

## Transformation at Springfield... the first few steps along a long journey

Springfield is committed to a journey of transformation. We recognise that it is a long journey and that our end-goal cannot be achieved in a short space of time. Instead, there will need to be continuous, intentional change in the months and years to come. The journey may encompass some practical easy to implement visible changes to our campus and events, but many of the obstacles we face will be considerably harder to overcome. Certainly, one of the harder adjustments, will be the ones within each of us personally - facing our own unconscious biases and challenging them.

A few weeks ago a group of staff members on the Management team, together with the counselling team, were given the task of **initiating** a new Transformation process for the school. We, the members of this group, are Bronwyn Jansen, Stephen Meehan, Gillian Stubbs, Diane Viljoen, Penny Boock, Morag Scordilis, Kaye Cloete and Gabby Cloete.

Transformation within a school context has many aspects - community education and development; recruitment and admissions - to name a few. The mission of *this* group is Community Education and Development - our hope is that we can spark change in the hearts of the members of our school community. This is a massive undertaking and cannot be done by 8 people but our mandate is to *initiate* the process, thereby creating opportunities for others to get involved as the process unfolds.

We believe that this process requires four parallel channels - the girls, the staff, the parents and the past-pupils. The programmes outlined below are the starting point, no doubt as we continue to walk the journey we will add and build onto the ideas which have been suggested.

The first of our programmes - with the **parents** - kicked off this past weekend with a talk by Lovelyn Nwadeyi to a group of approximately 250. Lovelyn created a safe space to hold some uncomfortable conversations and challenged our thinking and use of racial terms. She was thought-provoking, hard-hitting and honest. Many parents at the talk expressed their desire to commit to further change within our school and the following initiatives have evolved from this conversation:

- The Belonging Book Club  
Lovelyn shared a list of books which she recommended and Bronwen Wyllie, the senior school librarian, has investigated these further and is inviting parents and staff members to join a book club where these will be discussed in greater detail. - PLEASE SEE THE SIGN-UP LINK AND FURTHER INFORMATION IN THE NEWSLETTER
- Parent Think Tanks  
We would like to engage further in conversations with parents around the way forward and are inviting parents to think tank sessions. We will be offering slots in the first week of next term - PLEASE SEE THE SIGN-UP LINK AND FURTHER INFORMATION IN THE NEWSLETTER

Chronologically, the next programme to kick off is the **staff** programme. Staff will return to school on the 8th of July for a development day. All staff - teaching, admin and ground staff are invited to this event. We will be starting the morning with an address on White Privilege by Alan Storey. After this talk we will be divided into groups, where trained facilitators will lead us through Staff Think Tank sessions. After the whole-school discussion, this topic will be revisited in each of the sections of the school so that a plan of action can be formatted.

Although they are undoubtedly the most important members of a school community, the **pupils** programme is only the third to begin, because of the exams and other school commitments. The Junior School inclusive of the Pre-School, Foundation Phase and Senior Primary will embark on an intercultural programme which explores identity, perspective and cultural uniqueness. The Senior School is currently confirming dates with an external speaker who will address the whole school, before we begin work in smaller groups. We are committed to commencing this process with our learners in the first few weeks of the term.

In addition, there are a handful of projects involving the full **community**

- Conversation starters  
We will be producing a conversation starter jar for each Springfield family. The jar will be filled with a number of questions - to encourage a discussion around the dinner table every night. Many of them will have transformation themes, like belonging, equality and respect; but we would also like to use

the opportunity to encourage conversations around broader issues like social media, bullying, stereotypes, environmental awareness etc.

- Heritage Day celebration

Heritage day falls during the school holidays, but we would like to celebrate this as a school community and have ear-marked the 17th of October for a celebration event which will run during the school day and in the evening. We have already invited staff from the various areas of the school to get involved in the event but would like to also offer parents and past pupils the opportunity to be a part of this and will send out further information in due course.

Although they are no longer current members of our school community, the **Past pupils** programme is an important channel and we will be inviting past pupils to send through their ideas and join us in all of the collective community programmes. Past pupil think tanks will also provide much-needed input. The school experiences of these women **MUST** speak to the changes we need, and their voices must be heard.

**There are mountains growing  
beneath our feet  
that cannot be contained  
all we've endured  
has prepared us for this  
bring your hammers and fists  
we have a glass ceiling to shatter - let's leave this place roofless  
Rupi Kaur**