



Front office

Absent from school?

Please email:

secretary@westerford.co.za

Please see **this link** for all other Westerford email addresses

You can send achievements to be included in the Newsletter to: **webteam@westerford.co.za**

To avoid congestion the traffic flow around the school is a "One Way" system, treating Alfred and Mount Roads as one way roads down, away from the mountain, towards Main Road.

Please do NOT drive onto the school grounds to drop off or pick up your child at the start and close of the school day.



Congratulations

In the December school holidays, **Thato Gillespie-Naidoo** (Grade 9) was invited to perform her music live on Heart FM's breakfast show as part of their Scholar Holla series. Thato was interviewed by Aidan Thomas and played her very own composition 'Curtains' for guitar and voice live on the show. Her song was also recorded in a Cape Town studio and will be played on Heart FM as part of their 'First time on radio' series.

Welcome to our New Staff



Chan Dowra
Mathematics



Louise Harris
Business Studies/EMS



Kath Barnard (she/her)
English



Arvida Lincoln (she/her)
Mathematics (incl. FS Maths)



Ghusnaa Adams (she/her)
English Intern



Chad Johnston
English



Nicole Hector (she/her)
Afrikaans



Roberta Joubert (she/her)
Head of Information Technology

Interview with New Staff

Background

RJ: relocated to Cape Town from Polokwane in Limpopo at the beginning of January. My passion is teaching and making a difference in people's lives. I see myself as a people's person and I love to get to know and interact with people.

KB: I come from a family of teachers, in fact, I am a third generation teacher! I grew up in the Eastern Cape in Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown), a small university town which, while sleepy and quite boring at times, allowed me to explore many opportunities.

AL: I was born in Mossel Bay and grew up in the Somerset West/Strand area, where I attended Parel Vallei High School. During my time there I was the editor of the school's magazine, played hockey, took part in drama productions, ranked nationally for Science, Afrikaans and Mathematics Olympiads, and a multitude of other things I have already forgotten about - I was busy! At university, I continued to play hockey and became involved in student leadership and was a demonstrator/tutor for some first year modules.

GA: I was born and raised in Cape Town in the southern suburbs.

CJ: I grew up in a distant land known as Johannesburg. I was involved in the arts and sports throughout my high school career. When I became a prefect I realised that I had a talent for shouting at kids and I haven't looked back since.

NSH: I grew up in Graafwater, went to Graafwater High School (Grade 1-12), come from a family of four: mom, father and brother.

Education and work experience

RJ: I have a degree in education and worked for PEPPS, a private IEB school in Polokwane for 19 years as an IT and CAT teacher for Grades 10 to 12. I was in the IT industry before that and realised once I had started teaching that it was where I wanted to be.

KB: Undergraduate and Postgraduate in Anthropology at Rhodes University, pivoted to Education after realising that I really valued the classroom space, far more than research. Taught English at Riebeek College Girls' High School in Kariega (formerly Uitenhage) and at Parklands College in Cape Town before moving to Westerford High School.

AL: I completed my BSc at Stellenbosch University, where I majored in Physiology and Psychology, followed by my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) and an Advanced Certificate for Mathematics Education. I started my teaching career at Curro Delft and then, for the last two years, I taught at Hottentots-Holland High School, where I was the Head of Senior Mathematics.

GA: I attended Bergvliet High School and did my undergrad at UCT. I then worked as a Desktop Publisher and now intend to do my PGCE at UCT this year while interning at Westerford.

CJ: I studied Drama at the illustrious University of Pretoria (Tuks of niks!). While I was studying I worked at the student newspaper. In 2019 I decided to move to South Korea to teach English. I really enjoyed my time in Korea but while I was there I realised just how much I love loadshedding so I moved back a week before South Africa went into level 5 lockdown. Soon I found myself teaching at a school in Midrand where I became known as "The Dictator".

NSH: I studied BA Humanities (undergrad) at Stellenbosch University, also did my PGCE at SU. I did my teaching practice at Bloemhof Meisieskool in Stellenbosch.

What are a few interesting facts about yourself?

RJ: I served in the South African Police Service and was on duty just outside Pretoria on the day of the inauguration of the late President Mandela. I have always wanted to live near the ocean and this is the reason for my relocation to Cape Town. I am married and a mother of two children, both out of school and working. My daughter is married and has a child, so I am a proud grandmother as well.

KB: I live in Plumstead with my family and three cats, I really enjoy gardening and reading, and absolutely love laughing. I drink coffee like it's a competitive sport!

AL: I love to read - I have a 500 words/minute reading speed so I can finish a thick novel pretty quickly and I try to read one every holiday. I also enjoy hiking and my favorite hike was the five 5 day Tsitsikama Trail in the Garden Route.

GA: A few interesting facts about me is that I love fashion and one of my favourite hobbies is to make clothes. I am also a cat mom to two adorable babies named Yuki and Zuko. My happy place is the beach and, if I could, I'd spend the majority of my time reading while looking at the ocean.

CJ: I can't ride a bicycle, it's quite clear that I enjoy good food, and the source of my power comes from my beard

NSH: I am passionate about Afrikaans; I received 100% for my Afrikaans NSC Paper 2; I am the first child in my family that went to university; (I am not that interesting, lol)

What is your favourite thing about Westerford?

RJ: The friendly, respectable and accepting staff and pupils of Westerford have made my transition to a new school so easy. I am loving it here!

KB: So far - meeting everyone. I am still learning names, and still getting lost in the corridors!

AL: I love the culture of transformation and innovation within the school. Schools are supposed to be a safe space, and I love that the school is working towards being a safe and welcoming place, where pupils can grow, develop and flourish in every aspect and learn valuable skills and knowledge that are transferable to their futures. Pupils here are encouraged to be accountable, curious and independent thinkers, and are given every opportunity imaginable. It's truly a place of holistic education and, of course, academic excellence.

GA: My favourite thing about Westerford has got to be the amazing views. The school is very fortunate to have such a beautiful backdrop.

CJ: I really like my classroom. On more than one occasion the aircon has saved my life.

NSH: The fact that it is the best school in the province! and the kids, of course.

Which Westerford tradition are you most looking forward to?

RJ: SLOG. I understand this is a two-yearly event and it seems I am lucky to be part of it in my first year at Westerford. The pupils seem excited and I am looking forward to seeing what it is all about.

KB: I don't know many of the traditions yet, but I believe we don't come to school the day after Slog, and I am really looking forward to that lie-in!

AL: Probably Cabaret - I have heard from some of the other staff members that it's truly something to witness.

GA: I am very much looking forward to Slog. The kids seem very excited about it so it must be good.

CJ: House Tshukulu winning best house every term. (Did I mention I'm competitive?)

NSH: SLOG!!!

Southeast Asia History Tour

by Delilah Stoloff

Last November, the matric class of 2024 embarked on the trip of a lifetime. After a 16 hour flight, the 69 travellers arrived in Hanoi, Vietnam, the highlight of which was a local dessert, egg coffee with condensed milk - sounded bizarre, tasted fantastic, even at 10pm.

On the third day, we headed to Ha Long Bay, and boarded the Hailong Dragon for an overnight cruise. After a day filled with swimming and spring rolls, a flight to Hue awaited us.

Our arrival in Hue signalled the beginning of a more intense exploration of Vietnam's history. We visited the Demilitarised Zone and the Vin Moch tunnels, both sites of incredible tragedy during the American War in Vietnam - a befitting name the locals prefer to the Westernised term, the Vietnam War.

During our last night before our bus ride to the beautiful city of Hoi An, our teacher chaperones led us through the streets of Hue in pouring rain to the Imperial Citadel. It was a beautiful place, but the magic was lost on the group of pupils soaked to the bone and wearing paper-thin plastic ponchos, which we all agreed were entirely ineffectual barriers.

We stopped at the incredible My Son Sanctuary, which holds the remains of ancient Hindu temples, now in ruin, pockmarked with bullet holes, and surrounded by bomb craters, all the result of American bombings during Operation Rolling Thunder in the '60s.

Hoi An, the City of Lanterns, was one of the most beautiful sights of my life. We cycled through the countryside and took boat rides down the river, before learning about traditional farming and cooking in one of the villages nearby and enjoying a delicious lunch and sing-a-long, with my talented peers on the piano, guitar, improvised drums and vocals.

Our next stop was Ho Chi Minh City, the old capital of South Vietnam, now named after the country's revolutionary communist president. It was a scorching 33 degrees with a humidity of 95%, and we were baking in the heat. During our stay in Ho Chi Minh City, we visited the War Remnants Museum, one of the most powerful and heartbreaking experiences of the tour. We spent a night on the Mekong Delta, climbed a mountain, and then headed off at the crack of dawn for a six hour boat ride to Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Cambodia is the site of the Khmer Rouge's genocide, which wiped out 21% of the population. We visited its infamous prison, Tuol Sleng (S-21), and walked through the cells, each room containing photographs of the dead and equipment used to torture its thousands of detainees.

On our way to Siem Reap, we also stopped at one of the Killing Fields, mass graves holding some of the 1,7 million victims of the Khmer Rouge. After that gruesome stop, we passed through a spider market filled with tarantulas, both living, crawling all over us, and cooked for a snack. I chose not to indulge in that particular local delicacy.



Siem Reap was also the site of another highlight, the Angkor Wat temples, as well as the Monkey Incident: Revenge of the Macaques, during which Jamie and Chris (yes, we do name and shame in this house) were both bitten by the monkeys they hoped to befriend (and bring back to South Africa?), and received dual six month courses of rabies shots for their efforts.

After a stop at a local village and a visit to a crocodile farm, with real crocodiles nogaal, we flew to Thailand, for one night in Bangkok (yes, we did sing the song) and a visit to Khaosan Road for last-minute gift shopping. After a tearful goodbye to the amazing Southeast Asia, we were homeward bound.

Below are some thoughts from my fellow travellers:

“Words cannot describe my gratitude. History tour 2024 was hands down the best experience of my life. Although I am happy to be back in my own bed for a bit, you would not have to ask me twice to head straight back. I can safely say the tour altered my brain chemistry and that I am a better person for it. My heart has been opened and my world has been widened. There was not a single moment that I did not enjoy and I honestly mean that. The balance of history, nature, food and a bit of dancing made the tour impossible not to enjoy. My favourite day was at Angkor Wat in Cambodia. The temple was not something any photo or description can do justice to, and was easily the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. I will never ever forget the experiences I have had in South East Asia, and I thank you and the other teachers for making it the life changing experience it was.”

“It was a world changing experience. The environment, people, places and food were just incredible. The organisation of the trip was unmatched: everything was perfectly planned and orchestrated. My highlight would have to be the first night of experiencing Hanoi, roaming around the city trying new foods and trying yo navigate around the scooters! It's a given but Angkor Wat was absolutely brilliant. Never in my life have I experienced something like that. Thailand's market and just overall energy was truly beautiful. Overall, the trip will forever be a highlight of my life.”

“History tour was a life-changing experience! It gave me the opportunity to learn about people's pasts from their own perspective and actively engage with different cultures and ways of life. Apart from the valuable history lessons learnt, the tour taught me how to be independent, to travel safely and to make wise decisions.”



U-Turn Multi

by Thomas Wege and Luja Marx

The multi-purpose period has been around for two years now, and most people have classed the menagerie of professors, activists and comedians that have spoken at the school into four distinct categories:

1. Funny external speaker
2. Weird/bad external speaker
3. Interesting external speaker
4. No-idea-what-they-were-thinking-with-that-one external speaker

This last speaker didn't fit into any of the four. On Tuesday 23 January, Westerfordians had a wonderful opportunity to broaden their horizons during the first Multi of 2024, during which we had Mr Jean-Ray Knighton-Fitt as our guest speaker on the topic of homelessness and his organisation, U-Turn.

U-Turn is an organisation that most people have probably heard about. Walking into the gallery I heard a few whispers of: "I think I donated money to them once," "My parents said something about them," and "What is U-Turn?" These burning questions (particularly the last one) were soon to be answered.

U-Turn is a South African non-profit organisation with one of the most effective strategies to fight the issues of homelessness, unemployment and addiction. It consists of four parts: change-readiness, rehabilitation, work-readiness and employment.

Two U-Turn employees addressed the school. The aforementioned Mr Knighton-Fitt explained the purpose and goals of U-Turn and fascinated the school by detailing their process of rehabilitation for addicts and assisting homeless people in finding work and housing. Pupils were amazed by the number of people they've helped, and impressed by the ingenuity of some of their systems for assisting those in need. Needless to say, when the second speaker was introduced, everyone was interested to hear what he had to say.

The second speaker offered a stark contrast to the first when he told his story to the school, explaining how U-Turn helped him end his drug addiction and get his life back on track. He imbued all the charts and diagrams detailing U-Turn's achievements with a feeling of humanity, showing the school why we need organisations like U-Turn and what they do for the world. Many pupils realised what a privilege it is to go to a school like Westerford and how lucky they are to have a roof over their heads and a family to support them. When he concluded his story, he was met with thunderous applause, signalling the end of a fantastic presentation.

After a compelling and touching first "multi", it is safe to say that the school's multi-purpose period schedule has got off to a good start and Westerfordians can be excited for a new and amazing year of interesting speakers!

U-Turn encourages people to donate goods or volunteer at their various charity shops and initiatives, and to give vouchers instead of handouts, thus eliminating misuse of cash. They also offer various thrift stores selling second-hand clothing and pre-loved goods – all sales go towards their cause.

You can access U-Turn's website at <https://homeless.org.za>, or visit one of their 15 charity shops to find out how to do your part in helping to fight homelessness.

Saying goodbye to an old friend

by Thomas Wege

Hello dear friends, enemies and readers. Today, we are united in the loss of something very special. I ask all in attendance to put aside their grudges and disagreements and to read, as we mourn the passing of the Westerford Sports and Cultural Launches.

Gone are the choreographed tennis dances. Finished are the strange Guild skits. The curtain has finally closed on Westerford On Stage's Cultural Launch fashion show. Rugby has finally told its last dirty joke on stage and no one gets to see the Water Polo boys lining the stage in their speedos anymore. It is with a heavy heart that Westerfordians have to bid one of the most memorable events of the year adieu. And we do.

The soccer skits will be missed, even though there was always a member of the audience who had a ball kicked in their face. The laughter of the school will no longer echo through the Noel Taylor hall on the second Wednesday of the year and there will be no more groans at the cheesy catchlines. The grade 8s will never understand what they've lost, and everyone else will know all too well. Will the grade 8s know which societies to join? Or which sports to sign up for? Will the school ever recover? Only time will tell. And it is with this that we bid the Sport and Culture Launches farewell. Farewell. (tips hat and begins to weep).

Band Camp 2024

by Thato Gillespie-Naidoo

Always a highlight on the Westerford musical calendar, this year's band camp was filled with fun and beautiful sound, but was not without its fair share of hard work in hours of rehearsal.

Held at the Simonsberg Christian Centre amidst the winelands of outer Stellenbosch, Westerford's band pupils launched themselves into frantic rehearsal in preparation for Sunday's showcase of new pieces for family and friends.

Pupils were given time between rehearsals to walk down to the nearby pool or have a stroll in the forest as break-time activities with the popular addition of late-night games of frisbee, poker and Rummikub lasting to the early hours of the morning alongside Rock Band rehearsals.

The music was inescapable whether it was a result of band rehearsal, pupils having a laugh trying to play their friends' instruments during free time, or the dancing and singing in the corridors of the dormitories.

The music department's Mrs Penny, Mrs Grobbelaar, Mr Narun, Mr Engelbrecht and new teacher Mr Mphaphuli headed all ensembles including Concert Band, Big Band, Rock Band and the Orchestra, which were all conducted with much gusto and the outcome of which was an amazing closing performance on Sunday afternoon.

Thank you to the music department for all the planning and scheduling that went into this event and for their gift of music.



Grade 8 Camp 2024

by Anna Cartwright

The five house captains and two head leaders had the privilege of joining the Grade 8 camp last week, as part of the orientation programme.

Upon arrival at High Africa, we were drawn into the activity rotations alongside the Grade 8s. For some, this amounted to a mud bath. There was initial hesitation but, after the promise of a shower, everyone invested their energy (and their clean clothes) in the challenge. The afternoon allowed for more rotations, socializss and some free time.

That evening, bellies full with roosterkoek, the respective houses prepared for the war cry competition. Each house was required to perform a skit/song and dance.

The Grade 8s demonstrated enthusiasm and the core Westerford skills of brainstorming, cooperating and performing with people they have known for less than a week.

The evening's excitement and energy bore testimony to the fact that the 2024 Grade 8s will, without doubt, make the most of their time at Westerford.



Racism Multi

by Kai Manie

Following the previous week's multi-purpose period regarding homelessness, the POC and HCA societies, as well as the Holistic Growth portfolio, facilitated a multi-purpose period regarding racism, the effects thereof, and how to combat it.

It was an informative period, with topics such as reverse racism, the Bantu Education Act and others covered. After an address from the panel and discussions regarding the questions sent in by various members of the pupil body, the conversation was opened up to the floor and a Q&A session commenced.

Many pupils considered the period to be interesting and beneficial. However, many wished that it was longer, in order to provide an opportunity to dive deeper into certain topics. Some pupils said they had hoped to cover intersectionality and the dismantling of systemic racism but, due to time constraints, the panel did not have the opportunity to do so.

Westerford has taken many important steps to ensure that the school is a safe environment for pupils from all backgrounds, and I applaud them for that. May the sense of unity and family be continuously cultivated in the years to come.



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Contact Nix - nix@lifemattersfoundation.org
www.lifemattersfoundation.org

The LifeMatters Foundation

Lift club



Parent of Grade 8 pupil seeking lift share to/from school. We live in Constantia. Can also work with nearby suburbs. Please contact Josie 083 406 4074

Parent of a Gr11 pupil, seeking lift share from Plumstead. Looking to share morning lifts to school, and the occasional afternoon - if extramural timetables align. Please contact Louise on 0828312452

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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.



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School Days

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