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ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL
BLOEMFONTEIN

Mr Roland Rudd
Headmaster's Newsletters
The First Year
August 2021 – July 2022

Why St Andrew's?

When you walk the grounds of St Andrew's, one hears a whisper. The bricks and mortar of the school speak to you. It tells stories of the past, it retain the values, the traditions, the culture and the ethos of the school. You simply need to stop and look around you and take a moment to listen. That is when you hear the St Andrew's magic. The St Andrew's magic cannot be replicated. This is why St Andrew's families of years gone by return yearly. A deep love for this **"small school with a big heart"** is inculcated into every member of the St Andrew's family. On entering the campus I can assure you that you will be met by friendly young men, who greet you, are helpful and confident and take pride in their appearance and are neatly turned out in the school uniform. What you witness is a set of values inculcated into every St Andrew's boy from a young age.

At the heart of St Andrew's you find the little chapel which affirms the ethos of the school. The school prayer speaks the spiritual values we inculcate into every St Andrew's boy.

*O God our heavenly Father,
Let there be light in this place,
light to mind,
light to the heart,
and light to the will,
that we may know thee, love thee and serve thee all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

St Andrew's offers every learner the opportunity to be the best version of themselves. The aim of the school is clearly set out in the school mission and value statement:

To inculcate a desire amongst all our members to live a Christian life

To develop the intelligence and to form and strengthen the character of the young people entrusted to our school

To provide quality education and so use and maintain school facilities, that we may assist our students to fit themselves spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically for the work of life.

In pursuance of the above aims, we encourage:

Service to God and the community. Justice, fair play, truth and honesty, friendliness, unselfishness, courtesy, consideration, appreciation, humour, reading, playing, sportsmanship and pride in work

St Andrew's is the school of choice for English and Afrikaans and Sesotho families of the Free State. What sets us apart is that we are a small school that allows for one on one teacher pupil interaction, a record of academic excellence, close relationships between the pupils and the staff, opportunities to be involved in a variety of sporting, cultural and service activities, excellent facilities and a school where Christian values are at the centre of school life.

Not every boy who attends St Andrew's comes from a privileged background, but every boy who leaves St Andrew's does. My message to the boys is simple. In whatever we do daily, we must do as the Prophet Micah said: ***"Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God"***.

Issue 2

13 August 2021

The last two weeks have been a special time for my family and me. We have been welcomed with open arms by the school community. The support we have received has been phenomenal. I have spent the these two weeks getting to know as many of the staff and boys as possible. This means that my time during the day has been spent in meetings and walking the campus just enjoying the conversations around what makes St Andrew's special. One simply needs to walk through the gates to feel the St Andrew's magic (which I spoke about in my last newsletter).

My vision for St Andrew's is:

- To create a school where every learner and staff member has the **Opportunity to be the Best Version of Themselves**.
- Focus on **Values** such as **Manners, Dress, Appearance** and **Character**. St Andrew's needs to set the standard in terms of what it means to be a **Gentleman**.
- Focus on **Academic Excellence** and **Modern Teaching Methods** focusing on the **4C's – Creativity, Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking**.
- Prepare learners to take part in the **(4IR) 4th Industrial Revolution**.
- Focus on an **All in for Saints** philosophy, where we don't speak about different schools, but speak about one St Andrew's school.
- Focus on the **Christian Ethos and Values** of the school.
- Create opportunities for learners to be **Involved in School Life** – Culture, Service and Sport. A St Andrew's pupil is involved in the life of the school.
- Relaunch the **Boarding House Culture** at St Andrew's. Boarding has always been an important part of the life of the school. I want the Bloemfontein and surrounding community to know that the **St Andrew's Hostels are open for business**.

As a Saint's family we are truly blessed with a wonderful campus steeped in history and tradition. I take great pleasure in walking around the campus greeting the boys and having a chat under the trees or on the fields or in the dining room. Please feel free to pop in and have a chat with me. I have an Open Door Policy. I look forward to getting to meet more of the St Andrew's family over the coming days and weeks.

Every time I speak with the boys, I remind them, that whatever they do, they should do what the Prophet Micah taught us: **"Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God"**.

Issue 3

24 August 2021

Every day I wake up and rush to work, because Saints is a lovely place to be.

One of the first things I did, was that I opened the office door to the outside, so that the boys can bring their energy into my office. Not an hour goes by that I am not met with smiling faces and stories of the day and dreams of the future. I have enjoyed many a cup of coffee with visitors and parents whilst introducing them mid conversation to a St Andrews boy, who has popped in enquiring as to how I am and hoping for a sweetie from the headmaster's sweetie jar.

The stories shared over a sweetie amuse me and I have a good laugh. I have also been on the receiving end of I am saving up a bank of stories, for when I catch up with parents around the field or on campus. I look forward to sharing them with you.

On visiting one of the junior classes I have been met with a barrage of St Andrew's men telling me that my father taught their father. I am also hoping that the father of the one young man, who told me that my wife was his father's girlfriend, will pop into my office so that I can share a sweetie with him... I'm glad my wife made a good impression.

This week the St Andrew's staff will be switching over to Microsoft Office Online. It is part of my vision to get the school fully online (staff and learners) and equip us for the 4IR (4th Industrial Revolution). We will start with our Outlook emails and I will roll this into training staff in terms of TEAMS, Forms, SWAY, OneNote etc. It is a gradual process and we are now on the move. Perhaps one day we will see Saints Online school as part of the offering at the school. We live in exciting times and opportunities are limitless. I certainly want to see St Andrew's boys equipped with electronic devices and engaged in fully interactive teaching and learning environment.

Please continue to support our Service drives. Both the Junior and Senior grades are busy with the Santa Shoe Box project – a wonderful opportunity to give back.

Involve your son in the process of putting together the Santa Shoe Box, it is a very rewarding process of reflection and appreciation for what one has.

Saints is the place to be. The Saints boys sell the school. On a visit to my office this week, I challenged an Old Boy to visit the campus at any time, and see if he could make it past any Saints boy without being greeted. I look forward to hearing back.

Whatever you do today, do as the Prophet Micah taught us: "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 4

30 August 2021

There is nothing more that I enjoy than a good cup of coffee.

I look for any excuse to sit down over a good cup of coffee and have a “gesels”. I would like to extend my thanks to all the parents who popped in to have a cup of coffee or tea with me over this past week at our meet and greet. It was good to meet with each of you and I want to thank you for taking the effort to join me. It is very clear to me that St Andrew’s parents are invested in the life of the school. I thank you for the ideas shared. You have certainly given me more to think about. As mentioned, my office door is open. Feel free to pop in. When you are a boarder, you are given many opportunities to sit down and discuss life. This is one of the many benefits associated with boarding. One of the discussion points early in the morning centres around “Cofftea / Coughtea”.

Boarders around South Africa are still trying to come to a definitive conclusion as to what this warm beverage actually is. It arrives in a big urn, premixed and no variation allowed. Whether you add more sugar or less, it makes no difference to the already sweet taste. What is universally agreed is that if after enjoying a cuppa and you get a kick, then it is more coffee than tea. Those of you who have boarded will know what I am talking about. A discussion around “Cofftea / Coughtea” is central to the life of any boarder.

For those of you thinking about **boarding** for your son, I can recommend the “Cofftea / Coughtea” served at Champion Dining Hall. Your son will be richer for the discussions that happen around this magical drink. Applications for the boarding house close at the end of this month.

This week I have been speaking to boys about **appreciation** – appreciating their parents, the staff and one another, and appreciating the opportunity of attending St Andrew’s.

With the privilege and opportunity of attending St Andrew’s we have a responsibility of giving back. I remind boys daily of our **Santa Shoe Box** drive as well as our dry and non-perishable food drive. I have even managed to twist the arms of the boarders to give up some of their Two Minute Noodle stash. **Non-perishables** can be delivered to the chapel. I encourage all families to get involved in these two service drives. Giving back is such a rewarding experience.

St Andrew’s is a litter free campus. We take pride in our campus and care for the environment. I am asking all families to assist in reducing the amount of wrappers, plastics and papers that are brought onto the campus and to consider what products are bought from supermarkets. I would like to encourage families to send food to school in lunch boxes with the food having been removed from the wrappers and plastics, and these materials then disposed of or preferably being recycled at home. In terms of juice boxes and other cooldrinks, families are asked to please pour this juice/cooldrink/milkshake out into a reusable water bottle and send only the water bottles to school.

I have spent time speaking to boys about the dangers and inappropriate use of **social media**. I would appreciate it if parents could have a conversation with their sons and reinforce positive behaviour and appropriate etiquette. Please reinforce with your sons that they may never distribute a video or photo without the explicit permission of the person concerned. Remind your sons that if they caption pictures and videos that are hurtful, there are legal ramifications for this behaviour. The Saints Way is that we do not engage in anti-social behaviour in any form.

We are required to ensure that learners are screened daily. We are experiencing a number of learners arriving late for school. This impacts the ability to screen learners for safety reasons. It also impacts the start to chapel and the school day. Can I please ask that parents plan accordingly to ensure that learners arrive on time for school. It disrupts the tone of the school environment when learners arrive late for the start of the day.

Issue 5

6 September 2021

In Cape Town I had the privilege of a view over the expanse of Table Mountain – one of the Eight Wonders.

My bedroom window in our double storey, up on Wynberg Hill, looked out on the mountain. The magnificent beauty of the mountain left me breathless. I remember waking, seeing the mountain and counting my blessings. It is one of the things I miss most about Cape Town. It is also what I hope to return to when my time is done at Saints.

My family, my dogs and I spent many days on the mountain exploring the wonder of God's creation. Now I wake to the concrete mountain that is Mediclinic. I cannot help but draw a contrast between the two. Mediclinic reminds me daily, that I have the privilege of another day and of waking in my house, working with wonderful colleagues and interacting with the Saints boys and families. Whilst walking over the field to Champion Dining Hall, I can't help but think there are those who lie in the hospital who are their last breath. Fabrice Muamba said *"You don't appreciate life until you get to the other side. Like lying in a hospital bed."* The experience daily fills me with an immense sense of appreciation for the St Andrew's family. I feel truly blessed for the opportunity to serve as the 20th headmaster of this amazing school.

This week Reverend Ashe was licensed and I was installed as the Headmaster of Saints. This was a humbling experience and one of the unique traditions of the school. Traditions are important in schools. They create a sense of belonging and meaning to our lives.

They remind us that we are part of a history that defines our past, shapes who we are today and who we are likely to become. Once we ignore the meaning of our traditions, we're in danger of damaging the underpinning of our identity. The licensing of Reverend Ashe and my installation are one of many traditions that define who we are as Saints.

I would like to thank Bishop Dintoe and Chris Thomas for their role they played in the service. I would also like to thank all the respective staff who worked tirelessly in making this event possible. Thank you for all the messages of support that both Rev Ashe and I received. We are honoured by your support.

Last week Deon Scheepers, a good friend of mine, and the Headmaster of Grey College and I, travelled to Pietermaritzburg for the annual Headmaster's conference. We represented the two Bloemfontein boys' schools. Deon and I committed ourselves to bringing the schools together. We are both of the view that a Strong St Andrew's = a Strong Grey College and vice versa. We committed ourselves to working together and sharing best practice.

The two oldest boys' schools in the Free State will stand together and work to ensure excellence in education. We enjoy a healthy rivalry in terms of sporting fixtures, dating back to some of the earliest sporting fixtures in the Free State. This is a heritage that cannot be ignored and it is owed to past generations to ensure good relations. We appreciate and respect our brothers and families from other side Mimosa Mall.

I have been blown away by the commitment of the Saints staff. Every morning, I start my morning meetings by thanking the Saints staff for going out of their way to make Saints a better place for our boys. I find numerous examples daily of the Saints staff just going above and beyond the call of duty like it is norm – because it is.

One early morning at around 4am, I found Oom Phillip Du Preez on the Chapel field just

casually going about watering the field in preparation for the cricket season. An 80 year old man at 4am, in minus who knows what Bloemfontein Winter morning, giving attention to our facilities!!!

When I walk across to my office in the morning at 06h30, I find Margaret waiting for me, to clean the office blocks. Margaret is so much more than support staff. I have involved her in the counselling of our young men. She has compassion and understanding of a wise sage.

Another example would be our hostel kitchen ladies who travel in from afar as Botshabelo to ensure the boarders have breakfast ready at 06h45. What about Anthony our ever present security and smiling face in the hostel foyer or David our security guard and friendly face at the front gates to the school. These are just some of the staff who work at Saints but go so much further than just working for Saints and are part of this wonderful institution. What a wonderful staff we have.

I would like to remind families of our Santa Shoe Box drive. Please support this worthy initiative. Every day I speak to the boys about how rewarding the experience is of packing a Santa Shoe Box for those less privileged than ourselves. At Saints much is expected of us because of the privileges we have.

I have become aware of families who are struggling because of the effects of COVID. For families who are in a position to donate lunch packs or fruit for a fruit table please get in contact with me. Similarly if you are in need of support because of circumstances at home, please reach out to me via my Personal Assistant at admin@sasb.co.za

I enjoyed the positive feedback in terms of my last newsletter where I spoke of good coffee. Mr T, to answer your question on how I take my coffee - I take my coffee very seriously!

Issue 6

13 September 2021

Last week I spoke about missing Table Mountain and it was not long before a bouquet of Fynbos Proteas popped up on my desk. What a wonderful gesture and this is exactly what makes St Andrew's a special place - we have each other's backs. I felt my spirits lifted – thank you!

On my way out to a conference this week on one of the dusty Bloemfontein roads, an old friend sent me the theme song from that old classic movie Kelly's Heroes – Burning Bridges. We spent some time reminiscing our excitement about one particular evening when our parents were at a school function and we were waiting in anticipation for the movie to show - to which I was reminded I fell asleep. I did manage to get to watch the movie some months later. I wonder how many of the St Andrew's community will remember the movie? Today, Kelly's Heroes is regarded as a classic war film, noted for its ensemble, its humour, and its willingness to show the dark moments of war even among a more light-hearted story. If you listen to the theme song Burning Bridges, you will hear the following verse:

*All the burning bridges that have fallen after me
All the lonely feelings and the burning memories
Everyone I left behind each time I closed the door
Burning bridges lost forevermore*

One does not have to look hard to see the burning bridges around us. There are also those that actively work to burn bridges. We find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic, and face many challenges at home and in our daily lives – and we sometimes struggle in silence. We face unprecedented challenges on a global scale. This is exactly why we need each other. We need our brothers. Kelly's Heroes showcases a group of soldiers who become a band of brothers who despite overwhelming odds, come together, stick together, support one another and complete a daring mission.

This week we have been speaking to boys about brotherhood. Every morning at chapel Reverend Ashe and I have shared our thoughts on brotherhood and the fact that we need each other during these difficult times. We have encouraged the boys to support one another, to look after each other, to look after themselves and show love to each other. That is what we do at St Andrew's, **We Build Bridges** and we have each other's backs.

Reverend Ashe and I found ourselves speaking about multiple examples of boys building bridges. One boy having lost his father, was surrounded by his brothers who moved to console and comfort him on his return to school. This week a young man popped into my office to come and show me his "brotherhood" picture drawn in class. His picture summed up everything Reverend Ashe and I were trying to get across to the boys. On Saturday the Old Boys Class of 91 came together to say farewell to a class mate who passed away. It was a touching ceremony which entailed reminiscing the memories, celebrating the life and the unveiling of a plaque and scattering of the ashes of this Old Boy by his brothers on the Hickling field. At St Andrew's **We Build Bridges. We are Brothers and we have each other's backs.**

At St Andrew's there is no place for bullying or burning bridges. I have asked the teachers to speak to the boys daily about brotherhood and building each other up.

Every St Andrew's boy is responsible for every other learner part of this family. I would appreciate the support of the St Andrew's families in chatting to your son's about brotherhood, and about treating each other with respect, compassion and love. Anything

contrary to this is counter culture and has no place at St Andrew's. We are a friendly school. Together we can continue to build bridges at St Andrew's and in our community bringing light to the lives of others.

I have also taken the opportunity to speak to the boys about the fact that a St Andrew's boy is a master of being the all-rounder. St Andrew's boys are involved – they make use of opportunities. Please support the school in ensuring that your son is involved in the plethora of activities on offer at St Andrew's. I am asking for your assistance in having a conversation with your son, so as to ensure that he is involved and contributing to building himself and the school.

The small things are those things that matter. I have been speaking to boys about appearance and I would appreciate your support in checking things like hair, shaving, blazer buttons, socks, polished shoes, belts and clean blazers. "It takes a village to raise a child", and I am reliant on parents supporting the school in managing the appearance and dress of your son.

Our Santa Shoe Box drive is still on the go, and I encourage you to remain involved. It really is a rewarding experience and it is a wonderful learning opportunity as well as an opportunity to bond with your son.

I request the parents who are dropping their sons at the main entrance to the school in Gen Dan Pienaar to please pull in to the parking bays, drop and go, and not hold up the traffic. Please do not stop in the middle of the road – we need to keep it flowing freely. I also request that parents do not drop their sons on the other side of Gen Dan Pienaar and have their sons navigate a very busy road.

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, look for opportunities to build bridges and allow your light to shine brightly. Whatever you do today, remember to do as the prophet Micah taught us: *Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.*

Issue 7

20 September 2021

This past weekend Mr Hobson, Mr van Wyk and I travelled to Bethlehem to watch the Northern and Eastern Free State cricket teams playing one another. We used it as an opportunity to connect with St Andrew's families from the area and also chatted to the families of these talented cricketers. We had the pleasure of being hosted by the local families who provided us with good company next to the fields.

During the course of the day I slipped away from the cricket for a walk down memory lane. I have a long history with Bethlehem. My mother grew up in Bethlehem going to the local schools and my grandmother was one of the house mothers at the Charlotte Theron Children's Home. I spent many a holiday visiting my grandmother and playing with my friends at the Children's Home. Many of my family are buried at the local cemetery and I had the opportunity to visit their graves. I arrived to the Children's Home, amidst a hazy late Eastern Free State Spring afternoon, just as the sky was filled by the orange/red colours – the colours one can only experience in the Free State. I felt myself overwhelmed by a flood of emotions. There crossing the dusty road in front of me was a young barefoot boy no older than my son Daniel. In fact he bore an uncanny likeness to Daniel. I thought to myself **there goes I/Daniel, but for the grace of God.**

Over the past week I have found myself in conversation with a number of St Andrew's pupils around mistakes made at school. **St Andrew's is a place where boys are allowed to make mistakes.** It is a environment where we as the adults (teachers and parents) can mentor, guide and support our boys in a safe environment, where boys understand that there are **consequences for actions.** In real life, consequences for actions are so much worse. It is our role to ensure that one day, when our boys are grown up, a St Andrew's boy makes the choice to press the break instead of the accelerator when the traffic light turns yellow.

In all of the conversations this week, boys had a parent or guardian on the other side of the telephone, and without fail these adults arrived to my office and were supportive of working together. I remarked to every boy that they are privileged to have an adult who loved them so much, that they were prepared to come in at the drop a hat, be it during work hours or late at night. Keep reminding your son how much you love him.

At St Andrew's we rely on parents supporting the school and working with the school. We are a team. Parents/Guardians form the third leg of the potjiekos pot. Teachers, boys and parents need to work together so that we can get cooking. The ingredients that go into the pot, represent the various people, the cultures, the traditions and heritage, and all that is on offer at St Andrew's. Whilst pepper on its own may burn the tongue, and garlic without butter may be noxious, when added in the right quantity to the potjiekos pot, it adds flavour. God and Christianity provide the energy and fuel needed to get the pot cooking. Every part of this process, is important in creating a tasty meal. For those of you who have shared in a potjiekos pot, you will know that it is a long delicate process, and whilst the pot is going, ingredients are added and the coals are carefully shuffled around to get the correct temperature - you slowly build up to when the lid is lifted and the meal is ready.

St Andrew's is proud of and values all families who form part of this amazing school. We encourage and celebrate diversity. We are a multicultural and proudly South African school. Last week I spoke to the boys about brotherhood and what it means to be brothers. I spoke to the boys about caring for one another, for loving one another and supporting one another. The great majority of families and boys buy into this and live out the notion of **Ubuntu**

- translated as "*I am because we are*", also "*I am because you are*", or "*humanity towards others*".

I am requesting that all parents speak to their sons about Ubuntu and tolerance and respect towards one another - speak to the hearts of your sons. There is no place for intolerance or stereotyping in any way or form of anyone at St Andrew's based on race, creed, culture, sexual orientation etc. It simply may not and cannot happen. I am concerned that boys are passing comments and remarks at one another that is counter culture at St Andrew's.

This week staff will be speaking to all boys and reinforcing expectations. Boys are encouraged to speak up and report matters to their teachers, grade heads, house masters and adults at the school.

Whatever you do today, remember to do as the prophet Micah taught us: *Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.*

Issue 8

27 September 2021

On a weekly basis when writing my newsletters, I hope to be present enough in a moment, that I am given an idea about what to write.

This past week I heard one of the most powerful speeches I have heard delivered to a school, when Rev Ashe concluded our weekly theme by posing the question to the school - **What is the colour of our blood?** The answer is obvious right? So the question then is, why do we keep getting it so wrong? I wish we had recorded this speech because it is one of those that every South African needs to hear. Rev Ashe spoke with a dignified strength that left the school with goosebumps.

Learners and teachers came over after his speech thanking him for his powerful message. He certainly did justice to the message we were trying to get across to the boys – our message about brotherhood and Ubuntu - **recognition that we are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others.**

Parents need to work with us at school otherwise they are gambling with the education of their children by not playing a proactive role in the lives of their sons. Parents need to be present in educating their sons. As a school we spoke about brotherhood, how God sees women and men. We hope to impact our boys through the messages we deliver to them in their education daily - and I hope the message is also coming home to them from parents. How much more impact will our message have when we all speak one message to our learners and sons.

Please support the school in building the brotherhood of our family. We are looking to raise young men who will go on to be good husbands, fathers, sons and men who will contribute towards building bridges in our country.

This week we have a lot happening at school. On Wednesday evening we have our Matric farewell, which marks the beginning of the process to say farewell to our school leaders.

Our Grade 11's will be away on leadership camp on Monday and Tuesday preparing them to take over at the helm of the school. The school will also be voting for the new Prefects who will then start their tenure as the new school leaders. I need not mention that the election of the new leaders of the school is an important process. Every learner needs to consider the hopefuls, consider manifestos that have been set out, and vote for leaders that will take the school forward.

Last weekend my wife and I took the opportunity to register to vote at Victoria Park. I have exercised my democratic right to vote ever since I was eligible to do so. It is important that we speak to the boys about the importance of voting for leadership. South Africa's municipal elections will be held on the 1st November 2021 to elect councils for all district, metropolitan and local municipalities in each of the country's nine provinces and for some of our boys it will be their first opportunity to cast their vote at this level. It is important that St Andrew's boys understand the importance of exercising their right to vote. Clearly there is a lot to do in our beloved city (a Fountain of Flowers) – once the pride of central South Africa. I shake my head with sadness when I drive through the streets and piles of uncollected trash lie on every street corner and under the very campaign posters advertising the respective leaders who promise to bring change – how ironic and shameful!

Perhaps the parties should consider putting all the waste materials at their disposal to good

use by recycling it, and using it to print out their campaign billboards. Maybe a change in slogans from what is out there to **Tel Op!** and **Gets Trash Done!** Now that would make for cleaner politics. Either way, let's hope the leaders roll up their sleeves, step up and get out there with the rest of Bloemfontein to try and keep our city clean.

This past week I took Mr Volsteedt, a previous headmaster of Grey College, on a tour of St Andrew's. He remarked at how busy the campus was - all our fields were filled with cricketers, playing matches vs Newton Park from Kimberley.

The 1st team was playing against the University of the Free State. The Chapel Field was littered with junior learners involved in Cricket and Rugby skills. There were various learners moving around campus – some on their way to soccer and others on their way to squash. The fields were surrounded by boys supporting their team mates – what a wonderful sight. Mr Volsteedt remarked at how impressed he was by the Saints boys who greeted him as he made his way around the campus. I enjoyed having the boys and campus on show – every day I realize how privileged I am to be part of this school. Saints is a great place to be with so much on offer to the boys.

I hope families were able to spend time together on Heritage Day celebrating our national heritage. My family and I donned our South African gear and spent the day at the market in Langenhoven Park supporting the local vendors.

I found a great coffee joint - Time Out Coffee run by a Grey and Saints Old Boy – which can compete with the best out there. I can also recommend the Halloumi sold by Ms Gower at the Mooivlakte stall.

It is my understanding that the local market is a feature of Bloemfontein on Saturdays – it is certainly a wonderful atmosphere and I enjoy meeting up with St Andrew's families who happen to be exploring the market. Please send any recommendations my way – I am always excited to try something new. Hopefully some of you even spent the day around a Potjiekos pot.

Whatever you do today, remember to do as the prophet Micah taught us: *Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.*

Issue 9

11 October 2021

Over the holiday I had the opportunity to travel to Cape Town to support the 1st Cricket Team, who played a number of matches vs the Cape Schools. Thank you to Volvo Bloemfontein for sponsoring my transport in the new Volvo XC40 – what an amazing vehicle.

The 1st Cricket Team performed exceptionally well winning three of their games against Wynberg, Somerset College and Paul Roos. The fourth game against SACS was drawn in a real nail biter. What a privilege to be on tour with the team.

All too often in schools we become obsessed with winning. Had every result gone against the team, I would still have been extremely happy and proud of these boys. I took such great pleasure in watching the way they interacted with each other – the brotherhood (a concept we have been pushing with the boys), was evident in all they did. The boys would sit down together for meals and share in the days experience, reminiscing about small personal victories and challenges, the team success as well as planning for the next day. Off the field the boys spent time together as they explored Cape Town visiting Hout Bay, Camps Bay, Signal Hill and the Waterfront. These boys came together and supported each other in the way we expect all Saints Brothers to support one another. When we speak to the school, we tell them that we are All Brothers and that we are stronger together – we continue to emphasize that our differences is our biggest asset. These boys were gentlemen on the tour. I was complemented by parents, and opposition coaches on the manners, the appearance and the way in which these boys conducted themselves. I took great pleasure when the staff at Wynberg, complemented me as well on the quality of our young men on tour.

On the last day of Term 3, I decided to have a Staff Team Building exercise to finish off the term. The staff were divided into two teams – Red and Blue. The afternoon comprised of many activities run by Hennie van der Westhuizen from www.theteambuilder.co.za. It was great to see the spirit and enthusiasm of all who were involved and I am thankful to Hennie and his team (I can certainly recommend them).

The one activity was referred to as a Unity Stick. The question was posed as to whether we believed there was unity in our staff... The exercise seemed fairly simple. It involved standing in a big circle (both red and blue teams). Every staff member was given a pole that they needed to hold with their right hand, and place in front of their right foot. On command, every staff member was to move to their right, releasing the pole at the same time (causing the pole to fall), and then needed to catch the other pole they had moved towards with their left hand. Once completed you need to reset and start again. All that was needed was that we needed to move five consecutive times without dropping a single pole. The exercise took much longer than anticipated.

After an hour, the facilitator - clearly frustrated with the group was asking for permission to move on to the next activity. After another 15 minutes, the facilitator was insisting that we move on. It was then that we achieved our goal and the staff came together – the staff were refusing to give up. In fact, we said that despite what the facilitator said, we would do seven and not five. Eventually we did our five and the facilitator was happy to move on, but the staff reminded him again of the fact that we decided on seven. In our very next attempt we completed the seven we had set as our target.

At our staff braai afterwards the facilitator said to me that he had U12 netball teams complete the five consecutive moves in just 15 minutes. I reminded him of the fact that we

had in fact completed 12 consecutive moves (which I am led to believe this facilitator has not seen done yet). I am extremely proud of the way the staff came together, stuck to the task and eventually completed our goal set for ourselves – the unity stick provided some important lessons.

At the end of last term, I took the opportunity to write an individual report comment for every learner. It is important for me that every Saints boy knows that I take a personal interest in them. I trust that all parents have now taken the opportunity to look at the report cards and have had conversations with their son/s. I implore parents to focus on the positive gains made by their son/s (and tell them you are proud of them) and put in place strategies to build on this, take advice given by the teachers and continue to work with us in helping your son achieve his full potential.

If you were in the vicinity of Saints over the holidays you would have noticed the fields bustling with cricketers on trial for the Free State team. The U16 trials took place at Saints and boys from all across the Free State were hosted in our boarding establishment. I am grateful to all the Saints staff for giving up time over their holiday to ensure that an opportunity was provided to these provincial hopefuls.

Our grounds staff have been busy over the holiday working on the Junior School buildings and classrooms as part of our ongoing maintenance around the school. Our perimeter wall is also nearing completion with the final touches being done over the course of this week. I am sure you will agree, the ongoing maintenance projects around the school are certainly adding to the appearance of our prestigious facility.

This week will be another busy week. We have our Sports Awards Dinner on Tuesday, our Interact Dinner on Wednesday and our Speech Day on Friday. Our 1st Cricket Team departs on Wednesday for the National T20 Tournament. Our new school leaders will also be announced later this week at Speech Day.

What a privilege to be at a wonderful school like St Andrew's. St Andrew's provides so many opportunities for us (the Saints community) to become the best versions of ourselves – something we continually remind the boys of. We will continue our theme of brotherhood and inclusion over this term with a continued focus on our Saints Values: Pride in Appearance and Uniform, Being a Friendly School, Aiming High and Never Giving Up, Keeping God Central to All We Do.

Whatever you do today, remember to do as the prophet Micah taught us: *Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.*

Issue 10

18 October 2021

On Friday we hosted our annual Speech Day which gave us the opportunity to recognize the achievements of the boys.

It was my first Speech Day and it was a wonderful occasion, meaningfully celebrated. Whilst the focus of the day was on the achievements of the boys I want to appreciate the efforts of those unseen members (moms / dads / grandparents / guardians / classmates / mentors / teachers) quietly standing in the background ready with a word of encouragement.

Those are the special people who see the potential in others, that can't see the potential in themselves. It is through your words and actions that you push others to achieve their true potential and become better versions of themselves. The celebrations at Speech day were as much about the boys who came up on stage as it was about you, the unseen heroes.

I mentioned at Speech day that I was offered this bit of advice after my first day in office by one of my mentors using the letters of my wife's name KAREN:

K - KNOW your PEOPLE - their hopes and ambitions, their birthdays.

A - APPRECIATE what your PEOPLE do. Take nothing for granted. Thank them publicly as often as possible.

R - RESPECT the opinions of PEOPLE and listen to them. Spell '*listen*' another way and you get '*silent*'.

E - EMBRACE and celebrate the uniqueness of all PEOPLE. They bring different and valuable skills and intelligences.

N - NEVER stop learning - otherwise you get overtaken.

At St Andrew's we must always work at building relationships so that we can build bridges together. From relationship building, flows understanding and acceptance of each other. It leads to love. *1 Corinthians 13:13 "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth."*

At St Andrew's - We are brothers. We are family. The thread of legacies, traditions and values are the fabric of our blazers spanning multiple generations. The baton is being passed to those now who wear the blazer proudly to leave their own legacy. Let where we go, there be light.

At Speech Day, we were entertained by our Guest Speaker Mr Clive Mott. He was awarded the Fiat Lux Award – the school's highest honour (photo below) Mr Hentie Van Zyl and his wife Antoinette, were awarded the Saints Legacy Award (photo below). Mr Hentie van Zyl has been teaching for an amazing 58 years. The Masey Service Prize the highest award that can be earned by a pupil was given to Nicholaas Liebenberg.

The first week of term certainly was jam packed. The school leadership team for 2022 was elected. I would like to wish Jamie Fletcher (Head Prefect), Jaco Jordaan (Deputy Head prefect), and their Prefect Body an amazing and successful 2022. (photos below)

The rest of the school leadership structures (RCL Representatives, Interact leaders, Choir leaders and First Aid leaders) were also elected and announced to the school.(photos below)

On Tuesday evening we hosted our Sports Awards in the Chapel, where we were able to recognize the achievement of our sportsmen. We were entertained by Mr Hobson hosting a panel discussion with Old Andreans on the importance of sport and what St Andrew's meant to them. Brotherhood and experiences shared with friends as well as success and failure were common themes that emerged on the evening.

On Wednesday evening we hosted the Interact Dinner where the outgoing committee handed over the reigns to the incoming committee – the plans and vision for 2022 was shared to those in attendance.

Our Matric Class also attended Chapel for the last time as part of the school on Thursday morning and the school bid an emotional farewell to them.

On Thursday evening our Matric Art exhibition took place showcasing our talented artists.

Our First Cricket Team travelled to Pretoria to take part in the National T20 competition. The team performed well beating Wynberg, Northwood and Westville and lost to Grey PE and Waterkloof. In the Plate Final we played Centurion and ended up winning the game placing us 9th out of 16 teams.

Congratulations to Mr Anton Pretorius who achieved his Master's in Education as well as Ms Lauriza Muller for being appointed Chief Marker for Visual Arts in the Free State.

This coming week we will say goodbye to our Matric body at the Leavers' Dinner on Thursday evening and our Valedictory Function on Sunday Morning. They served the school with distinction. Our best wishes accompany our Matric brothers as they face their first Matric Examinations starting this week.

Parents, focus on the **WELLNESS** of the family and the wellbeing of your son during this stressful period. Don't lose sight of the big picture. Well-being means it is important to:

1. Eat healthily, get enough sleep, be physically active and combat stress and fatigue (Physical Wellness),
2. Connect to people who are Supportive (Social wellness),
3. Remember to have down-time (Emotional wellness),
4. Make Time to Connect with God (Spiritual wellness).

In all that we do, remember to do as the Prophet Micah taught us: ***“Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”***.

Issue 11
25 October 2021

In a time when the world can do with a little more love, we need men of integrity, wisdom and Christian values. When we come to the end of our journey here on earth and come before our Father we should aim to be able to say that we tried to be Men of Justice, Men of Mercy and Men who walked Humbly with God, then will have succeeded in what is required of us. Then we will be able to say as Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:7 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." This is part of my message shared with the Matric Leavers and our new Leaders at the Valedictory Service held on Sunday. The Valedictory service at St Andrew's is one where we take leave of one class and induct the leaders of the next.

Micah asks the question "With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?" He goes on and tells us that the Lord has shown us, mortal men, what is good. Every day I speak to the St Andrew's community I finish off with the words of the Prophet Micah – **Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.** This is what is required of us. I want to believe that when a boy finishes his career at St Andrew's, he leaves the school well equipped to tackle the plethora of challenges faced by our Country as a citizen and a Christian, and make a meaningful contribution resulting in the betterment of the lives of others.

At Chapel this week, I spoke to the boys about an analogy attributed to Sir David Attenborough. *"If you collect 100 black ants and 100 fire ants and put them in a glass jar, nothing will happen. But if you take the jar, shake it violently and leave it on the table, the ants will start killing each other. Red believes that black is the enemy, while black believes that red is the enemy, when the real enemy is the person who shook the jar.* The same is true in society. Men vs Women. Black vs White. Faith vs Science. Young vs Old etc... Before we fight each other, we must ask ourselves: Who shook the jar?" What an insightful analogy and relevant to our society and the world at large.

I would hope that every South African approaches the municipal elections with this in mind on 1st November. The greatest enemy of men are other men, particularly those shaking the jar (sometime hidden from sight). At St Andrew's we are part of the Royal Blue Ant Army - we are a friendly school, we have manners and are respectful, we aim high and never give up, we keep God central to our lives, we take pride in our uniform and appearance, we appreciate others, We are Brothers and We are Family. Next time you walk the campus of St Andrew's, take a moment to study the ants; they work silently and persistently, always looking forward, never giving up and all part of one family, working as a collective to achieve their goals.

At the end of the term we are planning a Saints SANTA Christmas Party. We will be entertaining the St Andrew's community and inviting local orphanages to join in the Christmas celebrations.

We will be setting up an amphitheatre of hay bales. We are also looking to have tractor and trailer rides, as well as a petting zoo.

If you are able to assist with any of the above please contact me via marketing@sasb.oc.za.

As the school starts preparing for the assessment period Parents need to focus on the **WELLNESS** of the family. Well-being means it is important that your son should;

1. Eat Healthily, get enough sleep, be physically active, combat stress and fatigue (Physical Wellness),
2. Connect with supportive people (Social wellness),
3. Have down-time (Emotional wellness) and
4. Connect with God (Spiritual wellness).

Let where we go, there be Light. Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

Advice To Young Men.

The book of Proverbs contains thirty one chapters. That is, a Proverb a day for each day of the month (except of course for those months with less than 31 days). The book of Proverbs is attributed to Solomon – thought to be the wisest man who ever lived. Proverbs 1 Verse 7 begins with the reminder that “To have knowledge, you must first have reverence for the Lord”, and it then goes on to deal with matters not only of religious morality but also of common sense and good manners.

Proverbs 1, on two occasions talks about **ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN**. I would hope that every St Andrew's boy would spend time reading Proverbs 1 and take note of the advice given by the wisest man who ever lived. Reverend Ashe tells us daily to make time for God. How about adopting the habit of reading a chapter a day for the month? It is a good start and we can all do with the advice offered in times like these.

Have you walked the fields, with morning/evening air cool to the skin? Have you heard the toll of the chapel bell at the start of the day? Have you stopped by the memorial gates and read the inscriptions? Have you admired the chapel by night? Have you seen the roses and the natural beauty of the expansive gardens? Have you felt the gees and heard the whispers of generations past, when walking the corridors? Have you experienced a Valedictory Service, Leavers' Dinner, Speech Day or Remembrance Day? You have, have you? Then you must be a St Andrew's boy. For this is the privilege of the blazer we wear. Traditions and legacy woven into the fabric of the blazers that bind and connect us with a rich tradition of generations past. This is the honour bestowed upon us St Andrew's boys.

With this privilege and honour comes a responsibility. **A responsibility to act for the betterment of others.**

Our Junior and Senior Interact have driven various Service initiatives creating opportunities for the involvement of the rest of the school. I am so proud of the St Andrew's community for the way in which they have responded. On Saturday, the St Andrew's community took to the streets in a drive to clean up the litter and uncollected refuse in our surrounds. Young and old, took ownership and came together to make a difference in the betterment of our community. Families arrived with bakkies and trailers. Moms, Dads, Sisters and Brothers, various teams and clubs within the school all turned out and together tackled this scourge plaguing our city. (see photos below)

Over the week Santa Shoe Boxes were pouring in from the St Andrew's community. I have enjoyed watching the boys climb out the cars with their decorated boxes, all smiles, as they delivered these boxes to their teachers. What an amazing effort on the part of the families involved. I am sure you will agree that the process of putting together a Santa Shoe box is a humbling and rewarding process. By Friday afternoon we had collected 357 Santa Shoe Boxes. Thank you to the boys, parents and teachers involved in this wonderful service initiative. (see photos below)

Plans are currently underway for the Saints Christmas Party at the end of the term. At this Party we will also be hosting an orphanage from Reddersburg.

Plans are underway to provide staff members with laptops and upgrade our computer facilities in the first phase of the Saints 4IR journey to replacing outdated technology and making a fundamental change to the way we approach education. We have already made

the shift to Office 365 Online and Cloud technology.

Staff are currently being exposed to and trained in this new technology in our journey towards digital relevance and advancement in this 4th Industrial Revolution. Our Science department were also the recipients of three laptops from the FSED for excellence in their subject area.

Let where we go, there be light. In all that we do, let us do as the Prophet Micah taught us: "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Remember why we remember.

“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.”

At 11:00 on the 11th November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare. The Allied armies had driven the Germans back. They had inflicted heavy defeats upon the Germans over the preceding four months. Eventually, the Germans called for an armistice (a suspension of fighting) to secure a peaceful settlement.

Therefore, 11:00, 11/11 attained a special significance in the post-war years, because it was the moment when hostilities had ceased on the Western Front in Flanders (Belgium). The poppy which was an indigenous flower in Northern France and Belgium and familiar to soldiers on both sides became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war. This first modern world conflict had brought about the mobilisation of over seventy million people. It had left between nine and thirteen million dead. Perhaps as many as one-third of them with no known grave. The allied nations chose this date and time to commemorate the war dead and called it “Armistice Day”.

After World War II ended, the name was changed to “Remembrance Day”. Now we at St Andrew’s continue that tradition. On Friday morning at 10h30 we will be commemorating those but especially those from St Andrews of all colours, creeds and beliefs who died serving their country and their communities in past conflicts: World Wars, Frontier Wars, Anglo-Boer Wars (South African Wars), Border Wars, those that fought in the liberation struggle against the Apartheid regime, and those presently serving in active operations throughout the world.

We encourage the St Andrew’s community to purchase a poppy pin badge from the front office at R2 – these pins may be worn with school uniform for the duration of this week. Please note that the school gates in Dan Pienaar Drive will be closed after learners are dropped off on Friday morning for our service.

We are fast approaching a generation, where there are no living family members having had the opportunity to see or speak with a living family member who fought in the Great Wars. Having spoken to the school over the past week about why we celebrate Remembrance Day, I asked that all those present (staff and boys), raise their hands if they knew of whether they had a family member who fought in the Great Wars – about a quarter raised their hands. I then asked those to keep their hands raised if they had known or spoken with a family member who fought in the Great Wars – only a couple hands were in and amongst the group – definitely less than ten or so. Many more would know of relatives who fought in the Border conflicts or in the liberation struggle.

I am one of the few left who were still able to interact with family members who fought in the Great Wars – I could hear the stories first hand. My great Grandfather, Johannes van der Westhuizen, is considered to be the youngest South African to have fought in World War 1 at the age of 13 years, his medals are on display in the Castle Of Good Hope – I never met him. He also fought in World War 2. Can you imagine your grade 8 son voluntarily going off to war with a rifle in his hands to fight many thousands of miles away? Imagine the feelings of the very real possibility of never seeing your son again. What would you be saying to him?

My Grandfather Roland Rudd, was a Sapper (combat engineer), and fought for South Africa with the Allies in North Africa against the Axis forces. I recall sitting with my grandfather in his old age, with his memories fading, where he spoke of how terrible the War was, losing friends, starving in the desert and only being given an egg as nutrition on return to small decimated towns, and I recall him telling me "there was nothing good of the War my boy". Those memories stuck with him to the very end.

This week we have had a musician at chapel services and play the Last Post and the Reveille. The point of the Last Post which is sombre, remembers those who died and the Reveille which is cheerful, offers hope and sends a message that we who remain behind must get on with living and use our opportunities which those young men who died never got.

Click on the link to listen to the Last Post and Rouse <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDLl9G9Hcec>. Cape Town remembers those who died with the noonday gun which is fired every day at 12:00pm.

Lest we forget those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, so that we may live the lives we live today.

Wear a poppy this week, take some time and remember. ***Do Justice, Love Mercy and walk Humbly with God*** – so that we may never see times like those again. If you are wearing a poppy, you are making a silent pact with those St Andreans who have gone before you that you will not waste the opportunities which are given to you at this school, and that you will remember them at the going down of the sun and in the morning.

It's time that we have a conversation about "Traditions"

The noun 'tradition' has Latin roots in the word 'tradere', which means *hand over or hand down*.

So think of a tradition as something that is handed down from one generation to another. There are those traditions that are good, which we celebrate, because they add value to the institution and the individuals concerned – these are vital to schools.

Then there are those traditions, often unwritten, which involve a power imbalance accompanied by a code of silence that are nonsensical, with the end result being a breaking down of values and culture and often a source of great unhappiness for the "not-so-willing victims". Those unwritten traditions perpetuated by generations onto each other, that have no place in good schools. Those traditions are often defended by the older boys with the argument it was done to me, therefore I do it to another. Adults on the other hand understand this rather naive argument from a boy that it was done to me...

Let me share this story with you.

How Traditions are Born by Thys Steenberg (February 2020).

An Infantry Battalion had received its new Commanding Officer. During his first inspection, the CO saw 2 soldiers guarding a bench. He went over and asked his Second in Command why they were guarding it.

"We don't know Sir. The last Commander told us to do so, and so we did. It is some sort of regimental tradition!"

He searched for the last Commander's phone number and called him to ask him why he had ordered guards to stand at this particular bench.

"I don't know. My predecessor had guards at that bench, and I kept the tradition."

Going back 3 more former Commanders, he found a now 100-year old retired General.

"Excuse me General. I'm now the CO of the Battalion that you commanded 60 years ago. I've found 2 men assigned to guard a particular bench. Could you please tell me more about the bench?"

"What? Is the paint still wet ?!?"

We have been given hands and we have a choice what we do with our hands. We can open our hands or we can close our hands and by doing so we can achieve two polar opposites.

With these same hands, we have a choice to make. When we open our hand we can use our hand to help others by pulling them up and building relationships. When we close our hand we can inflict pain and break down relationships / burn bridges (reference an earlier newsletter).

There are so many wonderful traditions at St Andrew's and rites of passage where we build on legacies past. Traditions aimed at maintaining values of brotherhood and building relationships.

One simply has to look at the Leavers' Dinner, where the matric learners, receive their Old Boys Blazers. It is a respectful and dignified occasion marking the transition from being a school boy to an old boy. This really is the point, traditions must be 'good' and must enhance the school.

Traditions which demean, insult and hurt hold no place in our school. The question then must be asked, why there are traditions that are the opposite? Are you starting to feel uncomfortable? You should. I will not allow any boy to perpetuate hurtful traditions - bullying in another guise to take place at our school – this is not who we are. We all carry a moral compass with us. The boys know what is right. The poor examples set to them as to what is acceptable through past lived experience, does not allow for them to continue with these outdated (and in many cases illegal) traditions.

Rev. Steenbok and I tell the school every day that we need to look after each other, we need to be there for one another, that we are going to need each other and that we are BROTHERS. I also tell the boys daily, to Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

How then can we justify that just because a learner in a generation far removed from the realities of today made a decision to do something to others, that we should allow this to continue. Adults understand how important it is in South Africa today that we treat one another with respect. No parent would allow a power imbalance or a veil of secrecy in their household – think about the way you allow your eldest and youngest to interact with each other – so why should this be allowed or condoned in school. Why is it that we allow the school to operate as an island in this respect. We should all be having this conversation about other ways of doing.

The newly elected leaders in the hostel took a decision with their House Masters to do things differently this year. In the past, the newly elected leaders would ransack dorms under the guise of an inspection to set a standard of what was expected. Now, instead, they took a decision, to build.

Schools are about building - building relationships, building confidence, building lives. Anything which detracts from this will not be tolerated. I want to congratulate them. All those dorms who passed inspection were provided with pizza instead of having dorms ransacked. This is the kind of St Andrew's I want to see.

When having a conversation with one of the Prefects this past week I asked him what he remembered about his matric, to which he replied "he was hard, Sir". He further went on to recount that he did not particularly have fond memories of this matric. Let this be the feature of our matric class this year - to leave a legacy which future matrics will want to emulate. A legacy of brotherhood, of kindness, of consideration for others, of camaraderie.

Nothing beats a legacy moulded in the hearts of those following on behind us. We all have a decision as to how we want to be remembered - this was my message shared with the Prefects. How will we choose to use our hands going forward?

Here are some tips on how are you able to identify a tradition that is questionable?

1. It is often accompanied by a veil of secrecy and a code of silence (often accompanied by threats) done in the absence of adult supervision (though not always). It is not spoken about and generally surfaces with a bang resulting in a great deal of unhappiness for all concerned.
2. A power imbalance exists between older/stronger/powerful individuals and younger/weaker/gentle individuals often manifesting in a top down interaction where

something is done to the other. One party may clearly benefit whilst the other does not.

3. It would seem out of place with what is regarded as normal in the ordinary household.
4. It happens under the guise of building respect or a showing of the “right way” and is often physical in nature leading to physical or emotional abuse - inflicting hurt and pain is bullying not building respect. True respect is not earned in an atmosphere of fear.
5. It is justified by the reasoning it was done to me therefore I can do it to another or by the fact that it is an easy way to address a concern and there is no need for talking.

If all else fails, boys should ask themselves whether their mother looking over their shoulder would **approve of what they are doing and the reason for doing so.**

The main purpose of a watchtower is to provide a high, safe place from which a sentinel or guard may observe the surrounding area. If the guard in the watchtower falls asleep and the city is invaded it is the fault of the guard. If the guard in the watchtower sounds the alarm and the city does not respond, it is the fault of the city. The alarm has been sounded, the choice needs to be made.

Let where we go, there be light. In all that we do, let us do as the Prophet Micah taught us: “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

A **code of silence** is a condition of when a person opts to withhold what is believed to be vital or important information voluntarily or involuntarily. The code of silence is usually followed because of threat of force or danger to oneself, or being branded as a traitor or an outcast within the unit or organization.

Omertà is a Southern Italian code of silence and code of honour and conduct that places importance on silence, according to one of the first Mafia researchers Antonio Cutrera, a former officer of public security. It seals lips of men even in their own defence and even when the accused is innocent of charged crimes. The basic principle of *omertà* is that one must not seek aid from legally constituted authorities to settle personal grievances.

The suspicion of being a *cascittuni* (an informant) constitutes the blackest mark against manhood. *Omertà* is thus an extreme form of loyalty and solidarity in the face of authority. One of its absolute tenets is that it is deeply demeaning and shameful to betray even one's deadliest enemy to the authorities. For that reason, many Mafia-related crimes go unsolved.

Whilst writing this piece, The Sound of Silence by Simon & Garfunkle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0q7MLPo-u8> was played over the radio. Garfunkel, introducing the song at a live performance (with Simon) in Harlem in June 1966, summed up the song's meaning as *"the inability of people to communicate with each other, not particularly intentionally but especially emotionally, so what you see around you are people unable to love each other."* I am of the opinion that the song speaks about the deteriorated social fabric and alienation of the youth that was so much a part of the 60's. Young people were distressed and angry about the racist, sexist, war-mongering, materialistic, hypocritical society they were growing up in. **The "silence" is the unwillingness of the society to speak up about its own corruption or to stand for anything positive.** Paul Simon calls out that silence.

*Hello darkness, my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sound of silence*

This past week several people, both locally and from around the country reached out to me, and thanked me for my last newsletter on a conversation about traditions. There is no doubt that there are many good traditions that play an important role in schools, and that these traditions should be protected, retained and celebrated. They add value to the institution and to the lives of individuals which results in the building of relationships. There is, however undoubtedly, the need for introspection. It is very clear that the South school community has an inherent sense of justice and about what is right, which is why questionable traditions are being called out. The code of silence that accompanies these questionable traditions is unfortunately part of our school DNA and needs to be dismantled.

The reason questionable traditions continue is because of the **Code of Silence** or **Omertà** - young men in the absence of adults are brainwashed into believing they are behaving in an honourable way and that speaking out is shameful and demeaning - which will result in them being ostracized from the group. In ancient Greece, to be ostracized meant, to be banished from a city or society by popular vote. This is one of the very real and inevitable challenges

facing those who choose to speak out.

This exile can often take the very visible and evident form of being completely excluded, but often is also unseen resulting in the “banished” suffering by themselves. The shame that comes with this “betrayal” is often too much for young boys in the fragile stages of their journey to manhood. Boys often just leave the environment by choice to go and seek life elsewhere (and even then these questionable traditions never come to light). In fact the ostracizing of individuals is often a lifelong banishment of individuals who are often regarded as soft/failures/not suited to the boys school environment. Then, of course, there is the threat of physical harm that comes from talking out and breaking the silence in schools. Coupled with being ostracized, physical threats and the acts of violence against those who have courage to speak out permeate schools (and society).

One of the stages of boyhood to manhood is the shifting of allegiance from parents to the peer group. This seeking independence from parental structures is evident in choice of music, clothes, hair style, state of bedroom and choice of friends.

Sometimes breaking into a group demands undergoing initiation - gangs in the Western Cape are well known for this. Bored in a bleak and often hostile environment, many youngsters, usually male, join the gangs which offer not only an alternative lifestyle, but excitement and a sense of meaning and belonging. In the book *Gangs, Rituals and Rites of Passage*, Pinnock argues that Western society has ceased to escort young men into adulthood through appropriate rites of passage.

In Spud, the Crazy 8 all shaved off a portion of their eyebrows to identify with their dormitories. Grade 8 boys have the Code of Silence drummed into them. ‘Snitchers are losers’. To be known as a snitch is the ultimate mark of the devil. They are bribed by being told to suck it up because ‘their turn will come’. The only way to break this is that seniors must set the ‘traditions’, but they must be positive ones and they must acknowledge that once set, anyone overstepping the mark will feel the full might of the Headmaster and staff.

What was done at ‘one school’ was to have a day of bullying junior boarders, by chasing them around an obstacle course. Urinating on the boys, whacking them with sticks and all sorts of other humiliating things. Then it was changed to the whole hostel doing it with seniors going first, with their grade 8 buddy. Staff also took part and also went through the obstacle course. Doing it together changed the whole atmosphere with parents coming to watch.

A Code of Silence exists because the boys have it drummed into them that this is a rite of passage for them to be accepted into the group. Get through the initiation and ‘Jy is een van Ons’. Acceptance into the group demands a Code of Silence. Our job is to install positive rites of passage which still has a physical component (e.g. a hike up a mountain). But this time, the senior boys are assisting and guiding. Initiation is a vital part of growing up. It comes from the Latin word *initium* which means a ‘beginning’. Confirmation into church rituals is one obvious example. In schools, other rituals include ceremonies like the Prefect Induction, Blazer Ceremonies and Leavers Dinners.

Initiation must never step over the boundary to *humiliation*. Untold long-term harm can be done by humiliation and parents must support the school and refrain from saying, ‘It happened to me and it didn’t do me any harm’. Times have changed, whether parents like it or not they have to acknowledge that humiliation is unacceptable in today’s society.

I am sure that you may have arrived to a tournament where you will no doubt have noticed the shaven heads. The cutting of hair before going on sports tours (humiliating by shaving the head) has been tacitly supported by the school community using the ‘it happened to me

argument' as well as 'it has been going on for years'. Forcing Grade 8's to run around campus (because they are not allowed to walk), making boys walk backwards into buildings for an entire year, not allowing boys to sit on couches in common rooms (despite there being a plethora of empty seats), making new boys perform in humiliating spectacles on stage are not the rites of passage that should occupy any space within our schools. Every member of the school community has to buy into this new way of thinking.

Schools and communities must break the adolescent code of silence by:

- Acting decisively by putting in place consequences for offenders, support for those who speak out and by educating the community when questionable traditions are exposed – they must actually not be allowed to start.
- Calling out questionable traditions when seen immediately.
- Taking a clear stance that any questionable act that is counter to the school vision and mission statement have no place at the school.
- Discussing what are considered meaningful traditions and what are considered questionable - and following this up with what is allowed and what is not.
- Character education of the school community stressing courage, care, and responsibility to one another.
- Regular discussions of the school discipline code, revisiting school policies and formal discussions and information sessions with parents.
- Putting in place policies and protocols for handling reports of those speaking out, and handling those found to be perpetuating these questionable traditions.

At St Andrew's, all that we do is guided by the principle of our school motto - ***Fiat Lux – Let There be Light***. The words from our school prayer - Light to this place (St Andrew's), Light to the Mind, Light to the Heart, and Light to the Will – are powerful reminders of the expectation and the commitment that all members of the St Andrew's community are bound by.

*O God our heavenly Father,
Let there be light in this place,
light to mind,
light to the heart,
and light to the will,
that we may know thee, love thee and serve thee all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen*

If we cannot answer in the affirmative to the question as to whether in what we do, **we bring light, we do justice, we love mercy or we walk humbly with God** – then it **has no place at St Andrew's**.

"What the World Needs Now Is Love" is a popular 1965 song with lyrics by Hal David and music composed by Burt Bacharach. First recorded and made popular by Jackie DeShannon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUaxVQPohlU>

***What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love
No not just for some, but for everyone***

Just when we thought things were slowly getting back to some semblance of normality, we were hit with the news this week from the World Health Organization (WHO), who has declared a new coronavirus variant to be "of concern" and named it Omicron. I cannot think of a more apt song at this time. Warren Buffett said *"What we learn from history is that people don't learn from history"*.

One would have thought that after the initial hard lockdown, and the social and psychological ramifications as well as the economic fallout we are dealing with now on a global scale, we would have got to the point, where decisions are not made in panic, but with due consideration. South Africans were by enlarge appalled by the UK placing us on the Red List, and rightfully so. One would think at this stage, our world leaders would work together, in support of one another – well this is clearly not the case. There is a massive divide between those who have (rich countries) and those who have not (poorer countries). I applaud our Scientists for the work they are doing and for our Government leaders being brave enough, to be honest and transparent, in the face of the fall out we are now experiencing.

Omicron is not a South African variant, it is a variant of the COVID virus, identified by our scientists. Through our announcement we can allow the world to prepare for this variant. We know that COVID is not going away, it is not some conspiracy theory, and there will be many more variants (found all over the world). As we work towards eradicating the virus we need to learn to live with it (as best we can). Life still needs to continue. The fallout for our children in years to come is going to be immeasurable if we are not able to return to some sort of normality. We need each other during times like these.

Just like South Africa reacted with anger and astonishment at the fact that we were placed on the Red List not allowing travel, I would hope our President and the leadership of the country does not impose interprovincial travel bans ahead of the festive season in the weeks to come. We have already lost out on so much. Imposing lockdowns and travel bans don't work. I think we all breathed a collective sigh of relief following the address of our President last night - and it will be interesting to see how the next couple days and weeks unfold. One thing is clear, we need to get the population vaccinated and I encourage all members of the Saints community who are eligible to be vaccinated, to do so post-haste. According to the World Health Organization,

"Take whatever vaccine is made available to you first, even if you have already had COVID-19. It is important to be vaccinated as soon as possible once it's your turn and not wait. Approved COVID-19 vaccines provide a high degree of protection against getting seriously ill and dying from the disease, although no vaccine is 100% protective". According to the CDC, *"COVID-19 is still a threat to people who are unvaccinated. Some people – including children – who get COVID-19 can become severely ill, which could result in hospitalization, and some have ongoing health problems several weeks or even longer after*

getting infected. Even people who did not have symptoms when they were infected can have these ongoing health problems”.

We will continue to ensure that COVID protocols are in place at St Andrew's. Please speak with your son's and provide them with the necessary reassurance needed during this time. Remember your child has already been faced with school closures, cancelled events, separation from friends and possibly loss and grief – it is important that they feel more loved and supported now than ever. UNICEF provides some tips on supporting your child during COVID.

1. You need to speak with your child about the corona virus in a calm and proactive manner about how they can keep themselves safe.
2. Children need structure. School provides structure. When not at school provide structure at home – and limit technology use.
3. Let your children feel their emotions. Expect, support and normalize that they are feeling sad and frustrated.
4. Check in with them about what they are hearing. There is a lot of misinformation being spread.
5. Create welcome distractions. Assist in providing a break from the emotions with activities like family game nights or cooking days etc.
6. Monitor your own behaviour. Remember your son takes his emotional cues from you. Try managing your anxiety in your own time and don't overshare your own fears with your children.

The week ahead is certainly jam packed. The respective senior grades are continuing with end-of-year assessments and our Matrics are in the process of finishing off with their last examinations. We will also be hosting our annual Carol Service on Monday and Tuesday evening.

As you will have noticed from our newsletter last week, we have also planned activities at the school from Monday 29th November to Friday 10th of December for Grades 1-6. We have our Junior Christmas parties planned (a first time event for which you need to book) where we will be having a family picnic, singing of Carols, entertainment and activities as well as hosting the orphanage from Reddersburg. If you are able to assist with any donations on the evening like eats, drinks, ice creams or gifts (for the children from the orphanage), please contact marketing@sasb.co.za

Please support the school in ensuring that your son attends school during this period. As things stand, schools close on December the 15th.

This past weekend I attended the Western Cape Regional Reunion in Cape Town with John Bridger. It was a wonderful opportunity to interact with past Old Boys, both young and old. The passion and love for the school was very palpable and their commitment to the continued support of the school was greatly appreciated. I enjoyed listening to tales and stories shared by these old boys as they reminisced fondly about their times at St Andrew's. The support of the Old Boys, in maintaining the traditions and legacies of the school, their contribution in the way of financial support, as well as their marketing of the school is immeasurable. I would like to thank Luke Wollenschlaeger, Honorary National Chairman, and the Western Cape Old boys for hosting both myself and John Bridger.

As we navigate these uncertain times, I trust you will remember the words of Jackie De Shannon on the radio waves in 1965 - **"What the World Needs Now Is Love"**. Us, South Africans, we are a resilient people. We are going to need each other. Whatever you do this week, remember to allow your Light to shine brightly, and to **"Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God"** in all that you do.

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6 December 2021

In 2018, I had the privilege to visit Italy with a group of soccer boys. It was at Allianz Stadium, in Turin where I came across the motto ***“Fino alla fine”***. Yes, I am talking about that Italian super club, **Juventus**.

They are the most successful club in Italy, having won 27 league titles, nine Italian Cups, four Italian Supercups, and eleven international titles (two Intercontinental Cups, two European Champion Clubs' Cup/UEFA Champions Leagues, one European Cup Winners' Cup, a record three UEFA Cups, one UEFA Intertoto Cup and two UEFA Super Cups). They are also the seventh most successful club in the world in terms of the number of trophies won by the club. With rich history, comes top-class legends. Legends that paved the way to success, and willed their team to victory. Some of the players who have donned the Juventus shirt include: Zinedine Zidane, Cristiano Ronaldo, Gianluigi Buffon, Alessandro Del Piero, Antonio Conte, Edgar Davids and the list goes on. ***“Fino alla fine”***, the phrase – meaning **“until the end”** – captures the relentless drive of the Bianconeri (the black-and-whites), a team who **never ever give up**.

The Biancoblu (blue-and-whites) of Saints, have really lived the phrase ***“Fino alla fine”*** – ***“until the end”***. We are blessed with the staff we have at Saints. I often remind the staff of the fact that they don't realize how good they are and that they need to have each other's backs and trust each other – because they are a **world class team**. And a world class team is made up of great people who have a sense of personal responsibility. Many Saints parents have siblings in other schools and it is them in particular who will have noticed that we have continued with offering a program for our learners – in spite of a trend around the Free State with learners heading off early on holiday.

Not so at St Andrew's – the staff here are going until the end. We do this because we consider ourselves different and we hold ourselves to different standards – we feel we owe it to our families. This speaks of the professionalism and commitment of our staff. Admittedly the staff were thrown a curve ball, when I announced that we would continue with a program at school, but I am so proud of the manner in which the staff of the grades 000 - 6 responded. Our Senior learners have been engaged with end of the year assessments during this time which has necessitated invigilation and marking by the senior staff (with some senior staff also involved in matric marking).

I mentioned in my Speech day address that the latest figures are showing that over a million children have dropped out of South Africans schools so far this year – a million uneducated and unemployable young people. It is against this backdrop of the mass drop out and the fact that many have only been attending on a rotational basis (attending school two or three times a week), that there must be great urgency in keeping learners at school.

There are of course many other good reasons as well like the national feeding scheme providing meals to learners at school, keeping learners off the streets, and providing a safe environment for learners to name but just a few. It is also estimated that if the rate of learning loss in 2021 due to lost schooling (rotational timetables) is the same as the rate of learning loss in 2020, then between March 2020 and June 2021 most primary school learners in South Africa have lost 70% to a full year of learning. A full year of learning lost! We are fortunate, that we have not had to endure rotational teaching as a norm, like many of the other schools. One can only but scratch one's head at the fact that mark schedules are being signed off so early and that the department does not rigorously enforce school attendance – surely there is enough evidence to suggest learners should be in schools

engaging in catch up programs or reading at very least?

I have received numerous emails from parents thanking the staff for the program that has been put in place. Credit must be given to the staff in terms of their commitment to our boys – teachers with a sense of personal responsibility. They have risen to the challenge, and put in place activities and excursions for the boys, which have kept our boys engaged and meaningfully entertained. The boys have already lost out on so much the past two years. It would be remiss of me if I did not mention the fact that the staff similarly experienced the same challenges faced by the Saints community. The staff rose to the occasion and dealt with the many new challenges that have now become commonplace in the daily school routine. I am sure that you will agree, that we are all now feeling tired and are looking forward to this holiday. I can certainly see that the staff are feeling the effects of this year (and the uncertainty of what lies ahead). Every day I count my blessings when I come across these wonderful people, the people who make Saints a good place to be. Like the names mentioned above, our teachers are our champions who don the Biancoblu Saints jersey daily. They capture the essence of the motto ***“Fiat Lux fino alla fine” – Let there be light until the end.***

This week we will be hosting our Christmas Parties, and will continue with our junior program during the day (excursions, sports program, demonstrations etc). Seniors may arrive to school with a book of their choosing. I have encouraged all learners to pop round to the Saints staff to thank them for this year as well as encouraging them to thank Moms, Dads, Uncles, Aunts, Grannies, Grandpas and anyone who contributed to their year.

It is important for people to express gratitude because with gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

Having caught up with my long time mentor this past weekend, he reminded me of the need to stop and smell the roses. Taking his message to heart I immediately followed it up with a 700 km round trip to destination nowhere, following the dusty back roads in a Landrover Discovery supplied to me by Motus Bloemfontein.

It was an opportunity to reflect on what a blessing this journey at St Andrew's has been thus far. I have come to meet wonderful new colleagues, interact with the Saints community (boys, teachers and parents), establish new friends, connect with family, learn from the Old Boys and new mentors, appreciate lessons taught and friendships made whilst in Cape Town and have now put my roots down and am able to say that Bloemfontein and St Andrew's is home.

It is my hope, that during this Christmas period families will make time to smell the roses. Stopping to smell the roses is an act of appreciation and recognizing the source of the goodness in our lives. It means taking time to recognize the daily moments that bring us joy and really seeing what causes that emotion. It also means taking time to relax.

Whatever you do today, remember to Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God until the end.

"You'll Never Walk Alone" is one of the more famous songs in football and is heard before the kick-off at every Liverpool match at Anfield. It has also travelled around the world as the "Reds" tour Europe and further afield as five-time European champions. The message of hope in the song has given the fans of Liverpool hope through some very tough times – both on and off the field.

In the finals of the 2005 UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul, Liverpool were losing 3-0 to AC Milan. Legend has it that the motivating effect of the fans singing **"You'll Never Walk Alone"** gave the players hope when all seemed lost. This small act of defiance in the face of adversity galvanised the Liverpool team, and they managed to pull back and win the match on penalties, crowning them European Cup Champions.

The song took on a much deeper and more tragic meaning after the Hillsborough disaster of 1989, when a human crush at the stadium in Sheffield injured hundreds and 96 fans lost their lives. The poignant lyrics have found a permanent home at Anfield, fixed forever in wrought iron above the gates of the stadium as a permanent reminder to fans that football is more than just a sport, it's family. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Go-jJIGd1so>

*When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark
At the end of the storm, there's a golden sky
And the sweet, silver song of a lark
Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
Though your dreams be tossed and blown*

*Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone*

It is my wish that every boy, parent and staff member of St Andrew's know that they will never walk alone – we are more than just a school – we are family.

Firstly we reinforce this with our Christian ethos and the message of hope we share with our community on a daily basis. Matthew 28:20 *"And be sure of this: I (the Lord) am with you always, even to the end of the age."* There is never a moment that His presence is removed from us and He reminds us that He is with us always.

Secondly, everything we do at school is aimed at building relationships and creating a sense of identity and belonging to the Biancoblu (blue-and-whites) of Saint Andrew's. When I leave St Andrew's, I want the school community to feel that they have never had to walk alone, because as a family we value, care for and appreciate each other, we see and support each other, and as a collective we come together to allow our light to shine brightly in building the individual, building St Andrew's and building our community and country.

Next year we will be launching our revamped House Structure aimed at strengthening a

sense of belonging, identity, brotherhood and pastoral care for our boys. We have appointed House Heads of the senior and junior grades, along with Deputy House Heads and a team of teachers in each of these houses. In the senior grades the boarders will no longer form part of the three sport houses (Champion, Clegg and Mackenzie) but will compete in the interhouse competition as a stand-alone house (the boarding house).

In the junior grades all boys (including junior boarders) will compete as a member of one of the three sport houses. The House Head, along with the team of teachers will be responsible for the pastoral care of the boys in their house, creating a sense of identity and belonging for the boys and running the inter house competition. The House Head will also be a primary point of contact for parents. This is the first step and in future the role of the House Head and the team of teachers will be expanded on so that all matters pertaining a learner (pastoral, academic and discipline) will rest with the House team.

The daily structure of the school has been adapted to include house meetings for both senior and junior grades and in addition boys in the junior grades will wear their house shirts to school every Tuesday. In the new year, families will also be invited to House get-together functions which will give parents the opportunity to meet with the House Head and the team of teachers allocated to the house as a meet and greet opportunity and also an opportunity for House Heads to present their vision for their House.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the St Andrew's community for welcoming my family and me to this special school. We have been blown away by the care, interest and support offered to us during this period of transition. From day one, we have been made to feel welcome and supported.

I would like to wish the St Andrew's community a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy the festive season, and remember to make time to smell the roses. May your family be abundantly blessed.

Remember that you never walk alone in Doing Justice, Loving Mercy and Walking Humbly with God.

“Proficimus More Irretenti” - "We Make Progress Unhindered by Custom". This is the motto of the Air Corps Tactical School. The US Air Force, the youngest of the US military armed forces, traces its history back to the Air Corps Tactical school. Attempts to shape the air force were hampered by the traditions of the army and navy to which the air force was initially connected. When the US air force eventually became an independent unit, they adopted the motto “Proficimus more irretenti” – ‘We make progress unhindered by custom.

At the first meeting with the prefect body, I asked our head boy Jamie Fletcher, what it is that defines the DNA of St Andrew's. His answer - **BROTHERHOOD**. I could think of no more apt response. Everything we do at school is aimed at building relationships and creating a sense of identity and belonging to the Biancoblu (blue-and-whites) of St Andrew's. I similarly asked the school leaders to think about what legacy they wanted to leave behind. This week I have spent time talking with the St Andrew's boys about our DNA and that the focus this year would be on what it is that makes up our DNA. We will pay special attention to what is good about our DNA and move away from what is not.

We are a brotherhood and we are a family. We look after one another, respect one another and have each other's backs. We are a small school and we are a family (boys, staff and parents). We are a Christian school and the chapel remains at the heart of the school playing a central role in all our daily operations. We are neatly turned out taking pride in our uniform and appearance. We are a friendly school and we greet visitors and adults. We are confident, honest and respectful. We are involved members of the school community participating in sport, culture and service. Our academics are a priority because we participate in the classroom and we behave in such a manner that allows teaching and learning to flourish. We are resilient and reliable. We are proud of the rich heritage and the traditions of our school.

Last year I started the conversation with the school community around building on what is good. I would like us to focus this year on making progress unhindered by those traditions and customs that don't add value to the school. This is the way we can continue to build on the legacy of St Andrew's. A traditional boys school, proud of its past, active in the present and eager for the future building on the foundations of those brothers who came before us.

At the end of last year, we relaunched the House System of the school in a slightly different format, but with the aim of placing special emphasis on the House system and the Inter-House competition. The House Structure is aimed at strengthening the sense of belonging, identity, brotherhood and pastoral care for our boys. We have House Heads of the senior and junior grades, along with Deputy House Heads and a team of teachers in each of these houses. All boys in the school belong to either one of the Day Boy Houses; Champion, Clegg or Mackenzie (all three fall under Webb house) and the Boarders belong to the three boarding houses Chandler, Twells and Storey who all fall under the Boarding House.

The House Head, along with the team of teachers are responsible for the pastoral care of the boys in their house and will also be a primary point of contact for parents along with the respective Grade Heads. Throughout the year the boys will take part in the Inter-House competition comprising various sporting cultural, academic and service activities competing for the coveted Hickling Shield. Families will also be invited to join us at our annual House braai and picnic where you will have the opportunity to connect with the House Head and the team of teachers. At the end of the year, the Houses will celebrate the year with our House Day which consists of various team building activities.

St Andrew's is a good place to be. In the words of Revd Ashe "*we have a good school and together we are going to make it the best school in South Africa*". There is so much on offer. The campus was buzzing with activity this week. We welcomed our new brothers to the St Andrew's family, trials for the respective sporting codes started, the senior grades held heats for the inter-house gala and athletics, we hosted our Grade 7 and 8 orientation camps, we met with the parents of the junior grades, the board hosted their annual welcome function for the staff and on Sunday the grade 8 class lit the class candle symbolizing the start to their senior school journey.

As parents you need to walk this journey with us. We want to walk hand-in-hand with you. We look forward to seeing you on the campus again. Please look out for the invitations to join us at the various meet and greet opportunities. We will be hosting a bring and braai for the junior school as well as House get-togethers. Please diarize these.

As we walk together this year focusing on the DNA of the school, let's do as the Prophet Micah has asked of us; Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

As a young boy growing up in Bloemfontein, I fondly recall attending the Benson & Hedges Night Series, watching players like Hansie Cronje, Alan Donald and Omar Henry. I can recall a jam packed cricket oval for those provincial games, the braai smoke filling the night air, the kids playing on the oval during a change of innings and matches ending late at night.

I also recall watching regular international matches where the South African team took on the likes of Australia, India, West Indies, England, New Zealand and Sri Lanka to name but a few. One would make your way to the oval directly after school, to be absorbed in the contest playing out. I recall watching the Cheetahs play their Currie Cup matches in a stadium flooded by orange and white, watching the likes of Helgard Müller, Os Du Randt, Brendan Venter and a

In 1995 I recall watching the All Blacks play Japan beating them 145-17, and getting the first look at that monster of a man Jonah Lomu. On other occasions, I recall dressing up and sitting with the masses at the Free State Stadium waving branches supporting the green and white of Phunya Sele Sele - Bloemfontein Celtics.

There are certain things about growing up in Bloemfontein, that are central to what makes Bloemfontein people, who we are. We are a fiercely loyal support base of our local teams – I believe this stems from the fact that our teams are filled with local talent, “gewone mense” that live in the same suburb, attend the same schools and attend the same weekend braais, as the rest of us. We share a genuine connection and are able to relate to our club, their ethos and the people who make up the team. People often joke that everyone knows everyone in Bloemfontein. I want the same from all members of the Saints family.

Whilst Phunya Sele Sele is no longer there, the Cheetahs are excluded from major competition, the Proteas and Springboks no longer play at the stadium and the city has degraded under current leadership - what remains is a resilient people. I have such a belief in and love for the people of Bloemfontein. Despite the desperate state of affairs in Bloemfontein, we make things work and there remains something special about our beloved city. I put it down to the people who make Bloemfontein what it is. The saying is true - you cry when you first arrive and you cry when you have to leave Bloemfontein.

At St Andrew's, it is our mission to create a sense of belonging and identity for every boy, parent and staff member to the Biancoblu (blue-and-whites). Our House Structure is central to this mission. We are a small school where we prioritize relationships - and here every boy is important to us. Every member of the school community has a role to play in building our school. Over the past two weeks we have had multiple meet and greet opportunities. We have welcomed all the new families to the school, parents have had the opportunity to meet with the teachers of their son, and this past weekend we hosted the junior school braai. It was a wonderful evening with families turning out to enjoy the camaraderie and gees of a school, that is united. Parents, staff and boys interacted with one another whilst setting up their camp chairs and picnic blankets. The Free State sunset on the Chapel field did not disappoint - the sky was swathed in colours of red, orange and pink and braai smoke and laughter filled the air. It was good to get together as a family again, and enjoy the evening together. All those in attendance would have felt the family connection we strive to create – Family and Brotherhood being key to the DNA of St Andrew's.

The respective House Heads will be sending out invites to the House braais/picnics that will take place later this term – please diarize these events as you will have an opportunity to meet the House Head and teachers in your son's house.

Our inter-house gala and athletics will also be taking place this week – here the houses will be given their first opportunity to compete for points towards the inter-house competition. We have reworked the house system so as to place much more emphasis on the houses and the inter-house competition. The inter-house gala and athletics is compulsory for all the boys and our boys are expected to be participating in events and supporting their respective houses. A Saints boy is an involved boy, this is another key part to our DNA at St Andrew's.

On Friday our matric learners arrived to school to collect their final matric results. This is a group who made it through two years of disrupted teaching and learning – and they came out on top. They definitely embodied a resilient character, another one of the aspects of our Saints DNA. I am extremely proud of this matric group. They achieved a 100% Matric pass and a Bachelors pass of 84.8%. They achieved a total of 83 A's and a class average of 66.98%. Our top achievers were Josh McLachlan with eight A's, Henco Meyer with seven A's, Nicolaas Liebenberg with six A's, Miltiades Marangelis and Savon Herbst with five A's and Gareth Visser, Jannie Hugo and Darion Booysen with four A's. Nicolaas Liebenberg ended with an average of 87%, Josh McLaughlan with 86% and Henco Meyer with 85%.

Our school was also invited to attend the Free State Awards ceremony where the school was presented with the Gold Schools Award for achieving a 100% Matric pass. We can be really proud of the St Andrew's boys as well as the Motheo District who ended second nationally in the matric final exams.

Service is also central to our DNA at Saints. On Thursday the senior school took part in the Blood Drive. Prior to Thursday, we had managed 64 units of a blood, a record set in the fourth term of 2021. I challenged the boys to see if we could improve on this. One thing I know about Saints boys, is that if you set them high targets, they will rise to meet the occasion. We had a fantastic turnout and managed to improve on our previous record with the Saints community donating 76 units. Several boys were turned away because of the fact that they were involved in sport and were away on tour this weekend and several grade 10 learners were not able to donate blood as they were not sixteen years of age yet. I am confident that before the end of the year we will reach 100 units. I am extremely proud of the efforts of these boys.

Similarly the junior grades held a shoe drive, collecting old school shoes and trainers for children at disadvantaged schools. I was humbled and thankful for the efforts on the part of the Saints families who arrived to donate shoes and even on occasions arrived with brand new shoes that were purchased in support of this service initiative. I would like to thank all the families for their donations and would like to encourage the Saints family to continue to donate any shoes that are not being used during the course of this week. Shoes can be delivered to the front office – please clearly indicate your son's name and his house – as we are rewarding the house who collects the most shoes.

St Andrew's is a school with a proud history built on the foundation and legacies of past generations. Our values of brotherhood, service to others and a resilient character are evident for all those who interact with Saints boys. These values will continue to define who we are.

In all we do, let us remember to do as the Prophet Micah taught us; Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

“**Firmamentum Ludi**” from *firmō* ("strengthen"), or *firmus* ("firm"), literally "that which strengthens or supports" and *ludi* meaning public games for the Roman people or school. Taken together we get **Foundation of the School**.

Boarding has always been an integral part of life at St Andrew's. Many boarders would argue that the boarding houses at St Andrew's are the foundation of the school. I would like to extend an open invitation to our day pupils to come and experience life in the boarding houses at St Andrew's.

Our boarders are accommodated in four boarding houses. Chandler House dates back to 1918, when the foundation stone was laid by Lord Buxton. The House is named after Bishop Chandler who had much to do with the School in the early days. Twells House shares the same building as Chandler House.

Twells House dates from 1951. Twells is named after the first Bishop of Bloemfontein, Bishop Twells. Chandler and Twells are our two senior boarding houses accommodating boys in grades 10-12.

Storey House is the Intermediate boarding house consisting of boys from Grades 8 and 9. Unlike the other houses, it is named after a headmaster and not a Bishop – in this case, the legendary Mr F W Storey who was headmaster of St Andrew's School from 1917 – 1946.

Dunn House accommodates Junior Boarders from Grades 1 to 7. Known for many years simply as Junior house, it took the name of Canon RA Dunn who served the school as Senior Mathematics Master and as Chaplain for some 31 years.

Two weeks ago, my son in grade 3, arrived home out of breath from a touch rugby game on Chapel field. My wife and I had been sitting on my stoep at Harison House, watching these junior boarders of Dunn House play whilst the sun was setting. It was a magical scene, the campus had cleared of all the daily visitors.

There were the little guys playing and the air filled with the sound of laughter, the Chapel as the backdrop with an amazing sunset. The game was supervised by the three older brothers, Jaco Jordaan (Deputy Head of School), Jarryd Crossman (Head of Dunn House) and Neo Kemeng (Prefect in Dunn House). It was beautiful to watch, you had the matrices playing with and helping the younger boys of different ages. It was one of the purest moments I have experienced on campus.

Boys being boys, and playing with absolutely no worries at all. My son arrived to tell his mother that he would be joining Dunn House, but that she need not worry as she would still see him at meal times and over weekends.

So why would you want to come and spend time as a boarder? The boarding houses play a very important role in the life of the school. Boarders consider themselves to be the “**heart of the school**” or the “**foundation of the school**” and it is a place where you can experience a close connection and brotherhood that is difficult to put into words.

The friendships formed as boarders last a lifetime. Boarding is an environment where you can experience life with your brothers in a safe space under the guidance and supervision of a House Head and House Masters.

Typically the day in a life of a boarder consists of a set routine. In the morning you will be woken by the rising bell and inspected by the prefects and house masters ensuring that you are ready for school. From there you would make your way to Champion dining hall, where you will be given breakfast by the hostel ladies. Besides being spoilt at breakfast by the food on offer, this is an opportunity to have a catch up with your brothers before the day starts. The day is planned around the table, sharing reminders and strategizing about managing the day ahead. After breakfast you would fall in with the daily school routine. Morning tea and lunch is served to all boarders during the day. At the end of the school day, boarders fall in with the sports program, and when not involved in a team session, boarders spend time on the campus usually relaxing under the trees or supporting the various activities on the go. After the afternoon sessions, boarders shower and get ready for supper. Supper is another one of those occasions to catch up with your brothers around the day's activities. Supper is usually followed by a game of touch rugby, soccer or a swim on campus. Evening prep sessions follow, and are supervised by the duty masters. You are given the opportunity to get your homework done in a controlled environment, with the necessary support from your house masters and your peers. The end of the day involves getting ready for bed and catching up with your brothers in your dorm which is a very special time. Boarders often reminisce about this time, after lights out.

So why boarding? **Boarding is an opportunity.** You are given an opportunity to grow as a person. You are given an opportunity to develop your character. You are given an opportunity to grow in independence. You are given an opportunity to develop your sense of self-discipline. You are given an opportunity to throw yourself into the life of the school on a daily basis. You are given an opportunity to make friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.

Boarding has and always will be an important part of St Andrew's. I would love for every boy at St Andrew's to try out boarding. I am giving boys the opportunity to spend three evenings at the boarding house at no cost to the families concerned.

Hostel week will be held on 16 - 19 February. More details to follow!

For families wanting more information on boarding please contact:

Mrs Debbie Fair dfair@sasb.co.za
House Mother of Dunn House
Boys in grades 1-7

Mr Craig Allwright craig@sasb.co.za
House father of the senior houses
Boys in grades 8-12

Mrs Ailsa Uys marketing@sasb.co.za for hostel tours.

Daily I remind the boys of St Andrew's of our DNA. With the Chapel at the heart of the school, our brotherhood is the lifeblood of this fine institution, which courses through our veins as strongly today as it did in 1863.

Let us continue to do as the prophet Micah reminds us; Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

I want to share wisdom from two Ancient Roman philosophers. These ancient Roman philosophers used few words to express pearls of wisdom, that I believe stand up today as guidelines for living wisely and compassionately.

“Si vis amari ama”. *If you want to be loved, love*. Written by Seneca in the sixth of his letters to Lucilius. The phrase has a double interpretation: “only loving souls can inspire love” and “you cannot ask for love from those you do not love yourself”. At Saints, we tell the boys that we are brothers, and that brotherhood is part of our DNA. We often speak of love and respect for one another. We try and live this love for our brothers in the way we interact with each other daily. We are different, yet we are the same when we come together as the Saints family.

Our differences are an asset that make us stronger. I hold my staff to the same expectation. Everything we do at Saints must speak to our DNA. As a member of the Saints family, you are expected to show love for your neighbour. 1 Corinthians 13, was the message shared by Revd Ashe at Chapel last week. “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”.

“Consuetudinis magna vis est” by Cicero. Consuetudo means “custom” or “habit”. “Magna”, as you know means “great”. “Vis” means “power” or “force”. “Est” means “is”. By now you’ve probably already figured out that the quote is, “The power of habit is great”. In simpler terms it means that habits are hard to break.

In March of 2020, we were forced into a National lockdown by President Ramaphosa. Can you remember how fearful and uncomfortable you felt when you were prescribed with the various regulations forcing you to change the way of living? It did not take long for us to become accustomed to the “new normal” forced down on all of us.

Last week at a special cabinet meeting, changes were approved for Adjusted Alert Level 1 COVID-19 regulations. The following changes were approved with immediate effect:

1. Those who test positive with no symptoms do not have to isolate.
2. If you test positive with symptoms, the isolation period has been reduced from 10 to 7 days.
3. Contacts do not have to isolate unless they develop symptoms.

Again, F.E.A.R - **“False Evidence Appearing Real”** took hold, resulting in many in the school community feeling anxious, uncomfortable and fearful. We are now required to break the habit of old and make a mindset shift. Take a moment and think about it. **We’re not going to something new; we’re going back to what we know.**

As the head of the school, I am trying to lead by example. I have been vaccinated and have received my booster. I am also advocating for you, my community, to **make full use of the opportunities provided by authorities to get vaccinated.**

Jumping to the future, I leave you with this quote, not from an ancient roman philosopher, but from Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the star ship USS Enterprise **“Live now; make now always the most precious time. Now will never come again.”**

With the uncertainties we have faced over the last two years let's embrace the now and go boldly into the future.

In living now, let us as the Saint's family, continue to do as the Prophet Micah has asked; Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

The original Olympic motto is made up of three Latin words: **Citius - Altius - Fortius**. These words mean Faster - Higher - Stronger. On the 20th of July 2021, the Session of the International Olympic Committee approved a change in the Olympic motto that recognises the unifying power of sport and the importance of solidarity. The change adds the word “together” after an en dash to “Faster, Higher, Stronger”. The new Olympic motto now reads in Latin “Citius, Altius, Fortius - **Communitur**” and “Faster, Higher, Stronger - **Together**” in English.

Participating in sport is an important part of the DNA of every St Andrew's boy. Every member of the Bianco-Blu (White and Blues) is expected to be involved in a Summer and a Winter sport. Boys are provided with a plethora of activities that they can choose from throughout the year and are also given access to first class facilities. Our Integrated Sports Program at the Junior School, exposes our boys to all of the sports on offer at St Andrew's.

In conversation this weekend with a teacher from another school, he remarked at how privileged my son (and by extension your son) is to be exposed to such a variety of sporting opportunities. Our aim is to have boys exposed to and involved in various sporting codes on offer throughout the year. In the Senior Grades, boys can choose what Summer and what

Winter sport they want to be involved in. We rely on the support of our parents to ensure all our boys are involved and committed to our sporting program.

We see sport as a way to stay healthy and fit. But sports' importance at St Andrew's, goes much further. We want to help in the overall development of our boys through our sports program. Through playing sport we teach our boys lessons of life, such as teamwork, accountability, self-confidence, responsibility, and self-discipline. Through our program we help prepare our boys to face the challenges of life and at the same time want to enhance the physical and mental abilities of our boys and help them achieve goals in their life.

Looking at the calendar, there are an abundance of activities on offer. We have the Independent Schools Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Festivals, the Bloemfontein Squash Open, the Rugby Derby vs Union, Southern Free State sport trials, SA Schools Squash Closed Qualifier and various school sport tours etc. I would also like to remind families of our inter school derbies; Clifton 22 and 23 April (HOME), St John's on 6 and 7 May (AWAY), Cornwall Hill 13 and 14 May (AWAY) and St David's 20 and 21 May (HOME).

We are a small school with a big heart. One could equate us competing with many of our brother schools, as David taking on Goliath or the 300 Spartans standing against the Persian empire. Other schools with 1200 plus boys per phase have the option of 3-4 boys for every one of ours. In our Junior school we are 300 strong and in the Senior school we have 350 boys. Commitment and Involvement is part of our DNA. It is through the commitment and support of every member of the St Andrew's community (Boys, Parents, Teachers, Coaches, Old Boys, Sponsors and Supporters) that we remain strong and competitive in our sport. King Leonidas in the movie 300, says ***“We fight as a single, impenetrable unit. That is the source of our strength”***.

In living now, let us as the Saint's family, continue to do as the Prophet Micah has asked; Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

“Oyez,oyez,oyez!”

'Oyez' (pronounced 'oh yay') comes from the French *ouïr* ('to listen') and means “Hear ye”. In medieval England the town crier would begin his cry with these words, accompanied by the ringing of a large hand bell to attract attention. In modern day St Andrew’s we use the word “Newsletter”.

We live in an age of widespread literacy. For most of human history however, the vast majority of people were illiterate—but they had the same desire we do to have the latest information. Gossip and town chatter played a role, but genuine news (as well as propaganda, sales, and everything else we still have today) from its source needed to be spread far and wide quickly. Hundreds of years ago, thousands of years ago—the news was shouted at you as you walked by, and you could stop to listen and carry the news home to tell your friends and family, or you could keep on walking (maybe muttering *falsum nuntium*, “fake news!”). Times have changed and at St Andrew’s we deliver the news to you directly in your inbox through our school Newsletter. If you are not receiving our newsletter on email, please contact Mrs Uys directly on marketing@sasb.co.za

We spend a lot of time putting together our weekly Newsletter. The Newsletter details the life of St Andrew’s. I also use the newsletter to share my views on education and goals for the St Andrew’s community. I speak to my expectations of the school and share ideas that I am talking to the school about. We celebrate achievements, remind families of important dates, provide COVID-19 updates, share results, request parental assistance and share a message from the Chapel. It is therefore important that families make time to read the newsletter to be informed about happenings and that we are on the same page or at very least families are aware of my expectations, views and goals. I implore you to make time to work through the newsletter weekly.

Last year we spoke about launching D6 Connect. We have taken the decision not to proceed with D6 connect. We have over the past five weeks been investigating a full school management system. Let me explain. The Free State Department makes use of SA-SAMS, a management system designed to speak to the Department only. It is essentially a data tool used by the Department. The school management system we are looking at will speak directly to parents. It will be used to record daily attendance, merits, demerits and communicate with parents. You will be able to access the profile of your son from the comfort of the home and see his attendance, his time table, his merits and demerits and at a later stage his academic results to date. We have already employed a school administrator, Ms Robberts is our designated administrator. We are looking to set up the school management system and train staff during terms 2, 3 and 4 and launch the system at the start of 2023.

Our means of communication with parents at this point is WhatsApp (primarily) and email (secondary). With the new school management system, the school communication will be directed through email and the school management App as opposed to WhatsApp. WhatsApp will simply be used as an additional means to reach out. WhatsApp has started to consume much of our daily communication. I am sure that the average person can relate if I said that you receive between 200-400 messages daily. Whilst I recognize the advantage of instantaneous notification, it is becoming increasingly difficult to sift important information, especially when there are long threads of messages on a group – important information is simply lost. By the end of this term all School WhatsApp groups will be deleted. You will receive an invitation to join a new group. There will only be one WhatsApp group per grade.

All information pertaining this grade will be shared on that group, be it school messages, sport announcements, homework notices etc. The groups will all be Admin groups only that only allow Admins to post. It will be one way push notifications.

CS Lewis said *“What you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing; it also depends on what sort of a person you are”*. He would probably add today that it also depends on your Facebook friends or WhatsApp contacts. Skinder and gossip are not part of the St Andrew’s DNA. I expect the boys, the staff and the parents of the school to refrain from rumours and skinder. Please don’t involve yourself in negative ‘car park chatter’ / WhatsApp talk. Rumour mongering or ‘carpark chatter’ can tear a school apart. The staff and I are always accessible to you, and you are welcome to book an appointment to come and discuss a concern or bring suggestions on where we can improve. We are here to work with you. If someone starts a concern with “everyone”, that is your cue to really interrogate what is being said. All too often “everyone” arrives in my office speaking from two mouths only...

I want to thank you for your patience and support as we move towards improving our communication channels over the next couple months.

Let us remember to do as the Prophet Micah taught us; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

Last week in my newsletter I spoke to how communication in the school will be changing by the end of this term. I also spoke about the fact that the staff and I are readily available and my door is always open. I always welcome any opportunity to have a chat and to share a cuppa coffee with St Andrew's families. Last year I was spoilt by one of our families who brought me special Greek coffee – what a treat.

Service is a key component of our St Andrew's DNA. Over this term we have been involved in Blood drives and have supported Flip Flop Day and on Friday we will be supporting the Shavethon. Muhammad Ali said ***“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.”***

Last year at our Senior Interact dinner, I heard for the first time about a concept of a test that we could apply to the things we think, say or do. I came across this concept again last week in conversation with a mentor of mine. Have you heard of the Rotary Four-Way Test of the things we think, say or do. **Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?** The Rotary Four-Way Test is one of the world's most widely printed and quoted statements of business ethics, which was created in 1932 by Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor (who later served as RI president) when he was asked to take charge of a company that was facing bankruptcy. This 24-word test for employees to follow in their business and professional lives became the guide for sales, production, advertising, and all relations with dealers and customers, and the survival of the company is credited to this simple philosophy.

Adopted by Rotary in 1943, The Four-Way Test has been translated into more than a hundred languages and published in thousands of ways. At St Andrew's it is my wish that all members of our community apply this Four-Way test to all we think, say or do.

Everything we do at St Andrew's is based on **RELATIONSHIPS** and these relationships are built on **TRUST**. The Rotary Four-Way Test is a wonderful way to guide us in maintaining positive relationships. These relationships are built by the entire community of parents, boys, staff and Old Boys etc. This is why I have targeted the House structure at St Andrew's as a means to improve relationships and create a sense of belonging for all boys in the school.

I want to move away from the concept of Sport Houses, to the concept of Day Houses. Over the last two weeks we have invited families to join us for House Braai's in the Senior Grades and a House Picnic in the Junior Grades. Our families at Little Saints also enjoyed a Water Fun Day. We have introduced House Meetings at both the Senior and Junior Grades, and appointed Heads of the Houses and teams of teachers for every House. The Inter-House competition has been expanded to include Academics, Culture, Service and Sport giving boys the opportunity to get involved in multiple activities at school. Last year the school management teams went away for a strategic planning weekend where we mapped out the direction we were wanting to take for the House Structure and Pastoral Care at the school.

We are only in the initial stages of where I am wanting to go with the House Structure. Eventually, I want the Houses (staff and boys) meeting daily at the start and end of the school day. We will have Houses headed by House Prefects and each House will have its committee operational which will enable boys to take on leadership positions and learn new skills.

I want to set up fully equipped House venues for all the houses that provide a space for boys to meet before and after school, essentially a HOME venue with entertainment for the boys

and a space from where homework can be done. I personally cannot wait till we get to that point and I am very excited by the progress we are making.

Barack Obama said ***“And so my job is to make sure that we have a North star out there. There gonna be times where my preferred option, what I’m absolutely positive is right, I can’t get done. And so then, it makes sense for me to tack a little bit this way, or tack a little bit that way, because I am keeping my eye on the long term, on the long fight...”*** My goal is clear. I want to create a school where every member of the school community experiences a sense of belonging and a genuine connection to our wonderful school. My aim is to achieve this through our House structure. Our journey has only just begun. There will be times we need to change direction slightly, but my eyes are fixed on the end goal. Let us continue to work to work together at building relationships at St Andrew’s.

Let us remember to do as the Prophet Micah taught us; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

“Ours is a brotherhood that transcends race, gender and creed”.

Should you take a trip to Simon's Town in Cape Town, you will come across a 2-m tall bronze statue created by former Navy diver Otto Du Plessis. On the statue is a plaque that reads, “This statue stands as a symbol to all past, present and future South African Navy divers. We protect and serve confident in the knowledge that there will always be a fellow diver looking out for us. Ours is a ‘brotherhood’ that transcends race, gender and creed.”

The image of the Navy diver conjures up images of brave men, heroes, the best of the best. For those of you, of my ilk and older you may recall a movie called Men of Honor, a 2000 American drama *film*, starring Robert De Niro and Cuba Gooding Jr. In the movie Carl Brashear says “Forgive me sir, but to me, the Navy isn't a business. It's an organization of people who represent the finest aspects of our nation.”

A picture of this famous statue was sent on to me by one of the staff who recently visited Cape Town, remarking that the quote, reminded her of what we were wanting to achieve at St Andrew's. We strive to create a brotherhood that transcends race, gender, creed and generations. A brotherhood that links past and present into a school community and family who represent the finest aspects of our nation. Everything we do is aimed at building and strengthening relationships and our brotherhood.

Our brotherhood gives the boys an opportunity to experience a sense of belonging. We pride ourselves in understanding boys and know that boys yearn for a sense of belonging because it is an important part of living a full life and it contributes to feelings of self-worth and acceptance. Social connections established through belonging to a group are important in developing and maintaining a healthy, well-adjusted emotional life, especially in the early years of a boy's life. At St Andrew's we aim to achieve this sense of belonging and identity through our House structure. Every learner at school is allocated a House and by default becomes a member of a family. We meet regularly in Houses, whereby the House Heads and teams of teachers touch base with learners and reinforce this sense of belonging to a family. The learners need for a sense of belonging is met through this connection to a House and the brotherhood at St Andrew's is cemented.

As mentioned in my previous newsletter, I have identified the House structure and building relationships as my North Star. The House structure puts our boys first, creating a sense of identity and belonging to something bigger than the individual. It is through the House structure that we build our relationships. We are now almost at the end of the first term, and I have enjoyed watching the House system evolve. Houses are meeting weekly, and boys are wearing the house colours with pride. The Inter House competition has heated up generating interest and excitement from the entire school community. The House structure and brotherhood has become part of everyday speak at St Andrew's. This is true for the little ones in Little Saints to the big brothers in Matric. I am thankful for the support and input received from all constituents of the St Andrew's family.

Kathy Bartilson says “By practicing brotherhood, we set a good example for those around us and in return we feel a sense of self-fulfilment for having aided a fellow human being”. In an age with a focus on toxic masculinity, we need to be producing good men. At Saints, our brotherhood reminds our boys that they are not alone. Our brotherhood ensures our boys stay on track by giving them perspective about what is important in life, further enhancing everything they have learned when grown up. Our boys learn from our family about how a man should lead and act.

Let us continue to strive to create a brotherhood that transcends race, gender, creed and generations and to do as the Prophet Micah requires of us; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

Let us remember to do as the Prophet Micah taught us; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

“He Aint Heavy, He’s My Brother”

In 1945, Joe O'Donnell took a photo of a young Japanese boy standing at attention after having brought his dead younger brother to a cremation pyre. O'Donnell, was sent by the U.S. military to document the damage inflicted on the Japanese homeland caused by air raids of firebombs and atomic bombs.

In the photo, the boy stands erect and at attention, having done his duty by bringing his dead brother to a cremation ground. Standing at attention was an obvious military influence. **Years later O'Donnell spoke to a Japanese interviewer about this picture** and said that, “the boy was biting his lips so hard to keep from crying that the blood was dripping from the corner of his mouth”. It was then that the guard asked him for the body and said, “Give me the load you are carrying on your back.” And the boy answered: “He aint heavy, he is my brother”. He handed over the body, turned around and left...

In the 1940s, the words, adapted as “He ain't heavy, Father, he's my brother”, were taken as a slogan for Boys Town children's home by founder Father Edward Flanagan. According to the Boys Town website, the phrase as used by Boys Town was said to Fr. Flanagan in 1918 by one of the residents while carrying another up a set of stairs. The boy being carried is said to have had polio and worn leg braces.

On Sunday, we came together, to unveil the Covid-19 fountain plaque at our Chapel and commemorate the members of our St Andrew's family who lost their lives in this Pandemic. The idea of the fountain was born in 2020 and it was built by Mr Charles Du Preez. On Sunday we were able to fulfil this idea.

The occasion was overseen by Revd. Steenbok, who once again spoke of the fact that we are family and that we are going to need one another. The Covid-19 plaque was unveiled by Mr Forster, who acted as headmaster during this time and the names of those lost was unveiled by Mr Bridger, Chairman of the Old Boys Central Committee. It was a touching moment sitting beside families, in commemoration of their loved ones.

Afterwards Revd. Ashe and I spoke again about the effects of this pandemic and he poignantly ended saying “I don't think we realize how deeply people have been scarred and traumatized”. Similarly, I could not help but feel the weight of the surreal feeling of duty, having to do a dedication, similar to those of previous heads of St Andrew's, who spoke of commemorating and remembering those who then had fallen in the great wars. It is my hope that the fountain will continue to be a beacon of hope for the future and a symbol of remembrance for those who lost their lives and suffered during this Pandemic.

We have travelled a long road of uncertainty through this Pandemic, carrying burdens of our own and that of others, calling on our own strength and that of others. The Pandemic has seen the best and worst of us. We are now slowly clawing our way out of that once dark hole. What is important to remember is that the healing only starts now – we have a long road ahead of us, and we all need to look to help a brother/sister in need. Our service on Sunday reminded me of the lyrics to He Aint Heavy, He's My Brother, sung by The Hollies. ***“And the load, doesn't weigh me down at all, He ain't heavy he's my brother”.***

Brotherhood is central to our DNA at St Andrew's. The boys will tell you that I tell them every day that we are brothers and we need to look out for one another. Everything we do at St Andrew's is based on building relationships. Relationships are now more important than

ever. After two long years, relationships are critical to start the healing process. This is why we are emphasizing our House structure, which gives the boys a sense of identity and belonging.

We constantly need to be looking out for our brothers/sisters who are struggling. It is my hope that the words of ***“He Aint Heavy, He’s My Brother”*** will act as a guide to allow our light to shine brightly in the lives of others.

I hope to hear ***“He Aint Heavy, He’s My Brother”***

link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifyUPYXwdlc>, played in private or in your office this week, and hope that it brings a smile to your face and a sense of resolve to continue to “Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with God” in helping our brothers/sisters.

I wish all St Andrew’s families a blessed and restful holiday.

Issue 28

12 April 2022

Welcome back St Andrew's family. It is good to be back at school. The start of the term is always a wonderful period because the school is re-energized again. It is an opportunity to reconnect with those who are important to our daily lives. I want to wish the St Andrew's family a happy and successful term. This is certainly a jam packed term. We will be writing exams and are also involved in four derby interschool weekends. All of this is contributing to the excitement and energy around school.

Have you heard the song ***"Man in the Mirror"*** sung by Michael Jackson. He sings:

*I'm starting with the man in the mirror
I'm asking him to change his ways
And no message could've been any clearer
If they wanna make the world a better place
Take a look at yourself and then make a change.*

The song is essentially about realizing that if you are wanting to make a change (in anything); it starts with you. This is a wonderful and powerful message. All too often we "dodge" accountability. It is easier to make it the responsibility of others. It is easier to blame others. However at the end of the day you cannot "dodge" the man in the mirror. When I was younger my father taught me this lesson long before I had heard the song. He said I could fool all others but I could not fool myself. He said that if I could look myself in the mirror, and say I gave it my all and tried my best, then I had nothing to worry about. My best was good enough for him and importantly for me.

This week Revd. Steenbok and I spoke to the boys about their report cards. Our message to the boys was clear:

1. You are worth so much more than a piece of paper and a mark on a report card.
2. What does the man in the mirror have to say about the report in your hand?
3. You are starting the term with a blank page and it is a term filled with possibilities.

On Friday report cards were handed out to the boys. Every report came across my desk for signature and comment. I am proud of the efforts of the boys and staff.

Part of our DNA at St Andrew's is that we are able to be honest with the man in the mirror. The St Andrew's family can account for themselves and don't shirk responsibility. When you stand before the man in the mirror, it is my hope that you will be able to answer in the affirmative when asked whether you Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.

Last week I spoke of Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror" and taking accountability. One can fool many people, but one cannot fool oneself. Often it takes courage and can be quite daunting when you need to look yourself in the mirror and be honest with oneself.

The scene is the 1994 World Cup final. Full time as well as the 30 minutes extra time had also elapsed. Up steps the darling of a nation - the second striker playing at number 10, the most loved of all footballers in Italy - to take to take a penalty that would reverberate around the world. Four penalties in, and Brazil are leading Italy three goals to two. Baggio needs to score this goal to ensure that Italy force Brazil into taking the fifth penalty, that if scored Brazil would win in any case. The commentator says as Baggio places the ball and starts his run up "The odds have swung wildly against Italy. Roberto Baggio, the saviour of Italy throughout this tournament". He's missed it and Brazil win the world cup. Baggio stays rooted to the spot".

There is a famous picture of Roberto Baggio staring down at the ground, Brazilians celebrating in the background, swathed with supporters in a jam-packed stadium. Baggio was arguably the best player on the field. Baggio when later interviewed says that "I missed that penalty every day for four years. Four years later, I chose to take another penalty. How many people watching, believed I could do it; I will never know. What matters is that I believed." Four years later, Italy found themselves trailing Chile in the group B clash 1-2. Baggio from the right-hand side of the field forced a penalty and once again stepped up to take a penalty. I remember watching both these matches as a young boy.

The man known as Il Divin Codino ("the Divine Ponytail"), played 56 matches for Italy scoring 27 goals and is the fourth-highest goal scorer. He starred in three world cups and is the only Italian to have scored in three world cups and with nine goals holds the record for the most goals scored in World Cup tournaments for Italy. Baggio had to face the man in the mirror, he chose to believe, when many others did not believe. Often, we fail in the goals we set for ourselves. It is then that we come to stand before the "Man in the Mirror" where face a choice. We can choose to blame others, blame circumstances and make excuses or we can choose to believe in ourselves and try again. John C. Maxwell says, "Fail early, fail often, but always fail forward".

At St Andrew's our boys are encouraged to make mistakes in a safe environment. Failure is not the end, but rather a choice to fail forward. A choice to try again and never give up. Missing a goal set in a test or assignment, missing a goal of making a particular sporting team, missing a goal of behaving in a manner expected, is an opportunity. An opportunity to do as Baggio did by believing in himself and making a choice to try again.

I also hope that daily you will make the choice to do as the Prophet Micah expects; "Do justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

With the admissions season upon us, families are frenetically preparing their applications to their school of choice. Daily I receive visits from parents desperate to get their children into St Andrew's.

Who are we? We are **The Saints**. The Royal Blue Army. The Bianco-Blu. Our boys are unmistakably recognizable by their **Royal Blue Blazers** and **"Iconic" Bashers** (semi-formal hat) and most importantly by their **Gentlemanly Conduct**. Our boys are friendly, greet adults, have manners, are well-dressed, respect one-another, are resilient and are neat in appearance. We are a family and a brotherhood. We live out our Christian values in our daily lives.

One of the most important decisions you will ever make is choosing your School. Many people will be only too keen to tell you which is the best school in the Free State. There are many outstanding schools in this area and no particular school is right for every boy. Our job is to deliver the right school to the right boy. Choosing a school is very much like choosing between a Mercedes Benz, a BMW or a Volvo. They are all very much the same, but different. It's what makes us different, why families choose us.

When choosing a school, I say to the parents and the boys, that they must choose a school where they are comfortable. They need to feel comfortable standing next to the families of the school on Saturday mornings, when supporting our sports teams. St Andrew's is a school for the "gewone mens". We are ordinary people who buy into the Christian ethos of one of the oldest traditional boys schools in the country. We are an English school for boys from different cultural, racial and language backgrounds, and it is our diversity that is our strength. At St Andrew's our boys and families come together as the St Andrew's family, and our boys live out this brotherhood daily.

St Andrew's is built upon our Christian, Academic, Sport, Culture, Service and Community and House pillars. This week we look at Boarding and Academic.

- Our beloved Chapel is the heart of the school and for that reason, was built at the centre of the school. Daily we emphasize Christian values of Love, Respect, Trust, Compassion, Kindness, Peace, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Goodness.
- The academic development of our boys is our priority. We have small classes. Our teachers are hand-picked from the best available. Our teachers believe in our boys; they push and challenge our boys academically and go beyond the set curriculum. Lessons are conducted in English as the medium of instruction, and support is given to those who are not first language English speakers. English as medium of instruction, opens opportunities both locally and internationally post school.
- Our Boarding Houses cater for learners from Grades 1-7 (Junior), 8-9 (Intermediate) and 10-12 (Senior). We provide a *"Home Away from Home"* environment with dedicated live-in House parents, students, tutors and staff, a full-time qualified nursing sister and in-house security with controlled access. Our Champion Dining Hall run by our Empack Group caterers, provides top quality catering and varied menus, with nutritional meals and snacks for our boarders.

Since 1863, St Andrew's School has been providing educational opportunities for boys from different faiths and cultural traditions who reside in Bloemfontein, the Free State, the other provinces of South Africa and beyond the borders of the country. We are a family and a brotherhood. We require of our boys to do daily as the Prophet Micah said; "do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Paul Coelho has written the international best seller, ***Manual of the Warrior of Light***, a book that contains inspiring short passages. In his book, we are invited to embark on the way of the warrior and follow the light. When I read this book, I cannot help but draw similarities and relate to what we are wanting to achieve at St Andrew's.

Our motto, Fiat Lux – Let There Be Light - serves as a powerful guide and reminder of the expectation of what it means to be a St Andrew's gentleman. Anyone who enters our brotherhood, a brotherhood founded on Christian values and built on relationships, becomes a custodian of our St Andrew's values.

- *"The warrior / St Andrew's gentleman asks himself: How will this affect the fifth generation of my descendants?"* Everything a person does leaves enduring consequences. At St Andrew's we raise men to understand this and work towards leaving a better world behind. Our Old Boys and the current generation are closely linked by the fabric of our Royal Blue Blazers. Since 1863, generations of Old Boys and staff have acted as custodians of the values of St Andrew's aimed towards leaving a better St Andrew's and world for those who follow in our footsteps.
- *"The warrior / St Andrew's gentleman knows that the most important words in all languages are the small words. Yes. Love. God."* Our chapel at the centre of our campus, is the heart of our school. St Andrew's boys are encouraged to love one another, look out for one another and to live as brothers. St Andrew's boys know that small words and actions can fill vast empty spaces. Yes, St Andrew's brothers are always there for one another.
- *"The warrior / St Andrew's gentleman is not a coward."* We raise our boys to stand for what is right. Integrity is one of the core values of what it means to be a St Andrew's gentleman. We raise our boys in courage. The origin of the word 'courage' comes from 'cor' meaning a 'heart' i.e. courage comes from what you really believe in your heart. We also encourage our boys to make mistakes at school and learn from these, and to always walk in honesty and truth. St Andrew's gentlemen find joy in the Good Fight. Our boys are raised to take responsibility for everything they do.
- *"The warrior / St Andrew's gentleman knows that an angel and a devil are both competing for his sword hand."* In a complicated world, we are faced by decisions daily. We can choose to be the light or the darkness. We can choose to heal or hurt. At St Andrew's we send out men who understand the difference, men who choose the hand of the angel. Our boys are encouraged to live out our motto daily – Let There Be Light.
- *"The warrior / St Andrew's gentleman is always trying to improve".* We raise our boys to be resilient. Boys are encouraged to fail and learn from their mistakes. Our boys don't give up. Failure is seen as part of the process towards achieving success at the end of the day - be it in academic tests and assignments or sports matches.
- *"The warrior / St Andrew's gentleman knows that no man is an island".* St Andrew's boys are part of a brotherhood. We are family and we depend on one another at St Andrew's. Included in this family are our Old Boys and parents.
- *"A warrior / St Andrew's gentleman knows that he has much to be grateful for".* Our boys understand the privilege and responsibility of attending a school like St Andrew's. Daily our boys thank their teachers, coaches and parents because they understand that they have much to be thankful for. At St Andrew's gratitude is an attitude that is lived out daily.

At St Andrew's we raise warriors of the light. Men who stand for what is right and just, men who make a positive difference daily, men who choose to be the light for others. In our village, everyone has a role to play in raising our warriors of the light. It is through our

relationships, our brotherhood and our values that our St Andrew's boys are equipped to be warriors of light.

St Andrew's men are known for living out our school motto - Let There Be Light. St Andrew's men choose to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

A leader is a change maker. A leader is a person who uses their inner spark to make a difference. I believe that inner spark is found inside every one of us. A leader uses their realm of influence to impact those around them. Our great leaders like Madiba and Reverend Tutu impact millions. Whilst Madiba and Reverend Tutu sent waves of change throughout world, we too have the ability to make waves. It is what we do daily. I love the quote from Batman where Bruce Wayne says to Commissioner Gordon, "A hero can be anyone. Even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting their coat around a young boy's shoulders to let him know the world hadn't ended."

"The Leader Who Had No Title" is a book written by Robin Sharma. In his book, Sharma says the first thing you need to remember is that no matter who you are, you have the power to show leadership. Every one of us has this leader inside of us. Step 1 is having the awareness and commitment to show leadership in everything that you do. Being a leader means firstly, you have a great attitude and commit to doing great work and leading by example. Ultimately you use your life for a meaningful purpose. Unfortunately it does also happen that people blame and play the victim. Sharma says that a lot of people suffer from this dreaded disease called "victimitis excusitis". A priority for any leader is to assume personal responsibility and stop making excuses.

This past weekend I dropped my son at a birthday party for one of our young men in Grade 3. His birthday party was held at a Restoration Centre in Bloemenda. In his invitation this young man asked for second hand clothing and shoes of various sizes as his birthday gift. He had invited thirty children from an orphanage to his party. There were clowns, games, cake and food – everything you would expect at a party. The difference was that on arrival, the second hand clothes were packed out and displayed on a table. The clothing would later be distributed to the orphans in attendance. On enquiring a little more, I found out that this young man and his mother feed 350 malnourished children weekly. What a wonderful example set by this young man. He is an example of a leader: using his inner spark to make a difference for the better.

At St Andrew's it is our job is to grow leaders. A boy who leaves St Andrew's is one destined to live a life of purpose and meaning and live as Ghandi said *"be the change you want to see in the world"*. At St Andrew's, leadership is a mindset and a way of being that is instilled in every boy. I take great pleasure in watching the boys and staff fan the flames of their inner spark and become change makers.

In a recent meeting, Roy Gordon former headmaster of St Andrew's, told me that as head and leader of the school, "you cannot suffer from self-pity and paranoia". When doubt sets in look to that inner spark for strength. John C Maxwell says *"Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another."* Let us continue do to do as the Prophet Micah said "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

One day I hope to climb into my own classic Ford Shelby GT500 Mustang. Black with white racing stripes down the centre. Oh the roads we will travel. The roar of the engine. Victoria Erikson says "Road trips are the equivalent of human wings." I so love a good road trip. What's inside this beast is a 28 CID engine with two 600-CFM Holley carburetors, rated at 355 hp and 420 lb-ft of torque, paired with a choice of a four-speed manual or a three-speed automatic (a really big and powerful engine). When you start this engine it is unmistakable.

This week, I spent the week speaking with the boys about the fact that it is what is inside that is important. Imagine climbing into the Mustang, full of expectation, turning the key, and there is nothing. Yes, from the outside everything seems good and well, but when it comes to turning the key there is nothing. With no engine you just have a shell. You aren't going on no road trip. It's the V8 Engine, found inside, that's where the magic lies.

At St Andrew's, our chapel is the heart of our school. This is where the magic lies. Together with the chapel, our values of brotherhood built on relationships and excellence in all we do (academic, sporting, culture and outreach), is what drives our school. Without these values, our school would be a cold shell. This is our DNA, this is what makes St Andrew's, St Andrew's. A St Andrew's man is recognizable by his Royal Blue attire and the way in which he conducts himself. He himself is a classic of our modern era. That is why people often comment on what it is that we are doing at St Andrew's. They can simply relate and appreciate that which we hold dear; manners, friendly, respectful etc.

There was a period in the 1980s, however, when Ford considered the Mustang to be more of an anachronism than a path forward. An anachronism is a thing belonging or appropriate to a period other than that in which it exists, especially a thing that is conspicuously old-fashioned. How true is this of modern society? Traditional Boys' schools are increasingly under fire and considered anachronistic. Religion is being attacked. Left Vs Right Culture Wars are raging across society. Is there hope for our boys?

At St Andrew's we raise our boys to be men. Good men, good brothers, good fathers, good husbands and good citizens. Or boys are raised to be aware of the privilege and responsibility they carry as men, in an era where society is suspect of the very concept of them being a male. We believe in the inherent value, goodness and worth of our boys. We believe in traditional values that will stand the test of time. A classic like the Mustang, much like St Andrew's will never be replaced. Yes, the body shape may change and the engine modernized, but what is inside remains iconic.

There are several versions of why the famous Mustang (logo) was drawn running from right to left. One of them is that it simply was a mistake on the part of the artist. My favourite explanation, probably because I associate it with St Andrew's, is that it symbolizes the car's free spirit, showing the horse running in the opposite direction from others. At St Andrew's we do things differently. Our actions are always guided by our motto "Fiat Lux" - Let There Be Light and daily we require of our boys to "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Jenn McKinlay says "Road trips require a couple of things: a well-balanced diet of caffeine, salt and sugar and an excellent selection of tunes."

I love the majesty of bridges. I remember being woken on road trips as a youngster, as we approached a bridge, and the excitement that welled up in me as I looked out whilst crossing over.

To this day, I still get excited when I see a bridge in the distance. I love looking at the way they are constructed; the main components of a bridge being the foundation, substructure, and the superstructure. I love the history attached to particular bridges and I love the variety of different designs from big to small, from arch to suspension bridges.

On a road trip to Aliwal North, I had the pleasure of staying at a guest house on the Orange River. Not too far in the distance was the General Hertzog Bridge, a truss bridge, designed and built by the public works department in the years 1935-1937. The General Hertzog Bridge links the Free State and the Eastern Cape.

Reflecting on the bridge in the distance, I could not help but think of the quote by Joseph Newton who said, "Men build too many walls and not enough bridges." How much better would the world be, if instead of building walls we built bridges?

I would like to think of St Andrew's as a bridge built in 1863 to bring people together. Much like bridges, the foundation of St Andrew's is our Chapel. Our chapel is at the heart of our school and is at the very core of all we do, driving the ethos and culture of our school. It provides stability and strength from the ground up. Our foundation established by our founding fathers is properly built, keeping our bridge well supported.

The substructure of St Andrew's is our Academics, Sport, Service and Cultural Pillars. The role of the substructure is that it supports the superstructure and distributes the load to the bridge footings and foundation. At St Andrew's we turn out well rounded young men, who are expected to be involved in all our pillars.

A superstructure is the main span and upward extension of the existing structure, and it serves the purpose of the structure's intended use i.e., creating a link from one side to another. The superstructure of St Andrew's comprises the people – the boys, the staff, the parents and the old boys all working together, all supporting one another, all with a role to play.

At St Andrew's everything we do is based on relationships. We are a brotherhood, and we are family. Without relationships, we don't serve the intended purpose of the school which is to turn out men of character, men who build bridges instead of walls, men who work to serve others, men who are good husbands, good fathers and good brothers.

In an increasingly Godless world, a world where differences are being highlighted and conflict is par for the course, we choose instead to turn out bridge builders. Our young men go out with the aim of bringing people together. My role as headmaster is to bring people together with a focus on getting our relationships right.

Martin Luther King Jnr. said, "Let's build bridges, not walls." and Bruce Jackson said, "Bridges are perhaps the most invisible form of public architecture." – I could not agree more.

It is my hope that more people will come to ask themselves whether their actions and decisions will add value and build or whether their actions and decisions will destroy and

breakdown, whenever faced with a choice. If we could all choose to build, we would be left with a much better world. Our boys are encouraged daily to be on the lookout for their brothers.

They are encouraged daily to make the right choice and build. They are encouraged to “Do justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

When you Google the definition of the word Brotherhood you are provided with the following options: The quality or state of being Brothers and 2. Fellowship and Alliance. At St Andrew's we are brothers, we are family. The fabric of our royal blue blazers join generations together. At St Andrew's we do "Brotherhood".

When walking back through the campus, after an evening meeting, I came across two beautiful examples of our brotherhood in action. The first example was one where two of our Grade 7's boys were playing on the rugby field. Chatting to the parent of the one boy waiting at her car, she told me that he son refused to go home until his friends' parents had arrived to collect him. In the middle of the campus, I came across a grade 9 boy sitting with a grade 2 boy. The taxi of the grade 2 boy had not arrived, and the grade 9 sat with this boy waiting for his lift. He took this boy to our dining room and made sure he had a warm meal before going home. How proud I am to be associated with this brotherhood. We are definitely doing something right.

I want to share another story of brotherhood. On Monday morning, Colin Hickling, our "Godfather" of St Andrew's, and one of our elder brothers contacted me and asked me if I was aware of an article in the media where a young boy in Grade 7 spoke of his desire to attend St Andrew's. The article speaks about a talented artist, who sells his paintings and contributes the proceeds to charity. He has donated in excess of R20 000 already. On Tuesday morning, we reached out to his school, and to our delight the headmistress, Mrs Fredericks and his grade 3 teacher, Mrs van Niekerk arrived to personally introduce Siyabonga to me. Siyabonga's talent was recognized by his grade 3 teacher, who encouraged him in his passion. Mrs Fredericks tells me, that when she heard that St Andrew's had called, she went to Mrs van Niekerk to share the story, and Mrs van Niekerk simply fell to the floor on her knees thanking God that their prayers were answered.

Siyabonga arrived to my office with a big smile on his face, with both Mrs Fredericks and Mrs Van Niekerk in support. I enjoyed chatting to this young man, and can attest to the quality of his works. The cherry on top was when his teachers showed me a portrait this young man, had done of me in barely an hour. I was blown away, and will be framing his "incomplete" piece as he put it. I took the opportunity to call my matric art teacher, Ms Muller, who is also a matric examiner, and she confidently told me that this boy is drawing at a level way beyond his years. Based on my interactions with this young man, having heard his story, and along with the support of his teachers I jumped at the opportunity to accept this young man into our family. But wait, there is more... In the true spirit of giving and concern for others, Siyabonga brought his friend Khosi along, who is the current head boy of the school he attends. Whilst Siyabonga is a very talented artist, Khosi is an exceptional leader. We are launching a campaign **"Fund Our Saints"** so as to ensure the families of these boys don't have to worry about fees. See info below on how to support.

It is funny how life works. Good things do happen to good people. As the two boys left my office, I walked a father of St Andrew's who came in to discuss a matter with me. As things would happen, we started chatting about the amazing two learners and their teachers who had just visited my office. I told the father about their story and the fact that I was accepting these two boys irrespective of the fact that these parents would struggle to meet the financial obligation. I made the point that I was going to reach out to our Saints community to secure the funding these two boys needed over their 5 year stay with us. This same father, later the day, sent me confirmation of a R10 000 donation towards these boys. I am sure that Siyabonga and Khosi will live out our motto "Fiat Lux – Let There Be Light". Welcome to the family boys!

Our brotherhood, is a cornerstone of St Andrew's. Our community serves as a shining light and beacon of hope to others, in a turbulent and uncertain world. Our community strives to do daily as the Prophet Micah requires of us; *"To do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God"*.

The word sensitive comes from Latin, *sensitivus* “meaning capable of sensation” or *sensus* which means to “feel or perceive”. At St Andrew’s, it is our aim to raise young men who are sensitive and aware. I believe these are two very important character traits that we need to nurture and develop when raising boys to men. Paul Revington, who I worked with, and is now Head Coach of Great Britain Hockey, always spoke of being aware of your surroundings. I found this powerful, because it forces you to become aware of and sensitive to (**your impact on**) your surroundings.

I have been walking the campus in the mornings with my dogs and have been watching small patches of frost develop across the campus. This past week, the winter bite set in. On Tuesday morning, I found the fields totally covered in the first Winter frost. I found myself chuckling, as I watched my dogs walking funnily across the frost – they have never experienced frost under paw before. I was also entertained by my one hound, speeding along the field and diving onto the grass and sliding along like a naughty school boy, followed by her treating me to her version of a “snow angel”. I must say, I am not used to the cold weather any more.

I decided earlier this term to take my daughter to school every morning. It is an opportunity for me to catch up with her and spend some quality time in the car. She sits smiling wryly at me when I sing to her, and she always turns the radio down when we stop at Eunice and she needs to climb out. I think she worries that I might sing to her in front of her friends, or play the music too loudly attracting unwanted attention from the other Grade 7’s. One of the things that I appreciate about our time together is that my daughter keeps me sensitized.

From a very young age, my daughter has been aware and sensitive to the needs of others – it is such a wonderful quality. Nothing much has changed. One morning on the way to school, she became aware of and subsequently made me aware of a young man standing on the corner in the freezing cold. Save to say our coffee date for two, has now become coffee for three daily. Our country provides us with so many opportunities to impact the lives of others. One of the problems is that with the plethora of opportunities we become desensitized and unaware of those in need. How often do we stop at the robot and ignore or pretend not to see the person standing at the car window. How often do we frown upon the vagrant sleeping on our street corner. We live in a time where we simply cannot afford to become desensitized and unaware of the pain and suffering of our fellow persons.

Service is one of our core values at St Andrew’s. Our boys and families are encouraged to get involved in the various service drives – and we have a lot of opportunity to get involved. I wonder sometimes, whether families feel overwhelmed by the initiatives of our service committee, but I am always amazed at the overwhelming response of our community. It is an expectation of every St Andrew’s boy to be involved in service. Currently we are encouraging the St Andrew’s community to get involved in our **Winter Blanket Collection** and our **“Fund Our Saints”** Campaign – where we are raising funds towards two deserving learners.

Albert Einstein said *“It is every man’s obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it.”* How much better would the world be if we put back at least as much love, care and concern for others as we took out of it...

At St Andrew’s our boys have a responsibility to be sensitive to and aware of others. Our boys have a responsibility to put back light into the world and to *“Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”*.

The word shepherd comes from the Old English *sceaphierde* : *sheepherder*. Such a person protects sheep from animals that would attack them, keeps them from wandering, and otherwise takes care of the flock. When I think of this word, I think of our Chaplain, Rev. Ashe Steenbok. Our own Shepherd, a wise sage and a great man who carries a big stick (ready to beat off any wanting to inflict hurt on our family). I wish Rev. Ashe could see himself the way we as a school community see him. I thought it apt to share my insights into our Chaplain.

I consider myself privileged having arrived at St Andrew's at the same time as Rev. Steenbok. Our paths to St Andrew's were set in motion many years ago. Our stories are different, but very similar. We have spent countless hours working out how it was that we would end up here together. It is funny how things have a way of working themselves out. I often wonder what it was that leadership saw in this NG Kerk Dominiee and a young headmaster to lead this prestigious school. I wonder whether we interviewed the same. I am fairly convinced we probably did, because we both value people and relationships. I'm a great believer in destiny, and my understanding of destiny is probably best summarized by this anonymous quote "*It might take a year, it might take a day, but what's meant to be will always find its way.*" Taking over as the head of St Andrew's has been the most challenging and rewarding work experience in my life. I feel the great responsibility of leading an entire community weighing on my shoulders. The weight of this responsibility is shared by my brother, Ashe.

Every morning we catch up with each other in the chapel for a quick "*check in*", as Ashe goes about preparing his daily message for the boys. Ashe has a way of connecting with the boys. He speaks to them at a level that they understand, and speaks to them in a genuine and authentic manner. He has the ability to pitch his message to both the senior and the junior boys depending on who is in front of him. He equates this himself as a chef preparing an old school home cooked dinner (sometimes traditional) – the kind we all long for, and on other occasions that much needed junk food fix (light and zesty), that one picks up at the local drive through.

Much like the boys and staff, I am always excited to hear what biblical story he will be sharing. Ashe, like me, also loves to share lessons learnt in his home whilst growing up in Cape Town. I am sure that his father, who also was a minister would be smiling down on him as he watched Ashe in action. You should see him at Little Saints, entertaining the youngsters with stories and costumes. The boys have been treated to a fireman and batman costume to swords and guns. I am sure these boys of Little Saints go home and tell fantastical stories to their parents and siblings.

As Cape Townians do, Ashe and I always connect after chapel for a cuppa coffee first thing. We use this as an opportunity to 'gesels' about everything and nothing. Often we sit in my office, but at other times we pull the chairs out into the corridor and chat to those who pass by. I can just imagine what the teachers or a passing parent must be thinking... This short space presents us with an chance to "check" one another. It also gives us an opportunity to breathe and contextualize where we are as a school (and as a staff) and where it is that we are wanting to go with our community. It is after that first coffee that we are ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities the day presents.

What I enjoy about Ashe is that he does things differently. He is a disruptor of the norm. He has a genuine love for people and like me values relationships. He always speaks of Jesus

being in a hurry and moving from one place to another. Ashe is the same. He is always busy with something, but always something 'Godly'. He has changed the hearts of so many and has had a profound impact on the school community in such a small space of time. He has encouraged and managed to get the school community down on their knees and praying. He has taught us to listen for the whisper of God.

You should make a plan to come to our chapel service at 18h30 on a Sunday evening. This service is open to the community and I can assure you that you will leave richer for coming to listen to the shepherd of St Andrew's.

Our shepherd, he carries a mighty stick. His favourite verse in the bible is Psalm 124:8 *"Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."*

We are privileged to have Ashe watching over our school community. I could not do this without Ashe, my friend and brother. He inspires me by the way he 'walks the talk'. Like Ashe, I hope for all of the Saints community to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 38

21 June 2022

Dear St Andrew's families. STOP. We need to talk. "In today's rush, we all think too much – seek too much – want too much – and forget the joy of just being" – Eckhart Tolle. Being present (or living mindfully) simply means you're focused and engaged in the here and now, not distracted or mentally absent. One of my mentors offered me this piece of advice - "Make time to stop and smell the roses".

Life is hectic. We are busy. We risk losing out on moments we will never get back. Marianne Williamson says "If we miss the moment, we miss the clues. In the present, when we allow ourselves to fully live there, we are restored, made wiser, made deeper and happier". A key focus area for me at St Andrew's is building relationships with the entire school community. We cannot do this, when we are distracted. Building relationships requires us to be present in the moment.

I want for the parent community to be part of all that is on offer at St Andrew's. I want the parents standing around the sport fields supporting the Bianco-Blu (White and Blues), attending our Spelling Bee, coming to our Sunday Chapel services, being part of the Inter-House picnics and House activities and visiting me for a coffee in my office etc. Most of all, I want for the Saints parents to be present for their boys.

In a previous newsletter, I spoke about a conscious decision, to take my daughter to school every day. We use it as our "coffee date" – it is our time – and it is something I know she appreciates, because she has told me so on several occasions. I want to encourage all parents to find time for their children. Make the time to take off work to come and support your boys and to be present in the moment. I understand that there are difficulties and constraints attached to your hectic schedule, but I can assure you, that you will never regret being present.

With the change in our work environments, working from home, does not always mean more time at home (or more time being present). Our laptops and cell phones keep us constantly connected (or distracted), from what is right there in front of us. Personally, my cell phone has become a source of anxiety for me. It proves to be a constant distraction after hours - and I feel I am missing out. How much of what I have said resonates with you?

I offer some practical tips:

- Make every effort to come to school and watch your son in whatever activity he participates in. He will remember this. Boys look to see their parents (and loved ones).
- Make time during the day for your child – your own time, away from school, one on one. Be creative, you will not be disappointed.
- Set boundaries for your time on electronic devices. I have started using Flight Mode (disabling the phone's ability to connect to cellular networks and Wi-Fi) after a certain hour, and I have been able to sleep again.
- Set boundaries for your child's time on electronic devices. Insist on family time.
- Put your kids to bed at night. Read a book and tell them stories. They will forever remember it.
- Make time for yourself and switch off for a couple minutes a day – watch a movie, read a book, exercise, walk the dog sit outside or have a nap etc.
- Find a hobby and actively engage in your hobby. I love hiking and fishing.
- Spend time with your spouse or partner or loved one.

Burn out is a reality we are faced with daily. You are not alone. Our children need us now more than ever. We need to be present. We need to manage ourselves – for the good of our families. At a recent aspiring heads and deputies conference, attendees were again reminded of the importance of self-care. Part of wellness is considering other peoples' wellness and enquiring of others how they feel. It makes such a difference to my day when a colleague or parent pops their head in and checks in on me asking if I am ok or how things are going with me. Make time for others and make time to check in with others.

The Dalai Lama said "There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. One is called yesterday and the other is called tomorrow, so today is the right day to love, believe, do and mostly live". Living means being present in the moment. It is my hope for our community, that today we live in the moment and do as Prophet Micah requires of us; "Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with God".