

Grade 10 John Jones Fish River Journey 2010

This is the 7th year that College/DSG have undertaken this great adventure. One would think that it would become second nature in its organisation and execution. Moving, feeding, accommodating, entertaining over 180 people, and then making them do it mainly on their own steam on foot, by bike, canoe, does not just happen overnight. The logistics organised and executed by Mrs Scott is something to marvel. Unfortunately, she will be leaving us and finding a replacement is not going to be an easy task. Now that we have taught her everything she and her husband need to know about camping, they will be undertaking an adventure of their own through Africa.

Yesterday we thanked all those whose contribution to the Journey was invaluable. The drivers, mechanic, medics, staff, group leaders, logistics staff. Forgive me if I don't do it publicly again today. Today we need to acknowledge the Grade 10s. Not only did they accomplish the physical tasks expected of them, but their attitude and behaviour from the preparation to the end at the Fish River Mouth remained positive throughout. Accidents were few, issues around discipline were rare. They were co-operative, willing to learn and help where they could. Even the way they prepared for their Community engagement gave us an indication that this would be a good year. The success this year is epitomised by the corporate effort. Here the Group Leaders played a major role in motivating and moulding the boys and girls into a cohesive unit moving towards one goal. We acknowledge particularly the contribution of Mr Basil MacKenzie, who has now completed 5 of these epic adventures, and it is with sadness to see him leave. We would like to take credit for changing his finely toned physique, but suspect that it is part of a long term plan to attract a partner.

The question always arises. Which was the best year? Which was the best group? Undoubtedly 2010 was very special, and it would be impossible to single out a group, because for the first time each group had their own Journey with very little or no contact with other groups. Was it tougher? Not really, the routes are basically the same. It was a little greener, but they contended with heat, rain, snakes, dust roads, as have previous years, but they did so with enthusiasm. The Journey is not about a destination, it is about how you get there, and what you learn about yourself in the process. For many it is the opportunity to make serious life-challenging choices and is the beginning of another of life's journeys.

Mr Paul Fleishack from Michaelhouse joined us for 2 days on a fact-finding mission as they are hoping to start a similar adventure. He is conducting research into the benefits of such a multi-day, multi-event Outdoor Education experience. If we ever doubted the benefits of our programme, he was able to give us affirmation that what we do on the Fish River Journey is providing you with the skills necessary to cope with the complexity of modern life.

This quote expresses why we have an Outdoor Education Programme

"And so from the hills we return, refreshed in body mind and spirit to grapple anew with life's problems. For a while we have lived simply and happily; we have made good friends; we have adventured well. The hills have taught us to be content in our faith and in the love of God who created them".

Thank you so much to the staff who have given of their time and effort to make your experience unforgettable.

D Boshoff