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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Penny Mullan



Dear Springfield community

I am delighted to be back at school, and recovering well, after having contracted Covid-19. The messages and prayers from the Springfield community were heart warming and deeply appreciated. I would like to express my gratitude to Geoff Quinn and Bronwyn Jansen for taking on an additional load during my absence. I am privileged to work with an extremely dedicated team.

The Coronavirus pandemic must not be taken lightly. Its impact has shattered families and communities and our continued observance of protocols, aimed at limiting transmission of the virus, is essential and must be prioritised by all.

In the past weeks a few significant events have occupied my thoughts. The first being the advertised launch of UCT's online school. My inbox lit up with messages asking if I had heard about it from people who were interested to know my response. But perhaps Prof. Jonathan Jansen said it best in his recent article on this topic:

"This is a bare-bones curriculum which is intended to get pupils over the line in terms of academic results. What you will not get is a wholesome curriculum, the types of things that make us human, such as music, drama, sports, physical education, excursions, choir — things you remember about a full educational experience long after you forget the mass of plutonium or the different uses of the inverted comma.

Where the full exclusionary effects of the online school will be felt is in its mode and methods of teaching. Most children need sustained contact with in-person teachers in school settings that allow for real interaction. There is a social class divide when it comes to the efficacy of learning online versus face-to-face."

Online schools have a place and their offering is exactly what is needed, by some, and I welcome all ventures that contribute, positively, to the education of our nation's children.

To my mind, initiatives such as this further highlight and promote aspects of Springfield's offering. Our rich curriculum aims to grow the humanity of each student through the development of healthy relationships with self and with others. We work towards advancing and empowering women who will contribute towards and participate in an equitable society. Much of this has perhaps been taken for granted and accepted as standard practice, but I hope that these aspects of our curriculum are seen as being distinctive.

Another moment of significance during the past week, was the sad news of the passing of my high school Principal. Tributes of love and admiration poured in for a woman who made a colossal impact on girls' education. During her career, Mary Hart actively formed thousands of strong women and I was reminded of the power that relationships and interactions, between teacher and student, have to affect and direct our entire lives. The Springfield teachers display these attributes and qualities every day as they challenge, nurture and guide each student in their care.

The feast day of St Dominic is celebrated on 8 August, and, at school, it was celebrated last Friday 6 August. St Dominic was a great intellectual who placed high value on learning. To do good, Dominic knew that we must know what is true. Wishing our Sisters and all at Springfield God's richest blessings as we continue to celebrate St Dominic and his vision during our 150th year.

PENNY MULLAN
Head of School



MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Alison Dunn



"Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God."

~Leo Buscaglia

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

During the course of the last week, everyone in our Springfield community has been introduced to the school's TRANSFORMATION STATEMENT. Following this introduction, staff and pupils are engaging with this statement, so that it can be owned by all and be a living statement of our way of life at Springfield. Within the Pre and Junior School, we are incorporating the content of this statement into our COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS (introduced to you in our last Newsletter), paragraph by paragraph, from which topics will form our conversations in the classrooms – at an age-appropriate level for each grade – and we are hoping that these conversations will continue into your homes.

These conversations will be closely aligned to our Stand4Change Social Justice programme taking place this term, linked to our Life Skills curriculum (also introduced in our last Newsletter). The statement will also be highlighted, paragraph by paragraph, in our Monday Assemblies.

Here is the first paragraph of the Statement, from which we have devised these topics for discussion:

We, Springfield Convent School, commit to live our vision and mission by continuing to build healthy respectful relationships, a community where the common good grows and is honoured, and individuals can thrive.

In order to build healthy and respectful relationships, it is imperative to begin by learning self respect. In so doing one needs to first build a positive sense of self. “Stand4Change” will be launching their programme to the learners on Monday, and the focus will be on positive self image and owning one's race. Courageous conversations can also be practical interaction and engagement with your daughter. Be brave and bold! The following tips are a meaningful starting point towards growing and developing respectful and meaningful relationships with individuals.

How can Parents assist their children in Building self-esteem?

- Help your child learn to do things independently.
- When teaching your child how to do things, show and help them at first, thus empowering them to feel confident and able.
- Praise your child when appropriate and avoid negative criticism.
- Be a good role model.
- Focus on their strengths.
- Let your child be helpers and givers.

Children with a positive self-esteem will:

- feel liked and accepted
- feel confident
- feel proud of what they can do
- think good things about themselves
- believe in themselves.

In the spirit of the message of St Dominic – to praise, to bless and to preach – and his motto Veritas – Truth, and especially during this month when we honour Women and the girl-child, we ask you to join us in our work in building “healthy respectful relationships” as we strive towards honouring the common good so that every individual in our Springfield family can thrive. Let us, together, make these conversations count.

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