



WESTERFORD HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

THE FORTNIGHTLY NEWSLETTER OF WESTERFORD HIGH SCHOOL

ISSUE 12 (25 AUGUST 2023)

FROM THE FRONT OFFICE...

Absent from school?

Please email: secretary@westerford.co.za



Please see [this link](#) for all other Westerford email addresses

Please send achievements to be included in the Newsletter to: webteam@westerford.co.za

Dear Parents / Guardians, we are moving towards a cashless environment on the school premises. In order for you to assist us with this, we would like to encourage pupils and parents to make use of their Bank Cards and Snapscan when paying at the following areas around the school:

- Pupil Tuckshop during the break times.
- Second Hand Clothing Shop.
- Rugby Tuckshop up at Imhoff on match days.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the school to arrange cash floats/change and so your assistance in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

CONGRATULATIONS

Jacques Dugas (9B) participated in the South African Sailing National Laser competition from 10-12 August, 2023 in Durban. Jacques participated in the ILCA 4 division, and finished 5th overall.



Olivia Williams (12B) placed second in the Royal Society Essay Competition.

Yaqeen Bawa (12C) participated in a National Cricket Tournament as part of the regional CPL team in Johannesburg over the weekend of 11 – 13 August 2023. The tournament takes place under the patronage of the National Premier League structure sanctioned by Cricket South Africa.

WESTERFORD PROMS

KAI MANIE (HE/HIM)

On the evenings of 15 and 16 August 2023, the Westerford musical ensembles put on two fantastic performances. The Westerford Proms were the first of their kind, but that doesn't mean that our Noel Taylor Hall was not filled with an enthusiastic audience.

All of Westerford's ensembles participated and they put many, many hours of practice into this event in order to make it one to remember. Waking up earlier to rehearse before school and staying late for after-school rehearsals was tiring, but every musician who put in the effort to make these wonderful nights happen can definitely agree that their hard work paid off.

We had some fantastic soloists: Kian Goliath, Emma Henshall, Caleb Thomas, Julia Boulle, Libhongo Lubambo, Maxine Wells, Jason Tempelhoff and Daniel Williams. The nights ended with a spectacular Queen medley, performed by all the pupils.

HEAD LEADERS ADDRESS ON ANTI-RACISM

LITHA SAWULA (HE/HIM)
NOKUTENDA THABEDE (SHE/HER)

In Term 2, our school was in the news for yet another racist incident, exams were rescheduled and it was clear that the school had mixed feelings about the incident. As a leadership body, we felt strongly about addressing a problem that created division, frustration and hurt at Westerford. Racism at our school has been frequently expressed not only on our grounds, but also on social media. Conversations have been started in the past but we need to put more effort into continuing our education on how to be Anti-Racist. We seem to forget about the hurt that this issue causes until another incident takes place.

As the head leaders, and on behalf of the portfolio leaders, we categorically condemn any form of racist behaviour at Westerford. We would like to make it clear that the campaign to be Anti-Racist is not going to simply run for a couple of weeks or months. It forms part of the values of our school with regards to transformation and racial inclusivity. Our Anti-racism conversations and education should not begin when we have a public racist interaction. Our engagement in becoming an Anti-Racist School in South Africa must be integrated into every sphere of our school and on a continual basis.

What is Racism? Racism is the deep-rooted discrimination, prejudice and violent behaviour directed towards people of colour as a result of Apartheid. Its structural and systematic culture affects our school environment and it is our responsibility as your leaders to be proactive in this agenda. The purpose of our Anti-Racism Campaign is to condemn any false prejudices and discrimination directed to people of colour (POCs) in our Westerford community currently and in the future. Our aim is to begin an ongoing initiative on Anti-Racism in our pupil body and incorporate education of racial diversity in every sphere of our school.

While Racism is a very broad topic, we have created an action plan that will guide the leaders. We are not experts on Racism, but this does not mean we should leave it to others to engage with it. That's why we must all be lifelong learners to create a safe, inclusive space at school. Our first point of action is to introduce mandatory Anti-Racism education and promote the study of the history of Apartheid. For a start, we will be putting up posters next week that explain the definitions of words such as cultural appropriation, microaggression etc. The purpose of this is to become consciously aware of these terms that will frequently be used in our campaign. We are also planning an open discussion and we will launch activities where we can actively learn about the repercussions that Apartheid has had on our school environment. This is why we urge you, as the pupil body, to give us feedback in the box that we have placed on the POC notice board because it gives us a definite direction of what pupils need to learn about.

Point number two is to address the misconceptions around POCs and debunk them. If you came across the Instagram stories on the Instagram account last term, you would have seen comments that indicate a destructive ignorance and the misconception that people of colour can be grouped into a single category. As a person of colour, my roots and culture are very different from the next person of colour and we are creating a platform for all of us to learn about the different cultures that different people of colour practice.

Our final point is addressing the use of language such as racial slurs. I think you may know one or two racial slurs. They may have been directed at you or you may have used them. The awareness of the history of these slurs and the way they were/are used is very important because this is how we understand not only the hurt they may cause but the dangers of such language. Educating ourselves on the weight of such language allows us to have the courage to correct ourselves, our friends and even the people we live with.



The most important aspect in beginning these conversations is to acknowledge that Racism is "our" fight. It is not the responsibility or burden for pupils or staff of colour to educate white staff and pupils on the realities of racism. We should never become desensitised as a school to the trauma and danger of such a pervasive act.

These conversations will not be easy. Admitting to past faults and educating ourselves will be hard but we urge you to approach this campaign with an open mind. We must be prepared to be taught, humble ourselves when we are corrected and remember that we won't always get it right. When we are in the arena of fighting against Racism in our school, we must promote the goal of safety, equality and justice in our institution. We cannot end Racism, but we need to actively equip ourselves with the tools that we can use to become an Anti-Racist Westerford.

OPEN DISCUSSION ON RACISM

TIM EVERTSE

As part of the anti-racism campaign initiated by the portfolio leaders of 2023, the multi purpose period of 22 August was an open discussion around racism. A Google form went out where pupils could anonymously give their questions, assumptions and feelings around the word "racism". These responses would guide the multi discussion.

The discussion involved a panel of portfolio leaders (Tanatswa Hwande, Mhlali Mateta, Nokutenda Thabede, Litha Sawula, Ariya Pillay, Hannah Rademeyer, Gugu Nkambule, Zahara Von Zeil-Singer and Tim Evertse), who would give their thoughts on the issues brought up and, thereafter, open it up to the rest of the pupil body in the hall.

Emotions were high as various issues were discussed from how we define and experience racism, as well as prejudice experienced by POCs in POC communities. Other issues included the use of racist language and white guilt. It was encouraging to see our fellow pupils bringing up their experiences and responding to the thoughts put forward by the panel. We hope that this is the start of an ongoing conversation that Westerfordians will continue having to become a more inclusive and accepting school and be more proactive in fighting racism.

WESTERFORD'S AMAZING EISTEDDFOD

THOMAS WEGE (HE/HIM)

This term Westerford re-engaged in some old traditions and even added some new flair to make the school the unique place that it is. At the start of the term, many of the pupils of Westerford had already taken part in eisteddfods! Music eisteddfods are a common thing at most high schools and Westerford is no different. The music pupils were in and out of classes, performing multiple pieces, and many of them achieved superb results. A large portion of them received gold diplomas. This is very difficult to get as it requires a score of 95% or more. Despite this, many music pupils walked away beaming, gold diplomas in hand. Normally that would be the end of eisteddfods at Westerford. This year, however, a category was added: a cultural eisteddfod! Here Westerford pupils had to perform either original or unoriginal monologues for an external judge (who has judged at the Makanda Arts Festival) and they excelled. With numerous pupils receiving over 95% for their outstanding performances, the school environment was made even richer as the promising young actors accepted their diplomas. These eisteddfods are always a highlight for Westerford pupils, and once again, made life at the school a little richer!





Westerford High School Presents All Grades Art Exhibition

Please join us for the exhibition opening:

Date: 5th of September

Time: 6:30pm (speeches at 7pm)

Venue: Art Room and Seminar Rooms



The exhibition will include artworks from pupils in Grade 8-11.

It will be open to view during school hours from the 5-8 of September. It closes at 12:00pm on Friday.

EDGEMEAD DERBY

BY DELILAH STOLOFF (SHE/HER) AND DAHLAAN COLLIER (HE/HIM)

One of Westerford's biggest derby weekends of the year took place this past weekend: the famed Edgemead Derby, with our Rugby, Soccer, Cross Country, Netball, Hockey, Table Tennis, Chess and Debating teams all participating. It was an incredible end to an amazing Winter Sports season, and the players gave it their all.

As the sun rose last Friday, a sense of anticipation enveloped the school, creating an exhilarating and electric atmosphere. The school assembly concluded with an inspiring address from the Sport Portfolio leaders, followed by a round of the Vukani that reverberated throughout the school. Pupils across all grades were driven to take on Edgemead, with the hope of upholding the honour of Westerford.

While every team performed excellently, certain results deserve a special mention, namely the resounding 2-0 victory of our First Girls' Hockey Team, our impressive Chess and Debating teams, who remained unbeaten throughout their matches, and our First Netball Team, who contributed to the weekend's excitement by snatching a last-minute, edge-of-the-seat victory – a nail-biting contest that showcased their determination from start to finish. The 2023 Edgemead-Westerford Derby will no doubt remain in our memory, earning its place as an unforgettable event. The Sports Portfolio thanks all those who were part of making the event a success.





When we entered the Eastern Cape, the many, many, many hours we had spent in the school bus became very much worth it. Green hills stretched in every direction with brightly coloured houses perched on each one. The beaches were a perfect turquoise. Beauty was abundant.

When we arrived at Wild Lubanzi lodge, we were greeted with kindness by our hosts, Luzani and Aiden. It was not long before we were settled in our dorms and began recovering from the long journey.

The next morning, we braved the beach. The water was unbelievably warm and reviving. A traditional lunch followed: carrots, spinach, spaghetti, salad and rice - all perfectly cooked by local chef Nomsis. The best part of lunch was the invitation to dance. Once you finished your food you had no excuse to remain at the table - so it wasn't long before we were all dancing with Nomsis's family.

Monday was the beginning of our purpose at Zithulele. School began and we were ready to help out wherever we could. In order to get to the school, we had to first walk 2.5 km to the gravel road - a hike that we had mastered by the end of the week. Then we would use our school bus to travel 5 minutes to the primary school and, finally, the rest of us would drive a further half an hour to get to the high school. We repeated the process to get home. Monday wasn't an easy start: it was raining heavily. We marched through the rain and the wind, eventually arriving at the bus soaked and very muddy. This was a great reality check - demonstrating to us the impossible challenge of transport in the area, and the issues that pupils face every day.

After arriving at Axium, we split into two groups - one at each school. When our group reached the high school, we were late and dove straight into Physics, English and Maths classes. It was a big relief to find that the pupils are accomplished English speakers, with a vocabulary far superior to our Afrikaans FAL skills. We got to know the pupils quite well over the week. Over the four days we were there, we sat with the same individuals and worked through the worksheets together, learning about our different lives whenever there was a break in the lesson. The pupils learnt an impressive amount of trigonometry and functions in the short time we were there and we would provide assistance wherever it was needed.



We ended the week with a prize giving. The top handful of pupils for each subject in each grade received some donated items - calculators, dictionaries, textbooks - that we had brought with us. Pupils with perfect attendance were given stationery items like rulers, rubbers, pens and pencils - true rarities, yet something we take for granted. After a long period of goodbyes and some memorable selfies together, we left the school for the last time.

At the primary school, before we started classes, we played many fun games such as "Inkanda, amadolo, iibhontsi", iibhabhatane and made exciting war-cries. After the morning games, we went straight into classes. Grades 1 to 3 read isiXhosa stories and sang songs, while grades 4 to 6 played grammar games, Scrabble and multiplication games. The kids were energetic, charismatic and pure joy. On Wednesday we watched *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* for their movie day. On Friday morning, when our whole group was at Axiom, we played "there's a fire on the mountain - run, run" with them, before splitting up into two groups to go to the recycling centre so that they could learn about the importance of recycling. They ended the morning playing the chocolate game and also had their own prize-giving.

During our stay, we were fortunate to receive a talk from one of the senior doctors at Zithulele hospital, Dr Nick Fine. He gave us a thorough run-through on the ins and outs of rural health care and the main problems it faces. Some facts stood out, such as the 90% unemployment rate in the area, meaning that the available income is often one disability grant per household. If locals need a procedure that the Zithulele hospital cannot offer, they are away from home for four days for often only a ten minute consultation. The doctors at Zithulele hospital are not masters of a particular field: they perform an endless variety of different roles and often have to teach themselves procedures so that they can meet the needs of patients in an emergency. Dr Fine described the strength of community and how neighbours will make great sacrifices to help each other

The lasting thought was one that would seem obvious but has been, nonetheless, forgotten in the buzz of urban life. Medicine is not about hierarchies, or proving to be the best in your minuscule field of specialisation. It is about saving people's lives.



We can safely say that we saved one of the best experiences for the last day: a hike. We walked down and up and down and up the very steep hills, that grew greener the further we walked. Finally we came across the famous Windows desktop... Hole in the Wall. Its beauty somehow exceeded expectations. No pictures we took could do it justice. We swam - even though it was freezing and rocky, soaking up each aspect of the experience.

Saying it was an amazing trip doesn't quite emphasise the impact it had on us. Not only did we get to spend a part of our holiday in one of the most beautiful places in the world, but we were made aware of a completely different lifestyle that is widespread in South Africa. We learnt not to take the so-called "basics" for granted. And the best part? We made connections that will not be forgotten and will remain intact even though there are many miles between us.



We would like to thank Ms Court, Mr Mtubu and Ms Schiava. Thank you for being our replacement parents and keeping us safe, for the many fun evenings spent playing games like Mafia and Code names, for the immune boosters when the cold weather and damp shoes started having unfortunate consequences and, most importantly, for making this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity possible.

A COMPLETELY UNBIASED REVIEW OF Y2K-ABARET

THOMAS WEGE
(HE/HIM)

For many years it has been a Westerfordian tradition for the Grade 11s to put on a show for the school, Cabaret! It has been going on for years and, with the exception of the Grade 11s of 2020 (during Covid), it has never been cancelled. Last year's Cabaret (the famous Oscaret) was a tough act to follow, but the Grade 11s of 2023 put all their energy and work into it, and it is safe to say that they succeeded in providing the school with an entertaining and funny show. Pupils worked hard to display not only their love for performing but also some of their unique talents. A few highlights include: a trapeze routine, a band performance during interval, a magic show, and a fully-choreographed backflip fight (that's right, there were actual backflips).

The audience also witnessed some amazing dances that pupils had choreographed themselves: 2000s mashup, amapiano, and usher dance to name a few, as well as some unforgettable musical performances. Besides displaying their special talents and musical prowess, Grade 11s could also show off their flair for writing and acting. A few special mentions include a live chess commentary, a tough post-game pep talk and some breaking news regarding an apocalypse at Westerford. With all these amazing skits, dances and other performances, it was clearly obvious that Y2K-abaret was an absolute success!



CREATIVE LAB MULTI

DELILAH STOLOFF (SHE/HER)

A long time ago (three whole weeks ago) in a galaxy far, far away (the Noel Taylor Hall), a diverse group of talented Westerfordians performed a spectacular show to demonstrate their musical, dancing and singing abilities.

Our fabulous 2023 Creative Lab portfolio leaders, Xanny Stevens and Deni Dagan, led the hall through several glass-shatteringly loud rounds of applause, showing off their signature outfits, the famous yellow dress/red heels combo included, of course.

Some highlights include: Liyabona Fikizolo's killer saxophone solo, our resident magician forcing Mr Massyn to wear goggles and a bucket hat in public, two incredible dances (shout out to Veronica and Nica Kasense, y'all brought the house down), some rock 'n roll, and the man, the myth, the foreign cultures legend himself - who knew Italians in neon orange chiffon could rap?

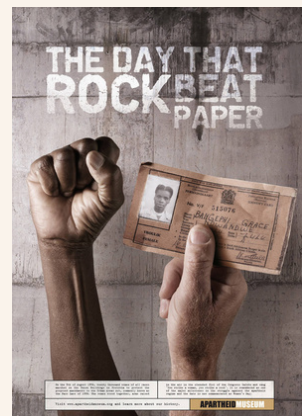
Special thanks to Xanny and Deni for making this happen, and to all those who participated. It was a great way to end our Tuesday.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S DAY - HCA

AMARA LEVIN, HISTORY AND
CURRENT AFFAIRS SOCIETY

On the 9th of August 1956 around 20 000 women of all races marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in protest of the extension of the Pass Laws to African women. They handed over huge bundles of signed petitions, stood in silent solidarity outside Parliament and sang "Nkosi sikeleli Afrika" demonstrating the political strength possessed by South Africa's women. Now, we commemorate this day with the celebration of Women's Day.

But Women's Day isn't just a day to thank all the women in your life, it should also be used to acknowledge the role of women in the fight against apartheid and to address the issues facing women today.



Post-apartheid South Africa has made lots of progress, but socio-economic inequalities still exist and disproportionately affect women, especially women of colour. Celebrating this day helps to bring attention to these disparities and encourage people to address these issues. Women, especially single mothers, are hugely affected by poverty, with their lack of access to education and lack of employment options limiting their income. Apartheid forced many people of colour to move to the outskirts of cities and towns, and limited the education available to POCs. This has created a cycle of poverty, even after Apartheid, leaving schools in these areas underfunded and young girls being unable to travel the far distances required to receive quality education.

Gender-based Violence is another big issue facing women in South Africa. Women's Day helps highlight the issue, encouraging women to break the silence, and communities and people in power to take action against it. Healthcare, especially in the rural areas of South Africa, is inadequate. Maternal mortality rates are very high due to underdeveloped healthcare infrastructure and lack of proper facilities.

While lots of improvement has been made, South Africa's political representation of women is still not sufficient compared to our population. Women's Day provides a forum for promoting more gender equality in positions of leadership, decision-making, and politics.

Women's Day shouldn't just be taken as a day off from school and work, but used as a celebration of the significance of women in the struggle against Apartheid and a day to educate ourselves on the challenges still faced by women today.

CLASSIFIEDS...

This classified section is for current Westerford parents and Old Westerfordians. Advertisements are R200 per insert.
Please contact Keren (ks@westerford.co.za)

MySchool Card

Thank you to all parents and supporters for making use of the My School Card in support of Westerford High School. Your support has raised R106 604 in 2022, R113 726 in 2021 and R112 773 in 2020. This regular, passive income is welcomed towards the daily operations of the school.

Please click on this link to make WHS your beneficiary <https://www.myschool.co.za/supporter/update/>

Should you not yet have a card, the My School App can be downloaded from Apple and Google App Stores and a virtual card applied for.

School Days

We encourage you to join the School Days programme, which runs in a similar way by shopping at Dischem and other stores. Click to join - <https://www.schooldays.co.za/home>

