

# Rector's Newsletter

## St Stithians College

Dear Saints family

### Easter Sports Festival

What a pleasure it was to experience my first Easter Festival as Rector. I felt tremendous pride on behalf of our institution. I deeply appreciated the team effort put in by dedicated staff, parents and alumni – this is a community occasion for us to treasure, unique on the South African schools sporting calendar. Thank you, too, to our major sponsors, led by Standard Bank. I was pleased to host our sponsors to drinks and snacks on one of the evenings. Our visitors experienced warm Saints hospitality: 1 300 players, a large complement of coaches, managers, Heads of School, and spectators in their thousands. The brilliant weather helped create a carnival atmosphere. The addition of two new codes, basketball and squash, brought new variety and buzz. The sporting encounters were entertaining and stretching – a good chemistry.

### Campus 2053

With the support of our Council Chair, Carel Nolte, and working with the College's senior staff, I have initiated a strategic conversation looking ahead to our centenary in 2053. A presentation was made to the St Stithians Council in its April meeting, and there was 'in principle' support for this initiative, currently framed as a set of questions about our educational offering and our campus master plan. Opportunities will be provided for stakeholder participation in addressing the Campus 2053 concept.

### Methodist Church Synod and the Ivory Park project

I attended sessions of the recent annual Central District Synod, chaired by Bishop Peter Witbooi. Alistair Stewart, Head of the Boy's Prep, and I presented to a plenary session the vision for a Nehemiah Primary School in Ivory Park. This is a follow-through from the five Nehemiah Pre-Schools established over the past two decades in a Methodist Church-St Stithians partnership. Boys' Prep students, staff and parents visit the pre-schools in a termly rotation, building long term relationships. Rev Gary Rivas, a Saints parent, was elected at the Synod to succeed Bishop Witbooi in 2016.

### Lebone II College

Together with Jill Wheeler (Manager: Projects and Strategy, Rector's Office) and Mel Dace (Head of the Junior Prep), I spent a stimulating day visiting Lebone, the flagship College of the Royal Bafokeng. We are advancing partnership opportunities with Lebone, building on personal relations with a number of former St Stithians staff now working at the school. Our discussions are focused on the Foundation phase, teacher and intern development programmes, and African languages. The Lebone Campus is built with a striking architecture, including a beautiful open-air amphitheatre and carefully crafted indigenous gardens – all set against a rugged rocky ridge common in the Phokeng-Rustenburg area.

### Bring back our girls

The shocking abduction by Boko Haram militants of some 300 school girls from a boarding school in Nigeria has caught the world's attention. We have responded in a variety of ways at St Stithians, seeking to highlight our support of the campaign to 'bring back' these students to their families.



### News from the Rector's office



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2014

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Editor:  
Jill Wheeler  
Rector's Office

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## Letter from the Rector (continued)

We are conscious that this tragic situation is part of far larger picture of human trafficking (particularly of girls and women) in parts of the world, and of widespread gender-based violence in our country. As we protest the abduction of the Nigerian school girls, and pray for their safe return, we take a stand at St Stithians against violence and abuse directed at girls and women in South African society. Included below in this newsletter are accounts of four events at Saints which drew attention to the Nigerian school girls. In ways such as these, and our student-led Stop Crime Initiative last term, we give expression to our concerns and rights as citizens of our country, continent and globe.

### #Bringbackourgirls – Four St Stithians events

#### Girls' College

*Mabothe Maleka, Grade 12*

On 19 May 2014 **St Stithians Girls' College** students braved the cold of a winter morning to participate in a mass protest in collaboration with other member schools of the Phoenix group. Phoenix is a group of top Johannesburg schools which organise inter school drives and community service initiatives. On this day Phoenix organized a mass protest in support of the ongoing Bring Back Our Girls campaign.

On the day girls from the St Stithians Girls' College brought posters and banners and collectively protested against the kidnapping of the Nigerian school girls by the militant Islamic group Boko Haram. Many girls felt personally affected by this event as they could identify with possibly losing fellow students and thus were motivated to take action.

The girls gathered on the side of the road at the main entrance of the school enthused and ready to protest with the support of some teachers. Girls stood on the side of the road with signs in hand and also managed to spell out "#BringBackOurGirls". The girls also encouraged passing motorists to take a stand against the situation in Nigeria by hooting their horns.

Pictures and videos from the protest from all schools were compiled into a YouTube video and sent to different media outlets, the South African Department of International Relations and the Johannesburg Nigerian embassy. We were very grateful for the support that we received from all students and motorists.

During assembly on the same day, our Gr 11 and 12 girls were asked to stand with the poster "#Bring back our girls". Their number of over 200 girls brought to mind visually to the rest of our school of over 525 girls, how many students were taken in Nigeria. Over a third of our school would be gone – a powerful depiction!

Through prayer, the abducted girls were placed in God's hands.



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## #Bringbackourgirls (continued)

### Boys' College

Ayanda Nyathi, Grade 12

This month marks almost three months since the abduction of over 200 girls by Islamic militants, Boko Haram in Nigeria. This injustice sparked global outrage, and ignited a virtual protest where hundreds of thousands across the world united to ask for the girls' return through the #BringBackOurGirls campaign. This campaign has not only shown the immense power of a hashtag in the modern world, but it also raised much awareness around some of the injustices which plague our continent.

While the reason behind the kidnapping of the girls is significant because of religious differences, one cannot ignore another pertinent social ill it speaks to, and that is the treatment of women by men in our society. As a **Boys' College**, it is important that we take the time to remember that the name of men in our society lies on our shoulders too, and that we as men, have to hold our brothers accountable, so that such crimes against women do not find their place in our communities.

And that is why we joined in with several other schools in Johannesburg, including our sister school – the Girls' College, to cry out with thousands across the globe for the safe return of those girls who were not only robbed of their freedom, but also of their futures. And as one matric boy put it (and I paraphrase): *"Even though I can't physically do anything to get those girls back, I can add my voice to those crying out for their return, that is what I can do in the here and now."*, which adequately captures the sentiment and intention behind having the campaign at the Boys' College.



### Girls' Prep

Colette Bruton

The **Girls' Prep** were aware of the 'Bring back our Girls' initiatives happening around the world and also wished to contribute. The Enrichment Committee gave the school a short presentation at Chapel, which was followed by the school standing for a minute in silence. It was a very moving moment, as 300 girls became aware of how such a tragic event could impact their school if that many girls were abducted from their community.



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## #Bringbackourgirls (continued)

### Kamoka Bush School

Kate Doyle

While the Grade 9 girls were on camp at the **Kamoka Bush School**, they engaged in a number of ways with the #bringbackourgirls campaign.

I was contacted by a Saints alumni (Kelly Leeuw) who is working on a video format collage which will be broadcast on various social platforms with photos of a girl (or girls in our case) holding a #bringbackourgirls poster. These posters also have the name of one of the abducted girls on each poster, to make it more real and personal. I asked Kelly for 6 names and asked the current grade 9 girls at Bush School if they would like to be involved. The girls were very keen to get involved. The girls then volunteered to make the posters and we then took photos of the girls in groups of up to 10 with a poster.

We also talked about the abduction and printed out information from the BBC website which discussed Boko Haram and their views on girls receiving an education. I think the fact that the girls had also just visited two educational institutions (the Marie day Care Centre and Phagameng High School) which highlighted the privileges of a St Stithians College education and heightened awareness of how many girls (and boys) around the world do not receive a decent education. As you can imagine it was quite a serious conversation, but a very important one and many girls have since made mention of it in the prayers that we say before each meal.



### Two milestones

Congratulations to our Chair of the Stithians College Council and a number of staff members for completing the Comrades marathon this past weekend. Secondly, we join Mrs Futhi Mtoba, a member of our Council, and current Chair of the Council of the University of Pretoria, in celebrating her receipt of an honorary doctorate in Commerce bestowed this past week by the University of Limpopo.

### Founders' Day

I look forward with anticipation to Founders' Day this coming weekend. It will be a great coming together of our village of schools, parents, alumni and invited guests. We will welcome Professor Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of the Witwatersrand, as our guest speaker. The weather promises to be fine but cold; the music, prayers, messages, national anthem and campus war cry will warm our hearts.

Good wishes

Dr Tim Nuttall



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## Stop Crime Initiative

Alexander Kinmont – Girls' College

On the 19th March this year, all five schools on campus came together to take part in the Stop Crime campaign. The event was initiated by an ex Girls' College pupil, who wanted to bring together all the students and staff in order to protest against the growing crime rate in our country.

Students came from far and wide. From the playgrounds of the Prep schools, to the quads and corridors of the Girls' and the Boys' Colleges; a massive body of students united themselves as one. A purpose and a will had led to the uprising of an entire campus of young minds, all to stand against something which has haunted everyone in some way or the other. With our banners blazing, our voices singing, we marched towards the field to finally take a stand.

We listened to the humble voices of speeches and prayers, reminding us of the purpose and strength of our campaign. Then, the time came for us to act.

In silence, hundreds of students stood together. A hum of anticipation rippled through the crowd.

On the count of three, the letter "S!" exploded into white, the sound bouncing off the opposite end of the field. After that, the T, then the O, then the P, all spelt out by students working as a team. Soon, STOP CRIME was projected into the endless skies. In unison, the College war cry was sung by Grade R and Matric alike, booming into the air, echoing throughout the campus; a collective cry of the youth. On the 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, St Stithians College took a stand.



Watch the video on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXRthces954>

## Easter Sports Festival

Megan van der Poll—Marketing Director

The 2014 Easter Sports Festival once again provided a weekend of great sport, entertainment and hospitality. With six different sporting codes, over 1300 participants and thousands of spectators, the campus was bustling with activity. Great matches were played, new relationships formed and many happy memories made.



Head's and students enjoying the sport



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## Easter Sports Festival (continued)

Participants travelled from all over the country to compete, and many of their supporters and families joined them. The combination of good weather, riveting sport, concerts and many refreshment choices, all added up to an unforgettable festival. This would not be achieved without the very generous support of our sponsors, in particular Standard Bank, L'Oreal, Discovery Vitality and Sandown Motors Bryanston. The various committees made up of parents, alumni and staff worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the largest event on our calendar. We look forward to meeting up again in 2015!



Some of the sporting codes



### Thandulwazi

*Bev Johnson – Foundation Director*

Congratulations to Mr Reuben Mandlazi who graduated from UNISA in April 2014 with a Bachelor of Education degree (Intermediate Phase). Reuben joined the Thandulwazi Intern-Teacher Training Programme in 2009; and completed his in-service teacher training in the Boys' College and Boys' Prep, where he was also actively involved as a cricket coach. Reuben was awarded a Bachelor of Education Degree at the end of 2013. Nicknamed "professor" by his friends, Reuben grew up in Soweto and attended Thutolore High School in Meadowlands. Writing of his experience on the Thandulwazi Intern Programme at Saints, Reuben commented: "it has been a wonderful experience, especially working with people who care so much."



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## Thandulwazi (continued)

This year, Reuben has enrolled for a BA Honours (Sports Management) through the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and has continued to coach cricket at the Boys' College.

Well done, Reuben – we are proud of you!

Reuben at his recent graduation



## Interns

Kim Urquhart— HR Director

An integral component of the St Stithians community engagement programme is the development of skilled, young teachers. As part of this programme there are 25 interns working and studying at the College this year. Each newsletter we draw on their experiences and demonstrate the value of this programme in changing the face of education and assisting young people to enhance their careers.

One of our interns tells his story:

*“ When I was in Grade 7, my father passed away. I never understood why and at that moment my life spiralled out of control. However, high school was not an easy road for me. Firstly, I was the son of a domestic worker in a school filled with rich children. I wanted to fit in and most of the time I would fall short. Sometimes, I went to school without lunch or tuck-shop money. I travelled daily from Orange farm to Linmeyer. I left home at 5:30am and come back at 17:30 every day.*

*I joined an organisation known as ‘Reach for Life’. It is aimed at teaching the youth about drug abuse. I spent most of my breaks writing poetry and drama plays on drug awareness, teenage pregnancy and as a result I was the new Reach for Life ambassador. It was then when I realised that my calling was to help the youth. Young achievers gave me an opportunity to write the Cambridge examination, I passed and achieved the highest marks out of all the candidates in South Africa.*

*In Grade 12, I was elected Head of the Disciplinary Committee and captain of the Athletics and Cricket teams. I was also the school’s Dramatic Art Student Director and life was good. I was a role model and people listened to me. During the year, my Drama teacher left and I was asked by the new drama teacher to teach the Grade 10 drama class. I fell in love with teaching at that moment. I enjoyed helping learners understand and at the same time teaching valuable life lessons.*

*During my Matric year, I applied at UJ and for several bursaries. A friend of mine came with a copy of the Thandulwazi Intern Teacher advert in the Sowetan newspaper and suggested that I apply. I was not sure but something said to me “just do it”. It was an advertisement to become a mathematics/ science student teacher but I did not do any of those subjects. But I had great English and Mathematical Literacy marks so I applied. After a few weeks, I was asked to come for an interview. I felt proud when Bev Johnson (Foundation Director) during the interview, told me that I had been one of the selected few out of 700 applicants. I was also interviewed by Thobeka Zuma-Mngambi (Intern Director). I felt that they controlled the interview in such a way that you were made to feel comfortable and I spoke my heart out. I wrote my Grade 12 Final examination with excitement knowing that my dream was about to become a reality.*



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## Interns (continued)

*However during this time my mother got really ill. I would sometime stay up the whole night praying because she couldn't walk or talk properly. She would wake me up at night in intense pain saying that she was dying. I lived alone with my mother at that time and I would accompany her to hospital when I was not writing my final exams.*

*In December, I could not go to my Matric dance because I was taking care of her. Two days before the results were released, my mother was admitted to hospital and she was immediately put in the intensive care unit. After I got my results, I excitedly went home to share the good news and I found that my mother was no longer with us.*

*I arrived at Saints during the worst time of my life. I had lost my mother; was depressed at the time; and lost my motivation to live. However, the support I got from staff members and the Intern Director was amazing. I said to myself "I will be selfless and support anyone with the same problems."*

*I met my mentors for the first time Ruth Everson and Pippa De wet. They taught me the rules at St Stithians Girls College. They orientated me into this innovative environment and I felt part of the team.*

*I am grateful for this amazing opportunity."*

2014 Interns



## Green campus news

*Pauline Dickson – Saints Environmentalist*

The forest below Peter Place, adjoining the bird sanctuary has been rehabilitated in recent months. Alien trees such as black wattle, poplar and blue gums have been removed, as have other invasive plants. The site was toxic and devoid of insect and bird life, the plants choking the waterways. As custodians of the site, St Stithians have rehabilitated the land and water flowing through the property is now filtered and cleaned using natural eco systems before entering the Braamfontein Spruit. The area will now be filled with quality material and over 300 trees planted; the area will be hydro seeded with 25 different types of indigenous grasses. Eventually the original wetland will be re-established giving life to a variety of birds and insects.

Rehabilitated land next to the Peter Place entrance



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## Kamoka

*Kate Doyle – Director of Kamoka*

The first grade 9 group—pictured below— from the Girls' College spent from 10 to 30 May 2014 at Kamoka Bush School and did incredibly well! They were the first group to experience an Urban Immersion in Modimolle town and spent time at the Marie Day Care Centre, Phagameng High School and an RDP house, where they had the opportunity to enjoy a traditional township meal of pap & tripe!

New records were also set for the wood carry (30kg of wood carried for 3km!) and 'The Tough One' (a new time of 3 hours 40 minutes for the self-navigated 11.4km hike).

All in all, it has been a fantastic Bush School and we are looking forward to our next Girls' College group, who will be with us from 7 to 27 June 2014.



The staff of Kamoka recently took ownership of a new vehicle, sufficiently tough and rugged to cope with the bush school terrain! Many thanks to Barlow World for their financial assistance with purchasing the vehicle.

*Dr Nuttall handing over the keys to a delighted Kate!*



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## Tech corner

Paul Mayers – Director of IT



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Green?

....or Blue?



If you have been into the ICT office, JP Computer Lab or GP Library recently you will have noticed a wall painted “Jungle” green! We have been experimenting with using green screening techniques and making videos. So what is so special about the colour green? Originally Hollywood used the colour blue for a technique in which you shot the actors performing in front of a blue screen and then stripped out the colour blue from the film and replaced it with a background of something else which means that you didn't actually have the actors on site at all!

Today's digital video cameras have digital sensors that are highly sensitive to the colour green so we can get the same effect using inexpensive digital cameras or iPads to do the same technique by videoing students in front of a green wall and then stripping out the green using entry level movie software and placing them in front of photographs or other live video! The human skin also contains no green undertones which means as long as we don't wear green while making the video we get fantastic results.

In the recent Girls' Prep production green screening was used very effectively in the production to create news casts without actually having to build any set! All the news casts were filmed in front of the green screen and then dropped onto an image of a news room!

This technique is certainly not new to our high school drama departments but MeLT (Mobile eLearning and Technology) has meant that we can use this in our Prep and Junior Prep schools with equipment the learners have in the classroom. Later this term we will be experimenting with these techniques at the JP level getting the grade 2s to create videos using green screen techniques.

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## Saints Family News

We would like to congratulate the following members of the Saints Family on their new family additions:

- Bev Richter on the birth of her granddaughter
- Francoise Blaire on the birth of her daughter
- Franklin Human on the birth of his son
- Lynda McCurrie on the birth of her grandson



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We wish to express our sincere condolences to the following members of the Saints Family on the loss of their loved ones. Please keep the families in your thoughts and prayers:

- To Alec, Colin and Jorja on the death of their mother, Fiona Harwood

We also think of those in the community who are struggling with illness and sadness and pray for a time of renewal and healing.

## Alumni



Holly Norton – Matric Class 2011

On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014, Holly Norton raced in the No. 7 seat of the Ohio State University 1<sup>st</sup> Eight that won the NCAA Division 1 Championship in Indianapolis, Indiana . Holly was awarded a full scholarship to study at Ohio based on her strong performances whilst rowing for St Stithians Girls College in 2010 and 2011.

The Ohio V1 Eight won the Grand Final of the Championships by 4 seconds from Brown University (2<sup>nd</sup>) and University of California (3<sup>rd</sup>). The A final was rounded out with Washington, Michigan and Stanford. This victory in the V1 Eight allowed Ohio to win the overall NCAA Division 1 Championship and become only the second university to retain the title in the history of the competition. The Ohio V1 Eight finished the season unbeaten adding the national championship title to their 12 victories earlier in the season and the Big 10 Conference title.

While at St Stithians Holly was vice Captain of the Girls School Rowing (2009-11), a member of the South African National Team (2011), earned Most Promising Rower, National Colours and Vice Captain honours (2011), won gold in the Women's Double event at the Senior South African Championships (2010), won bronze in the Women's Four and Women's Eight events as well as winning three bronze medals and one silver medal at the South African Schools Championships (2010-11).

Holly has had an outstanding 12 months of rowing as the results detailed above are in addition to the silver Medal won in the Women's Four at the World University Games representing South Africa in July 2013.

If you have any Alumni cameo stories to tell, we would love to hear from you. Please email [alumni@stithian.com](mailto:alumni@stithian.com).

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## Saints snippets

With the death of Maya Angelou, we lose the immense wisdom of the celebrated African American author, poet and civil activist. This is probably one of her more famous quotes: *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

Maya recently delivered a video tribute poem in honour of Nelson Mandela; *"His day is done"* praises Mandela as a modern day David, who slew the mighty Goliath and a Gideon, who freed the South African people.

To watch this moving tribute, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDumMEzYyqk>

## PSG Collection week

The generosity of the Saints community shows itself in many ways. In the first term the PSG Collection week was a fantastic example. We collected toiletries for the Gerald Fitzpatrick old age home. The home was overwhelmed by the contributions received – it is amazing that a small thing such as a few rolls of toilet paper can make such a difference. Thank you Saints!

This term we are collecting old sports equipment – please start sorting through your cupboards – we are happy to take anything you don't need. If you can't wait until June, please contact Jeanette on 0824126746 and we will arrange to collect from you.

## Chaplain's prayer for the term

*Rev Dan Nkomo – Superintendent Chaplain*

Almighty God, the giver and Lord of all life, we bless and praise you for your merciful keeping and gracious care, for all the gifts of your providence and grace. We thank you for the faith which sustains us, the hopes which inspire us and the light by which we daily walk. We thank you for Jesus Christ, who by the life he lived, the temptations he conquered, the gospel he taught and the cross he bore. He has brought us nearer to you and closer to each other. Give to all parents, guardians and educators a deep sense of their responsibilities before you. Bless our learners to have love and creativity for their school work. Gracious God, we pray for the Nigerian girls who have been abducted from the school they love. We pray for their completely safety keeping and care, soften the hearts of those who have kept them in custody to release the girls in your powerful Name we pray. Amen.



***If there is anything you would like more information about,  
please do not hesitate to send your questions to [rector@stithian.com](mailto:rector@stithian.com).***



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Reflections on our village of schools



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## The College Hymn

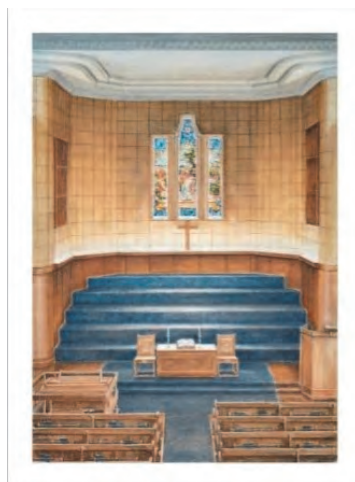
Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;  
Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,  
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,  
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;  
Be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;  
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;  
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:  
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:  
Be thou mine inheritance now and always;  
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart;  
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,  
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won;  
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.



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