

INNOSPAN INVESTMENTS (PTY) LTD T/A



Enlightened Minds

Principal's Newsletter: 2/2017

Dear Parents

We definitely hit the ground running at the start of the third term. The past two weeks have been action-packed and very busy for the pupils and the staff. Throw in a sinkhole on the first Friday, what an interesting week! You would have received communication from our General Manager, Mr. Christo de Wit, in terms of the plan of action and the way forward.

I must say that the highlight thus far, was the Foundation Phase Choral Verse. There were four outstanding performances from our Grade 1-3 pupils. Over 370 boys and girls giving of their best every single performance! Hours and hours of hard work by everyone to make it one of the best productions I have watched in many years. It was pleasing to see the confidence levels of our boys and girls. I am sure that we will have to keep a close eye on a few Wallys, including some of the staff. I am indeed very proud of what Mrs. Altenroxel and her team of teachers have put together. Special mention must be made of **Ms. Meghan Manica** and **Ms. Charnene Weller** who put the whole production together. **Mrs. Lizl Hesom** must also be mentioned for writing the script and the majority of the poems. Well done team! I also want express my gratitude to all the parents that were involved, making costumes, props etc. We are truly blessed to have such fantastic parents at our school.

The second major event was the Prestige Athletics event that we hosted on Friday afternoon/evening. **Mr. Nala** and his team must be commended for a well-organized event. A big thank you to all our staff who officiated and made this Athletics meeting possible. I want to congratulate our Southdowns Athletics team, not only were they victorious on the evening, but their team spirit and appearance was excellent. I managed to watch the last few events and I am very proud of what I saw. There are a couple of minor aspects that we will work on, but all and all, an outstanding event. I am looking forward to the next few sporting events that are scheduled as per our Term Calendar.

Staffing:

As promised in my first newsletter, I have the pleasure to announce Mrs. Altenroxel's replacement as Deputy Head Foundation Phase for 2018. We had huge interest in this position and we managed, after a strenuous process, to narrow it down to a shortlist of three candidates. The three candidates were interviewed during the holidays by a panel that consisted of myself, the General Manager and representatives from ADvTECH HR. One of the candidates blew us away in terms of leadership, confidence and her vision for the Foundation Phase. We were all in agreement on the selection of Jill's replacement. **Mrs. Janine Delpoort** has been appointed as the Deputy Head Foundation Phase for 2018.



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19 September 2017

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I look forward to working with Janine in her new position. Janine has proven herself over the past few years and I am confident that with the wealth of knowledge she has acquired, she is going to lead the Foundation Phase team well.

It also happens during the third term in all private schools that we have staff moving to other schools for promotions as well as to gain experience in other fields. Some parents may and have asked why there is a staff turnover at the school, I can assure you that this happens at all schools, we don't have to panic and be overly concerned. Southdowns teachers are extremely professional, knowledgeable and sought after, this happens in all major companies too.

Having said this, I have to sadly announce that **Mrs. Caitlin Smart** (Grade 4) has accepted a teaching position at Hatfield Christian School in January 2018. Caitlin has been with Southdowns Preparatory for nine years and as a young teacher it is good for her to build up further experience at another school. We are going to miss Caitlin dearly and we wish her and her family all of the best for the new venture that lies ahead.

Mrs. Witness Mchunu, (isiZulu) our highly efficient isiZulu teacher, has accepted a teaching position at Kyalami Preparatory in Midrand. Her decision is purely due to logistics. She stays close to Kyalami Prep and it will reduce her travelling time to and from school drastically. She is very sad to take leave from us as she has formed a special bond with our Foundation Phase pupils. We will miss her a great deal and we wish her all of the best at her new school in 2018.

Lastly, I have to announce that **Mrs. Lizl Hesom**, (Grade 3), will take leave from us at the end of the year. Lizl and her husband will be returning to the family farm where Greg will be taking over from his father. Lizl will definitely be missed as she has spent 10 years at Southdowns Preparatory School. She was one of the Pioneers who established the school with the first Headmaster, Mr. Dean Marsh. It is exciting for Lizl as she will remain in teaching as Head of Department at her new school in Dundee. We will miss Lizl's creativity and her passion for teaching.

We will be saying our formal goodbyes towards the end of the year. We will be advertising their positions this week and will be conducting interviews for suitable candidates as soon as possible.

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Campus and Facility Development

I am so pleased that the temporary classrooms were removed from the campus at the end of the first week. It was an eyesore and we are now waiting for the movement of the two containers that are still in this area. They will be removed this week, one will be moved to the Prep Tennis and Netball courts and the other to the top sports field where they will be utilised as interim storage facilities. We will be cleaning the area from where the temporary classrooms were right up to the edge of the new classroom block. It is not looking good at the moment and our facilities staff will be spending some time to make it look more presentable.

The back entrance to the campus, the guard's hut and the building of proper change room and toilet facilities at the tennis and netball courts at the Pre-Primary are receiving urgent attention. I know that you received promises in this regard in the past, but I can assure you that I will be attending to this as a matter of urgency. I will be able to give further details as soon as I have collected all the necessary information.

The Guard's House between the Prep and Pre-primary schools is also receiving attention. This house will be replaced with a sturdier structure that will last longer and will look better than the current one. We have actioned this as a matter of urgency between the College, Prep, Pre-Primary and the Estate.

Mr. Odendaal and his team have attended to some of the irrigation problems we have experienced and he has also removed the very small trees that were not growing. In the next few months he will continue to improve the irrigation. The plan is to replace the trees that were removed with bigger trees and to ensure that the areas are better prepared in terms of proper soil and irrigation to make them grow into strong trees. As soon as the Astro Hockey surface has been completed, will we address the grass area on the remainder of the sports field.

The proposed parking area behind the new building is also receiving attention and I will be able to give further feedback in my next newsletter. Mr. Chouveau and I do a walk around on a weekly basis and we are actioning all maintenance issues that we are picking up. I have also implemented a follow up system to ensure that our actioned items are attended to in the required time. There are a number of minor issues that we are attending to and hopefully we will be seeing a considerable difference in the appearance of our campus.

I want to thank all the parents that have met with me over the past two weeks to address maintenance issues. I appreciate your input and together we will make sure that we can be proud of our campus.

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I have asked our Security Company to address the fact that Terry, our superb security guard at the gate to the Estate, does not let the children make use of his cellphone to make calls. Terry is a superb guard, who is extremely friendly and he has a good relationship with you as parents and the children. We have a NO cellphone policy at Southdowns Preparatory and it contradicts our policy if Terry allows the children to make calls. I have chatted to Terry personally and asked him to refrain from doing so. He fully understands the school's policy and he has agreed. I know that he also provides a valuable service to the Estate parents in terms of handing a sports bag or something that was left at home to your children, but please rather phone Samantha Foley at our office or drop it off at the Admin office.

I want to thank all our parents for their support during the past few weeks and for the good wishes. I really appreciate your input and involvement.

"The best way to predict your future is to create it" – Abraham Lincoln

Kind Regards

P. Labuschagne
Preparatory Principal