

President's Award 2009

The President's Award programme has always had a strong following at College. The organization began its South African chapter at St Andrew's College and it was fitting that the 25th celebrations were held on our campus during April. Three of our Gold Award participants, Bradley Hobson, Greg Were and Thomas Niven, represented College at the event. I am pleased to report that 2008 must surely rate as one of the best ever in terms of both enrolment numbers as well as active participation by the boys. There are currently 277 boys enrolled on the programme: 62% of the school. The average number of boys involved in our weekly activities has risen from fifteen in 2007 to twenty five in 2008.

The challenge has been to develop service projects that enable the boys to fulfill the service requirements of the awards. The other three components of Physical Recreation, Skills and Adventure are relatively easily met by the varied curriculum on offer to the boys.

The distinguishing feature of the 2008 service programme has been the type of projects that the committee has spear-headed. In the first half of the year the major emphasis was on the Cradock Dam project. The boys have spent many hours clearing away aliens, building access paths and planting trees in an area that has the potential to become an outdoor recreation spot for Grahamstown. We continue to host the seven-a-side soccer tournaments that create opportunities for children from different backgrounds to interact through sport.

The major project for the year was Gtown Spunk 08. This was a fund-raising event that was put together in collaboration with the Interact Club from DSG and show-cased the talent of the youth from a selection of schools in an evening of wonderful performances. The level of responsibility and dedication shown by the members of the committee was inspiring and the R5000 raised will go a long way to helping the Shaw Hall Pre-school.

Our interaction with the Good Shepherd School continues and during the course of this year we have continued to offer a variety of sports coaching opportunities including athletics, basketball, cricket, swimming, hockey netball and tennis. The Good Shepherd Outdoor project is now in its fourth year and provides a great environment for relationship-building between the schools.

The St Matthew's Hostel make-over project was another successful venture. Seventy-seven boys and girls travelled to Keiskammahoek to work with the St. Matthew's matriculants on a project to repaint and repair their dormitories. The funds for the project had been raised by the DSG challenge girls. Despite the rain, it was incredible to see both the interaction between children of different social and economic backgrounds and the change that it has effected in the dormitories.

In addition to the project mentioned above, the President Award boys have been involved in the following:

- Maintaining the section of Kowie Ditch that runs parallel to Webster Field
- Marshalling at various marathons and fun runs such as the Makana Nite race, the Settler marathon and the President's Award Fun Run
- Working at SPCA
- Street Collections for other organizations like Red Cross, Brookshaw, Society for the Blind and the Society for the Physically Disabled
- Litter clean ups in various parts of Grahamstown
- Collection and distribution of clothing, blankets and food for the Soup Kitchens
- Assisting Prep at various events such as Tikkie Aand, Old Prep Supper and Carnival.

It is a full and busy programme and I am pleased to report that College boys are showing a heightened awareness of the needs of others less fortunate. More and more of them are committing to helping by giving of their time.

Barbara Scott