

Newsletter 16/2021

7 September 2021

Dear Parents

Staff

- After 16 years at PNPS, Ashlyn Wagner will be moving to SACS Primary School at the end of this year. Ashlyn has formed an integral part of the inclusive processes at the school, and also played an important part of the sports coaching team over the years. He will be missed.
- Adrian Endley, our teacher intern for grade 7 and community support technical assistant, will also not return in 2022 as he will be furthering his opportunities elsewhere.

Parent Support

Thank you to everybody who is assisting at school at the moment! Wherever I look I find parents: helping in the traffic in the mornings, teaching children to knit and managing the reception office! We are so blessed to have you in our community!

Covid and assessments

The Delta variant is affecting more children at schools and we have noticed more children off sick and isolating. We have noticed how mentally and emotionally affected children are when they return to school after isolating with family members, whether they actually got Covid themselves or not. Please be gentle with each other at home. Do not insist on your children remaining up to date with online schoolwork if they can't do so in your circumstances. One missed assessment will not make a difference in the bigger scheme of things!

The best thing to do is ensure that the class teachers are informed of your personal circumstances and then they can make a plan for you and your child. This might mean giving additional time to complete the work or cancelling that task altogether. Learning support has also been asked to assist in this matter.

Arriving late for school

Please remember that school starts at 8h15 this term. Last term some of you were meeting me frequently at the front door of the school in the mornings... PLEASE insist on your children arriving at school on time. By 'allowing' your children to arrive late you are teaching them that it is okay not to meet deadlines and you are teaching them to be disrespectful of education, learning and teaching. Please ensure that your child is accompanied onto the premise and that they are scanned.

School Camps

Camps for grade 4 to 7 were scheduled for the end of this term but permission has still not been granted by the WCED. The grade 7 tour has been postponed to November in the hope that it can still go ahead but the grade 4 to 6 camps have been cancelled.

The Simonsberg Campsite will however come here to the school to provide the teamwork learning at our venue instead of theirs, for all these 3 grades in the final week of this term. More information will be provided to those grades later this term.

Early Act

See page 8.

Grade 7 Sports Award ceremony

Also in the final week of this term, the school will be celebrating the sporting prowess of the current grade 7 pupils. Their sport over the past 2 years has been severely curtailed (as has other grades) but they would usually be the recipients of the trophies for sport at the Award ceremony at year end. Unathi Radebe, the PNPS past pupil who now represents SA in the under 19 soccer team, will present the certificates. Unfortunately, parents will not be present but the ceremony will be live streamed.

School Fees

- Final accounts will be sent at the end of October. Please settle these as soon as possible and if you have problems, please contact Crystal Dougall to make an arrangement.
- A reminder too, that should payments for extra services offered by the school not be paid, the service will be withdrawn.
- Thank you to all those parents who regularly pay their school fees up front. Whenever we discuss the 'school fee' issue with other schools, they are astounded that we don't struggle to recover money owed to us – most schools in similar financial categories to us have to budget for about 20% of their parent body not paying, or not paying enough!

Care of Textbooks

- I am very concerned about the state of the textbooks being used in the Intermediate/Senior Phase. These books were purchased for us by the WCED, and they are supposed to last 5 years. Please ask your child to bring all textbooks home for the holidays so that you can see the state they are in...
- All textbooks should be covered in thick plastic, with a barcode stuck to the front cover – this identifies the textbook 'owner' on our school library system.
- I have told my staff that they are not to accept books like this at the end of the year – if they are in a bad condition, you will be allowed to keep the battered one, but will be expected to pay for the full replacement cost of a new one.

Holiday programme

A reminder that we will again offer Holiday Care at a basic cost of R60 a day, during the coming holiday. Remember this when you plan for your children. Holiday Care booking forms will go live on Tuesday, 21 September at 12 pm. Please SAVE THE DATE as it works on a first come, first served basis. Here is the link you will use to access the form once it goes live at 12pm, <https://forms.gle/NisgiYJY6MLnDoBW8> . Please note that no bookings will be accepted before the stated date and time. If you are worried about being able to access the link, please remember that newsletters can be downloaded or emailed to yourself via our Edana Parent Portal in the Documentation folder, under Newsletters.

Catching everyone doing things right!

The reason our school children are so well behaved, we believe, is because we continually praise those who do the right thing. Please try to do this at home too. You will find that you feel less stressed too! Try too, to catch our staff doing things right – thanks to those parents who do so regularly. There are however, parents who only contact the school when they wish to complain about something – try to change that view and catch us doing the right thing – you might be surprised at the response!

Can you help?

Our ducks are a very important part of the life of Pinelands North. A large bag of duck food from our supplier costs R342 for 50kg, and this lasts us 2 weeks. Would your family like to supply some duck food, particularly if you know that your child's life has been changed because of their access to our ducks? Please give this some thought, and contact Crystal, even if you can only supply R100 towards a bag...if a whole lot of people give us R100, we will be able to supply them with food for a while. Thanks to the veterinary practice linked to the school who gives us R500 a month towards animal food!

Several Jewish festivals are being celebrated this month - we trust that families are enjoying special times with loved ones.

Yours sincerely



ANN MORTON
Principal

Mandela Peace Garden

Since Mandela Day, 2019, a trusty team of excited Grade 5 Aftercareers, known as The Green Team, have been helping me to redesign and plant up the old art garden in preparation for a bold move by Aftercare. PNPS families generously heeded our request for donations of drought-resistant, indigenous plants, and on July 18th we got to work with great enthusiasm, bringing to life a dream I have harboured for the last 6 years... to have a quiet, leafy area in which our Aftercareers can relax.

The Green Team has worked enthusiastically every Freedom Friday (and often in between times) to create a leafy haven, and the rest of Aftercare have joined them in creating whimsical ornaments with which to decorate the area. This Saturday, PNPS parent, Peter Bester of Timber Worx came back to school to lead a team made up of myself, my friend, Alumoni Kamanga, Peter's house guest, Waldema, and Thinus Pistorius to erect a latte fence and enclose our special corner.

The area now has planted-up beds, leafy trees full of birds, and lizards and insects aplenty, all in time for spring. The entrance will be via our Aftercare play area, but it may only be entered during breaks and during Aftercare time when TAs and Aftercare staff are supervising the area. The garden is not for ball games, hide-and-seek and on-on. It is a quiet, relaxation space, set out with sitting areas and lawn, on which children can chat, read, draw, play board games or study.

We hope to eventually put in a picnic table on the lawn there to complete the homely feel. Pop by and take a look when you get a chance! On the other side of Aftercare we have also erected a roof, (or afdak) which joins the Red Roots outer wall to ours, creating a pleasant, shady, indoor/outdoor space. It is the start of our plan to extend the space available to our big hulking Grade 6 & 7 Aftercare users when they descend on us at 14h45. Up until then, members of the Red Roots and Aftercare teams will take groups there to spend time in the shade.

We are so grateful to PNPS and everyone else who has made these developments possible. Watch this space, people... Aftercare is spreading its wings! If you like the look of our Mandela Peace Garden's fence, Peter Bester of Timber Worx can be reached on 074 273 3588. Our "afdak" was put up by the Jones brothers, contactable on 083 288 0760.



SEPTEMBER 2019

Building bridges through building friendships

Ann's eyes were vibrant as she told us how Uncle Sakkie had rushed from the car, come straight to find her, put his hands on her shoulders, while struggling to find the words to express his overflowing enthusiasm. Uncle Sakkie had just returned from the Grade 7's Mandela Day visit to Klipfontein Primary School and he was so moved by the way the Grade 7s had behaved during the outing. I was intrigued to find out what had touched Uncle Sakkie to such a degree.

This incident happened, serendipitously, during the early birthing phase of the "Inclusion Matters at PNPS". Our children are exposed to many intentional incidences of inclusion that we parents understand only in vague terms. Through "Inclusion Matters at PNPS" we hope to give parents tasters of the inclusion meal our children are having at school. Uncle Sakkie's story is a good place to start as it highlights multiple layers of inclusion in action.

Sakkie Louw has worked as a cleaner at PNPS for 19 years. The children call him Uncle Sakkie which speaks to the way he interacts with them as he goes about his duties. I asked Uncle Sakkie about the visit to Klipfontein Primary. He told me how he was amazed at this school's maintenance and cleanliness in spite of it being in an impoverished area, and he was blown away by the confidence of the little grade Rs who live in challenging circumstances. But he did not seem surprised at being included in the Mandela Day visit. Many other parts of our society view cleaning staff as one dimensional and therefore to serve their job description only, but Uncle Sakkie is used to being included at PNPS. Did you know that staff events include all staff, not just teachers? And that the staff room is literally for all staff, not just the teachers? Inclusion means that Uncle Sakkie knows that he can find the principal, tell her what is on his heart, and know that he will be heard.

Returning to the Mandela Day visit, Bev Pereira, Grade 7 teacher, gives us the context

"On the morning of Mandela Day this year, the Grade 7s of PNPS made almost 500 sandwiches in the hall to hand over to the children of Klipfontein Primary. After a short bus trip, we were welcomed by the principal, Mr Ismail Meyer, select staff members and the grade 7s of Klipfontein. Within the first fifteen minutes of meeting, the children had found a friend, formed groups, and shared snacks as well as personal stories. Each group then had a turn to work together to serve sandwiches to the rest of the school."

It was a cold and rainy day, but nothing could put a damper on the enthusiasm for soccer! The boys' and girls' soccer teams, together with their supporters, went next door to the community field to play a friendly match. Others were enthralled in the chess matches which were taking place. Curious community members made their way over to the field to see what the excitement was all about.

Staff members were taken on a tour of the school and knowledge was shared about the different processes that each school follows. When it came time to leave, Mr Meyer presented us with a beautifully framed drawing to commemorate Mandela Day."

Uncle Sakkie shared with me how he was amazed by the way the friendships were formed between the PNPS and the Klipfontein children.

"That was the best experience. The Grade 7s were in the hall and talking to each other, one on one. It wasn't even five minutes and you could see a connection between the children. It looked like these kids had known each other a long time. And by the time we left, they were hugging, so many were crying, they were sharing phone numbers and they were taking photos. It really touched my heart."



What Uncle Sakkie witnessed was authentic connection across social and economic barriers. Given our country's history of separation and the plaguing legacy of inequality, these moments are indeed worth celebrating. These moments echo Nelson Mandela's dream "We can build a society grounded on friendship and our common humanity – a society founded on tolerance. That is the only road open to us."

Let us pause here in order to unpack what made this possible. We know that real connection doesn't "just happen". The visit to Klipfontein stands in stark contrast to the typical 67-minute initiatives which are often little more than tick-box tasks that don't make much difference to the *have-nots* but allow the *haves* to feel less guilty about all they have. This visit was designed for *friendship building* which is vital in collapsing the dividing lines of superiority and inferiority. Further, the grade 7s from *both* schools were included in distributing the sandwiches. This mutuality of working alongside each other, as opposed to the hand-out mentality of charity, is key to honouring the humanity in one another. We parents would do well to receive the challenge issued by our grade 7s in their simple act of friendship and partnership:

- Are we crossing the segregated boundaries of our city to build connection?
- Are we finding spaces where we can work alongside, as equals, with those who live in poorer communities in order to bring change; or do we hide behind the act of giving our money without engaging ourselves wholly?
- Are we able to find points of connection with those who are very different to us in order to build friendships?

I would also love to understand what intentional educating by PNPS staff has been taking place, over the years, in the lives of these grade 7s that laid the foundation for them to be

feel so comfortable to engage with children who are new and different to them. I hope that over the next few months "Inclusion Matters at PNPS" will explore this question more deeply.

We must not forget that intentional educating has also been taking place in Klipfontein Primary to nurture their grade 7s for connection too. Riaz Parker, Operation Manager, whilst reflecting on his visit to the school, couldn't help but bubble over as he listed the inspiring way things are done there, and that we should consider doing an article on all the things we can learn from them.

With PNPS being as innovative and proactive as Klipfontein Primary, this school partnership is well matched and mutually beneficial. Riaz has already started working on an ecobrick building project and there is, of course, the ongoing potential for transformative friendship opportunities where everyone comes away with their sense of humanity enriched.

As our country is limping with deep wounds from our past, inclusion is not just a good thing for our children, but it is a vital part of our nation's healing. Inclusion is not only about embracing all who are in our school, but being aware of those who are not, and actively finding ways to reach them with the type of authentic friendship that leaves Uncle Sakkie at a loss for words.

Do you have any questions about how PNPS makes inclusion happen? Do you have a suggestion for a topic that you would like to see explored here? Please email them to: communitysupport@pnps.co.za



HELP MARKUS GET TO AMERICA

Support our Cerebral Palsy Warrior



” Let’s help get Markus to America. Markus was diagnosed with Spastic Cerebral Palsy at 14 months. We have since been searching for every possible resource to create the best possible life for him. He is a real warrior and so strong. He attends Physio, Occupational therapy and swimming therapy on a weekly basis and works so hard to get even stronger. Since the diagnosis we have come so far already. He can crawl now but is still unable to walk due to his increasing leg spasms, which ultimately affects his overall balance.

We recently came across Dr Park at St Louis Children's hospital and found that he is the only neurosurgeon in the world that's willing to do the procedure called SDR (Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy) which could remove up to 70% of all spasticity. This

was a big decision to make as Markus and his father will spend 5 weeks in America where he will have the surgery and rehabilitation every day thereafter as an in-out patient for 3 weeks. But looking at what this can do for him, we have decided we want him to have this surgery in order to live out his full potential in life.

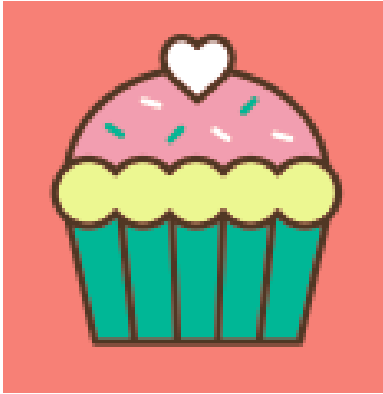
His surgery will give him that chance and we will do everything in our power to make sure he gets it.

We appreciate everyone with us on this journey.” - Written by Sarishna, Markus’s mom

Early Act will be selling Shake & Bake-Pancake mix on Friday 10th of September and 24th of September at R40 for 2 litre bottles. This pancake mix needs no oil or butter to cook.

Let’s try and support this amazing cause!

Warm regards
Megan Culligan



PAJAMA DAY

16 SEP

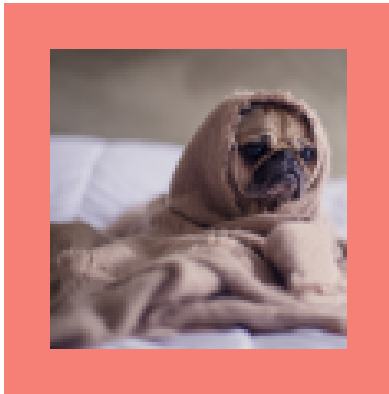
17 FOR GRADE 2

**WEAR YOUR
PAJAMAS AND
BRING YOUR
BLANKET!**



**BRING:
MUG
FOR HOT
CHOCOLATE**

**CUPCAKES WILL
BE ON SALE FOR
R2 EACH!**



CUPCAKE SALE!



SEPTEMBER 16TH

Come in your PJ'S and enjoy the day.

Bring along R2.00 that's all you need to pay
For a delicious assortment of cupcakes on sale.