



Newsletter

Enlightened Minds

Southdowns College High School

# News

Date: 16 October 2017



Dear Parents

What I anticipated was going to be a quiet start to the term, has been anything but! Thank you for your support and understanding over these past weeks. When I send out a general e-mail, such as this newsletter, it is distributed as a bulk delivery under our IT administrator, Thea Meiring's name. Should you want to offer any feedback by simply replying to the general e-mail, Mrs Meiring will forward your response to me.

TOURS

Our school tour to the USA was a great success. It comprised of a whirlwind of places and venues and different food which delighted the pupils. The Belgium exchange also went off well with the pupils renewing their friendships with the Belgian pupils who visited South Africa earlier in the year. We are currently drawing up a two year touring programme so that parents and pupils can plan for school tours in advance. We are also looking to present a strong blend of sporting, cultural and niche tours, such as The World Challenge tours to exotic destinations. On the subject of tours, Michael Neumann is our first representative to be selected to participate in the FSA (Friends of South Africa) exchange to Germany. We wish him well on his travels in December.

This week we bid farewell to the matric class of 2017. It is always an emotional time for many of them. Some are happy to leave whilst others are not! We have always encouraged our matric group to leave with dignity and to set an example to the rest of the school. The class of 2017 has most certainly accomplished this!

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## CREATIVE ARTS:

Our pupils participated in the National Eistedfodd in September. To date we have won 38 diplomas, 15 gold and two silver awards. We are awaiting further results and we will report on those as they are revealed.

Jessica George took part in the Claddagh Irish Dancing Competition, in August, in Cape Town where she won the title of Priomh Comortas or Premier Champion in the Tus Grade section, she also won seven gold, two silver and one bronze award in the competition. She repeated her performance at the City of Gold Championship in September at Carnival City, where she again attained the title of Priomh Comortas and walked away with five gold, two silver and one bronze medal.

Tamsyn Dexter participated in the Commonwealth Dance Competition and placed 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in various categories. Tsebang Sipambo, who also participated in the Commonwealth Dance Competition was named as the winner of the competition. We are very proud of all of these exceptionally talented dancers.

Finally we'd like to congratulate our senior marimba band that performed at the St Mary's DSG Marimba Festival, which was attended by many schools in the region.

One of our pupils, Neo Rapetsoa, is to be highly commended on being selected to attend the New York Film Academy Youth Programme, which is an outstanding accolade. Well done Neo!

## SCIENCE EXPO

During the holidays a number of our young scientists, who excelled in their science research project at school, entered the North Gauteng Science Fair. Their results were as follows: Anri Steynberg, Shané Hattingh, Hanno Janse van Vuuren, Brian Fouché, Dudley Peacock and Sydney Cohen all received silver awards. Bart le Roux received a bronze award and Christiaan Dijkstra received an iron award. Each of these young scientists is still in a junior grade and so we look forward to good things from them and others in the future.

## SPORT:

We were very pleased to hear that Justin Visagie and Lee Fenyane were both selected to play for the South African touch rugby squad. This is a fantastic achievement and we extend our hearty congratulations to these two gentlemen.

Christin Mundell arrived back from swimming in the Junior World Competition in Indianapolis over the holidays. Her junior world ranking placings were as follows:

200m breaststroke - placed 15th  
100m breaststroke - placed 24th

50m breaststroke - placed 19th  
200IM - placed 28th

She swam personal best times in both the 50m and 100m breaststroke races. Christin was also part of the 4 x 200m freestyle relay team as well as the 4 x 100m relay team. South Africa made the semi-finals in the 4 x 100m relay where she also swam a personal best time. This is wonderfully exciting for her! Congratulations Christin!



## BUILDINGS:

You would have received the e-mail on the future building plans. Construction is moving along swiftly and the predicted time for completion, of the new classroom block, is the end of the year. The boarding split, which involves the construction of a new boys' block will then commence. We are planning to convert the existing staff room into our media/resource centre. Plans for this internal remodeling are currently underway.

The pump at the Sax pool will be repaired in the upcoming weeks. We apologise for the delay in the process. It was a very expensive piece of equipment that needed to be sourced for a full repair to be done.

Once we have had confirmation of the required work to be done to repair the hole on the upper field, we will inform the school community. At present we have slowed down some of the sports activities due to the presence of the hole. We will be using the remainder of the time left prior to the exams to finish off sports such as tennis and to begin pre-season training for athletics as this sporting code will feature prominently in the first term. With the exams commencing in early November, we need to use the time productively with our sportsmen and women.

I was fortunate to attend The International Principals' Conference held recently in Cape Town. The emphasis of this event was on the latest neurological understanding of the brain and how it relates to the learning process. The second main thrust of the conference was that of twenty first century education and the direction it is taking with regard to artificial intelligence and how humans need to continuously adapt their education accordingly. The challenge ahead is to work within a curriculum and an examination structure, whilst simultaneously educating the youth for a world that does not rely on knowledge alone, but also requires non-cognitive skills. Finland, for example, has broken down the subject lines to blend learning. This is a topic that will receive significant attention at Southdowns College as we need to ensure that we remain relevant within the twenty-first century context.

I hope that you enjoy the upcoming half-term break.

Kind regards,  
Mark Smith

