



Dear All

It is difficult to accept that I write this at the end of March, as the early mornings are getting darker, the dusk falls earlier and that I am looking back on nearly a term's work in my new role. I was delighted by the positive response to the previous newsletter.

### Community Engagement Portfolio committee

The school's Community Engagement Portfolio committee has met, set priorities, reported back on house projects and planned activities. One of the significant undertakings has been to change the way our boys address cleaning, service and catering staff. Typically, the boys refer to such staff, either by their first names or as "Sissies". I have tried to persuade the boys that this would be about as appropriate and respectful as a boy addressing the Headmaster as "Boet" or by his first name. This change will take some time, just as it took people of my grandparents' generation a long time to stop referring to the "the garden boy" and the "kitchen girl". Improving the respect for all on our campus, understanding the dignity of physical work and becoming more inclusive are the committee's ultimate goals.



**Hodago Minney and Mrs Spelman at the handover of stationery to Tanty Lower Primary school**

House representatives contributed significantly to the gathering of stationery for foundation phase classrooms. They are in the planning stages of House Community Engagement projects, which we hope to see taking place in the Trinity term.

### President's Award

The boys involved in President's Award have participated actively in 26 activities this term, ranging from walking dogs at the SPCA to clearing hiking trails on the Featherstonekloof commonage. It is delightful to see so many boys signing up for activities in their own time. Without fail they are positive and delightful to work with. There is a real sense of growth in confidence and empathy. My own favourite projects have been the painting of the boundary walls of Kuyasa School, who look after children with severe developmental and intellectual challenges, and the very successful stationery gathering project, both of which have allowed our boys to engage with real needs.



**Wall-painting at Kuyasa School**



**Before and half-way! Matt Alcock on the path clearing project**

We are in the planning stages of a Gold level residential project in the Amatolas in the August holidays, a 24 hour relay run (co-ordinated by Bruce Blaine), and Grahamstown Funk (Declan Williamson and Hodago Minney), as well as a Gold level Adventurous Journey.

The St Andrew's College President's Award unit was visited by the Director for Youth in the Presidency, Ms Bernice Hlagala. This gave some of the participants the opportunity to share how they were involved in the Award, and how it had affected them and others. Excitingly, Ms Hlagala, spoke about the need for urgent policy imperatives to be put in place to foster this type of youth development and empowerment at a national level.



**Ms Bernice Hlagala, Director for Youth in the Presidency, with participants and leaders of the President's Award**

I am hoping to upgrade the information available on the Award on our website during the holiday, as I have encouraged many boys to use some of their holidays to complete the requirements for their award. The more self-motivated and self-organised these activities are, the more meaningful they are for the participant.

## Good Shepherd School

The Grade 10 service clubs offered our boys the chance to interact with younger children, build empathy and offer some of their skills at the same time. As with much of what we do, the degree of engagement of the individual boy has determined what benefit they derived. Making interactions with others compulsory is risky, as we do potentially expose some of the more negative aspects of College boys' behaviour. Yobbish disregard for others, a sense of entitlement and arrogance are deeply embarrassing. Real College men are unpretentious, sound and connected. We still have some way to go with some of our young men, but many were positive, and gained all they could from the experience.

The new term sees the boys, led by members of staff coaching rugby, football, hockey, English and IsiXhosa reading, Science and Maths clubs, as well as Physical Education programme, called Move-it sponsored by Coke Fortune, led by Ms Siwa (Good Shepherd), Mr Eksteen, Matthew Archer and Brandon Haynes-Africa. James Plumb (a Gap year student from Abingdon at College) will continue to assist with these programmes as part of the Life Orientation curriculum in normal lesson times.

## Scholarships

We are in that wonderfully uplifting and deeply distressing process of scholarship applications and selections. We see so much human potential, and have to disappoint so many. There are so many boys who want to attend College, and we rely on building relationships with scholarship funds, individual and corporate donors. The Director of the SAC/DSG Foundation Office, Mrs Angie Marriner, is in charge of building "baskets" of funders to support the boys. Any kind of assistance, suggestions and advice are most welcome.

I am delighted to report that the boys at College currently on Scholarships are doing well, and looking to use every opportunity available to them. My sense is that the feeling of alienation experienced by some of the boys is a painful, but necessary, stage in achieving self-actualization. College culture is unique, and thus all boys need to negotiate their place within it. Acceptance of ourselves takes place against a social and cultural background, and we need to be cognizant of how dominant social or cultural mores affect different people.

## ABET and Financial Literacy

The process of gathering information on the training needs for our staff, and putting plans in place to offer Adult Basic Education and Training are now well advanced. Siyabonga Faxes, who has participated in these classes in the past, has been of great help. His contribution to a project to keep children off the streets with dance and drama has recently been acknowledged in our staff community newsletter. There is work to be done, but it has begun!

## Academic Extension

Every Friday afternoon, Grade 10 and 11 Maths and Science pupils from Nathaniel Nyaluza, Mary Waters and TEM Mrwetyana come onto the College campus to work with each other and volunteers to add an extra dimension to their academic progress. The initiative, begun by Mrs Kate Cobbing as a result of a request from pupils from one of the schools, does not replace good teaching in these functional schools, but offers the pupils a chance to extend themselves, or ask for help. Mumamba Mwanda and Kayleigh Spurway from Rhodes, Kate Cobbing, Ontlametse Thipe and Tim Barnard from St Andrew's have offered their help. In addition to the Maths and Science support sessions, the pupils are offered assistance with the "soft-skills" they need when applying to tertiary education institutions or bursary schemes. Such is the academic "hunger" of these pupils that they came on the day their schools closed and wanted to come during their holidays.



### Kayleigh Spurway (Rhodes University volunteer) assisting with Grade 10 maths

In addition to these classes, groups of Grade 6 and 7 pupils from Good Shepherd, Ntaba Maria and Grahamstown Primary attend sessions, supervised by Gap year students Jack Gooding and James Plumb, and Mrs Sally Price-Smith (a College parent), to grow their Maths, English and current affairs knowledge. A team of College Grade 9 boys and DSG Grade 11 girls assist after they have finished lessons for the day. Robbie Ball, Momelezi Mdingi, Zach Melvill, Simphiwe Zondani, James Lake, Justine Lowe, Jenna Barclay, Janet Gibson, Kath Barnard, Emma Puggia, Katie Harrison and others have given up their free time to help.



### Grade six learners from the academic extension programme

We are trying to avoid cutting across the efforts of other schools and institutions to provide academic extension, and we are hugely grateful for the input of Nathaniel Nyaluza, Mary Waters and TEM Mrwetyana, Good Shepherd, Ntaba Maria and Grahamstown Primary, DSG and Rhodes University Community engagement. The table below shows how we are trying to operate in an independent, but co-ordinated manner.

Grade	Academic extension offered by	Time of week
6	St Andrew's	Fridays 2-4pm
7	St Andrew's	Fridays 2-4pm
8	DSG	Thursday afternoon
9	DSG	Thursday afternoon
10	St Andrew's	Fridays 2-4pm
11	St Andrew's	Fridays 2-4pm
12	Rhodes University	Saturday mornings

## Working with Makana

The three independent schools in Grahamstown had a wonderful opportunity to present what our Community Engagement programmes involve. It is clear that we need to communicate what we do more deliberately with the Municipal structures, and consider expanding our programmes to outside the city limits. It is amazing how serendipity works. While standing outside after the presentation, I was approached by Marcelle Booyens, who is in contact with a group of young people looking to form a brass band- a phone call, a staffroom chat and three emails later, and Makana could be on its way to its very own "Brassed Off" under the guidance of the St Andrew's director of music, Mr Johan Pretorius! You never know where things will lead.

## Reflection

I began this newsletter at the end of March, and am finishing it in the first days of the holidays. The term flew past, we have done some good things and we face great challenges. I must acknowledge the support of the Headmaster, Amy Taylor and Alistair Ferriera, who assist with the President's Award, Kate Cobbing, my colleagues in the D&T Centre and the chaplain in particular. So as I run, paddle, fish, read in this long holiday, I will look forward to what the new term will bring. Mr Aidan Smith waxed poetical at the conclusion of his academic newsletter, and not to be outdone, I end with my favourite line from Ulysses.

"Some work of noble note may yet be done"

Warm regards

Tim Barnard