.S.G., all designed to enhance daily life for our girls.

Our newly upgraded kitchen is now complete, allowing us to cater more effectively to the school's dietary needs, and the food is better than ever! We've also completed our borehole and water retention project, so the school is now fully supplied with high-quality, filtered water.

Paving upgrades in the Junior School, under the stretch tent, and outside the Boarding Establishment have improved safety and accessibility, while the beautifully revamped Junior School playground has brought great joy to our younger girls. We're also delighted that the new Grade 6 and 7 classrooms are now complete.

Mr Simon Moore says, "We remain committed to continually improving our campus to ensure our girls learn and grow in the very best environment possible."



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWS

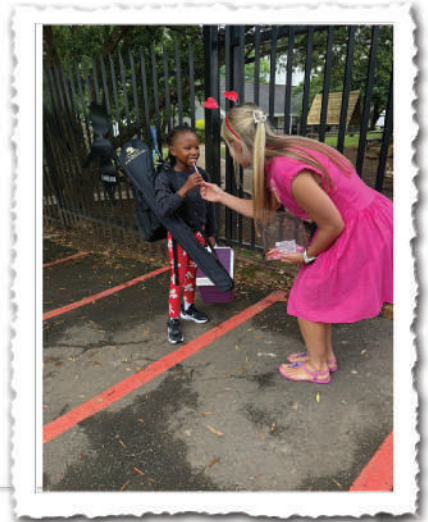
Spreading the Love

On Valentine's Day, our wonderful Parents' Association surprised the Junior School girls with the cutest heart-shaped pencils to brighten their day. Needless to say, there were big smiles all around, and the girls were absolutely delighted with their sweet little gifts!

Festive Fun 100 Club

A BIG "thank you" to the parents who joined us for the P.A.'s recent Festive Fun 100 Club. The support received from the St John's D.S.G. community was amazing. Congratulations to the following main draw prize winners for the evening:

- Third place R1,000: Pippa Blackburn
- Second place R2,000: Tracey Schwegmann
- First place R4,000: Pippa Nipper



JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWS

Meet Our Junior School Specialists

In the Junior School, we believe in a structured, early-intervention programme that nurtures both confidence and competence. Meet some of our Junior School specialists whose passion and dedication support each girl in reaching her full potential.

Dani Malherbe

I am an Occupational Therapist with a special interest in paediatrics. I studied at the University of Witwatersrand and soon thereafter moved to KZN for work. I truly love living in the Midlands and the outdoor lifestyle it brings. I have also been lucky enough to meet my husband here and start a family of our own.

Since moving to the Midlands, I have completed my Sensory Integration, Hippotherapy and Kids Yoga Therapy training. I am deeply passionate about early intervention and supporting learners through all stages of development and schooling. As an OT, we look at each child holistically to assess where they might experience difficulties. Therapy entails working on various goals from more foundational skills such as reflex integration, core strength, arm and hand strength, to more functional skills such as handwriting, organisational skills and anxiety management.

Jess Hockly

I am a Speech-Language and Hearing Therapist, and I am pleased to introduce my role. Speech therapy focuses on communication in all its forms, including:

- *Articulating sounds and speaking clearly and fluently.*
- *Understanding and using language in all aspects.*
- *Reading and writing skills.*
- *Listening skills.*
- *Phonological awareness (hearing and thinking about the sounds that make up words and being able to work these sounds, eventually linking sounds to letters and spelling).*

I joined the St John's D.S.G. family in 2023, and I am passionate about what I do. I work with the Eaglets in weekly group sessions, targeting phonological awareness, language, and auditory processing skills. I also see Junior Primary girls across various grades.

My goal is to support each child in achieving their speech goals and to give them the confidence to support themselves.

Jess Hockly



Dani Malherbe

St Piran's, UK Exchange

In February, we were delighted to welcome our exchange students from St Piran's School in the UK!

Henna and Jess thoroughly immersed themselves in school life, from lessons to sport and everything in between, alongside their wonderful Grade 6 hostesses. What a special opportunity to build friendships, share cultures, and grow together.

We hope their time with us was filled with joy, connection and unforgettable memories. Three of our Grade 6s, along with Mrs Philippa Nipper, will soon be jetting off to England to complete the exchange programme.



Grade 1 Rainbows

Our Grade 1 girls have been delightfully engaged in their theme, “Wonderful Me”, as they explore what makes each of them unique and special. As part of this journey, they have been learning about their five senses - discovering how we see, hear, smell, touch and taste the world around us.



One of the highlights was when the girls quite literally “tasted a rainbow”! Through a colourful and hands-on activity, they used their sense of taste to explore a variety of flavours, making learning both memorable and fun.

Our Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) focus this term is the question: “How is a rainbow formed?” This exciting line of enquiry will lead the girls into exploring light, colour and the wonders of nature later in the term.

It's been a joyful start filled with curiosity, creativity and colourful discoveries, and we can't wait to see where their learning takes them next.



Eaglets' Valentine's Day Outing to Scrummies

*On Valentine's Day we went to
Scrummies,*

*With happy hearts and sunny skies,
And love shining in our eyes.*

*Our little girls were spoiled that day,
With donuts, roses, sweet in every way.*

*They made small bracelets, hand in hand,
And cushion hearts so soft and grand.*

*They laughed and ran, so wild and free,
By the river and the zipline tree.*

*They played and splashed, full of cheer,
The best kind of love was felt right here.*

*They made bright crowns of pink and red,
With glitter hearts and gems, they spread.*

*Jewels sparkling in the sun,
Crafting, playing, having fun.*

*A perfect day, so full of cheer,
Our Valentine's memories we will hold so dear.*



Botanical Gardens Outing

Running parallel to their Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) study on wetlands this term, and in celebration of "World Wetlands Day" (2 February), the Grade 6s visited the Botanical Gardens, where they were involved in several activities, led by GroundTruth from Hilton. The outing included a talk on wetlands and the role the girls can play in improving the quality of water that goes into our wetlands, as well as a river health assessment using the MiniSASS tool (a citizen science tool that can be used to identify and categorise the health status of the river by means of collecting a sample of macro-invertebrates.)

The girls got to use a clarity tube and a velocity plank, and their investigations gave an indication of the biodiversity, habitat richness and degree of human impact on the stream. For the last part of the outing, the girls had a picnic under the trees and read their class reader, "Number the Stars" together.



Visit to Fairleigh Primary School

In February, our Grade 4 and 5 girls visited the Grade R and Grade 1 classes at Fairleigh Primary School in Eston for a morning of outreach. At the end of every year, our Grade 4 girls collect stationery items to donate to Fairleigh for learners in need. It was a truly humbling experience, and our girls conducted themselves with kindness, maturity and pride! They were exemplary throughout the morning.



Fun at Cordies

In February, our Grade 5 girls visited Cordwalles Preparatory for an exciting day in their Outdoor Classroom. The girls enjoyed spending time getting to know the boys and participated in a variety of fun ice-breaker games that quickly built connections and laughter.

After a quick snack break, the real adventure began as they headed into the forest. Working in teams, the girls and boys were challenged to build a shelter using natural materials. They also put their problem-solving skills to the test by constructing a raft to travel from one side of the river to the other.

The girls had an absolute blast exploring the forest and river environment. It was wonderful to see them collaborating so well, communicating effectively and embracing the opportunity to learn beyond the classroom walls. The day was a great success, filled with teamwork, resilience and an appreciation for the beauty of nature. A BIG “thank you” to Cordies for hosting us!



SENIOR SCHOOL NEWS

Self-Defence

In January, our Grade 9 girls participated in an engaging self-defence workshop led by Mandy Tyrer from the Academy of Self-Defence. Passionate about empowering women, Mandy taught the girls that self-defence is not about fighting, but about awareness, prevention, and knowing how to respond if needed.

The key message was clear: knowledge is power. With the right mindset and skills, our girls can move through life with greater confidence and safety — all while having plenty of fun learning together.

“I really enjoyed the self-defence workshop. It helped me feel safe and confident. I loved feeling like I am in control and that I can go places without fear.” – Sarah S

Business Studies Pop-Up Restaurant

The Business Studies Grade 12 girls completed a comprehensive simulation task that aligned with their annual theme based on the sit-down restaurant industry. As part of this experience, they were required to invite two guests to their pop-up dining event and treat them as real customers. They had to design and set up a fully functional pop-up restaurant space that reflected the atmosphere they wanted to create. The girls prepared the food themselves, ensuring that their chosen dishes were appropriate for both their concept and their limited budget. Once their guests arrived, they were responsible for serving the meals professionally and managing any requests or changes.

After the dining experience, they were required to clean up thoroughly, reinforcing the idea that running a restaurant involves far more than just cooking. This hands-on task gave them valuable insight into the realities of operating a successful restaurant. Many of the girls commented on how stressful the experience was, especially when trying to keep their customers happy. Several remarked that they couldn't believe restaurants do this every day while still maintaining high standards. Overall, the simulation provided them with an authentic, first hand understanding of the effort, pressure, and coordination required in the restaurant industry.



SPORTS NEWS

“Yellow Fins” Season

Our “Yellow Fins” in both the Junior and Senior Schools have represented the school with pride at numerous galas this term. While lightning and challenging weather conditions unfortunately led to several cancellations, the enthusiasm and determination of our swimmers never wavered.

Throughout the season, the spirit of competition, camaraderie, teamwork and outstanding sportsmanship have been evident in every performance. We are incredibly proud of the way our girls support one another in and out of the pool.

We look forward with excitement to the upcoming Junior School A and B League Galas, as well as the Senior Girls’ Relay Gala in the weeks ahead. Go, “Yellow Fins”!

Senior School Interhouse Gala

Just before half-term, our pool came alive for the Senior School Interhouse Relay Gala, full of energy, teamwork and house spirit. A BIG “congratulations” to all our swimmers, our spirited supporters and our dedicated staff and Sports Department for hosting such a fantastic event.

Special applause to Lucas for claiming the House Trophy, and to Bayly and Hermann for lifting the Spirit Cup!



uMgungundlovu Swimmers

A BIG “congratulations” to our 17 “Yellow Fins” who were selected for the uMgungundlovu Swimming Team to participate in the KwaZulu-Natal Schools’ Swimming Trials that took place over the half-term weekend at the new AquaPark pool in Pietermaritzburg.

- Elizabeth C-E
- Emma C-E
- Shiloh C
- Lisa dT
- Kylie D
- Jessica G
- Meghan K
- Violet M
- Abigail M
- Kaitlyn M
- Katelyn N
- Kaitlyn R
- Julia R
- Jamie S
- Abigail S
- Skyla S
- Chanel vT

Well done girls, we are so proud of you.



Championship Winners

Last month, our Senior School hosted its much-anticipated Annual Championship Gala and what an incredible display of talent it was! A BIG “congratulations” to all our “Yellow Fins” for competing with such determination, courage and true St John’s D.S.G. spirit. We are so proud of the depth of talent within our swimming squad and the outstanding standard achieved across every age group.

Well done to our Senior School Champions and Runners-up in each division, a remarkable achievement!

♥u14

Champions: Jessica G & Shiloh C

Runner-up: Meghan K

♥u15

Champion: Jamie S

Runners-up: Julia R & Violet M

♥u16

Champion: Emma C-E

Runner-up: Chanel vT

♥u17

Champion: Bailey L

Runner-up: Alexandra W

♥Open

Champion: Emma W

Runner-up: Nina R

A BIG “well done” to all our individual trophy winners:

♥ Junior 200m Freestyle (U14/U15): Violet M

♥ Senior 200m Freestyle (U16/U17/Open): Bailey L

♥ Junior Individual Medley: Jamie S

♥ Quicke Trophy for Senior Individual Medley: Bailey L

♥ Quicke Trophy for Open Butterfly: Emma W

♥ Lindsay Backhouse Trophy (U14 Backstroke): Meghan K

♥ Henwood Cup for Progress in Senior School Swimming: Samantha S & Hannah W

♥ Style Trophy: Emma C-E

♥ Norman Alan Macleod Trophy (for the most points accumulated in the U16/U17/Open age groups): Bailey L & Emma C-E



MUSIC NEWS

Choir Workshop

As we embark on an exciting year, our recent Choir workshop gave us an excellent opportunity to make significant progress in learning some of our new repertoire. Most notably, we have learnt two of our pieces for the ATKV Applous Choir Competition; two very quirky and fun Afrikaans songs, newly composed for this event. Furthermore, we have worked on other songs for our various performances for Chapel services, as well as the highly anticipated “Stars over Broadway” supper theatre production that we are presenting. The choristers enjoy the music and are taking on the challenges that come with it with gusto.



Band Workshop

On 14 February, we hosted our Senior Band Workshop, marking an exciting step in our new initiative to divide the band programme into two specialised groups: the Contemporary Band and the Senior Ensemble. Both groups have already been working diligently on new repertoire. The Contemporary Band has been exploring and refining their unique vibe and style, carefully selecting music that reflects their identity, while the Senior Ensemble has been focusing on string quartet repertoire as well as preparing for the upcoming “Stars over Broadway” supper theatre production.

The workshop was filled with energy and enthusiasm, as the girls embraced the opportunity to collaborate, develop their musicianship, and grow as an ensemble. It is incredibly encouraging to witness the musical and personal growth already taking shape within both groups, and most importantly, the girls thoroughly enjoyed the experience.





Marimba Workshop

The Marimba workshop during the St John's D.S.G. Open Day presented the first opportunity for our 2026 Performance Marimba Band to showcase their skills and perform together with the new members. The girls worked hard before the Open Day tours began and learnt an impressively challenging section of their Classical piece. Once the tour groups of inquisitive prospective families started arriving, the marimba band pulled out all the stops to demonstrate what they are capable of. The girls performed a variety of songs they had learnt previously, as well as the iconic "Saint Special".

A highlight of the day was when last years' drummer made a guest appearance, and the band performed the piece that won them the first-place trophy in their category at the 2025 Marimba Nationals! The workshop was not only a time for learning new repertoire, but also for building relationships, gaining performing experience, and shaping the identity of the 2026 Performance Marimba Band.



"Stars over Broadway"

Prepare to be dazzled by an evening of glamour, sophistication and musical excellence featuring classics like "Feeling Good", "Summertime" and "New York, New York"!

Please join us for either of the concert performances on 14-15 May or go all out (and get dolled up!) and attend the special Gala Dinner on 16 May. All tickets can be purchased via Quicket or the Karri App.

This special evening promises more than just beautiful music - it's an opportunity for our community to come together in celebration and connection. As we gather to support our performers, we strengthen the spirit and sense of belonging that make our school so special.

