



Dear Parents

There have been meetings of only a moment which have left impressions for life, for eternity. J R Miller

I first met Pam Muir when I arrived at Oakhill three years ago. She was certainly one of the most peaceful, loving, passionate people I have been fortunate to have engaged with. In September this year Pam passed away from cancer: Oakhill lost a founder, a past Board member and a parent. Pam's legacy lives on in her wonderful sons, Matthew and Rob, and our heartfelt love and thoughts go to Andy her husband at this time. We will miss her but are eternally grateful that she had the energy and vision to help start this great school.

It has been a wonderfully enriching year: one filled with hope, love and enthusiasm and as it draws to a close, it is good to reflect and to celebrate the successes. Our Matrics are enjoying a well-earned rest before they contemplate the fruits of their labour on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2012. Our Celebrations of Excellence and Valedictory services have been wonderfully affirming occasions and at a busy time it is encouraging to see everybody come together to ensure that we end the year in style. Our Grade 7's are excited about their next leap and our Matrics left with dignity and pride, unlike some other schools that had to cancel valedictions and prize-givings. There is definitely a sense of harmony and excitement to all our rites-of-passage at the end of a year and I would like to congratulate both staff and pupils for ending a busy but productive year on such a high.

- **Good byes**

We will not only be saying goodbye to our Matrics this year, who have closed out their careers with us in the most mature fashion, but we will also be bidding farewell to four staff members who have made a significant difference in their time with us. **Robin Long** has been at Oakhill for the last 18 months and he has certainly made a significant impact on the young lives in his care. We will miss his compassion and dedication and wish him well on this next phase of his journey. **Hilary Talmaggies** also leaves us at the end of the year after having completed her internship and **Sallie Pettit** returns to Johannesburg to be closer to family and friends. Her quiet wisdom and experience will also be missed in Grade 4.

**Rose Solomon** who has been our Sanatorium Sister and Little Oaks Administrative Assistant has taken early retirement due to her illness and her humour and compassion will be missed

in this vital area of our school. We also say goodbye to many families who will be relocating and I would like to wish them every blessing as they settle in their new homes.

- **Staffing for 2012**

I would like to confirm that **Hanette Bower** will be joining us in a full-time capacity in the College as a Life Sciences teacher as will **Sue Carver** in the English and History Departments. Both Sue and Hanette have already made a positive difference in our academic programmes and I am excited about their involvement in a full-time capacity.

**Annette Nelson** will be joining us as our new Grade 000 teacher and her experience at the Knysna Education Trust and her love of kids and learning will certainly strengthen an already wonderfully strong team in this area.

**Loami Koekemoer** also joins us as our new Grade 3 teacher alongside Debbie Nicoll. Loami joins us from stepping Stones and brings with her a wealth of experience and wisdom. **Rene Korsten** has been appointed to the Grade 4 position and many of you have already met this vibrant energetic young lady who I have no doubt will continue to impress here.

**Rodney Anderson** has been appointed to the Grade 7 teaching position but will also specialize in Natural Sciences and I am excited about the business and engineering experience he brings to the table. He is innovative and enthusiastic in all he does and I have no doubt that his presence on our team will allow us all to grow in 2012.

We also welcome **Andre van Rooyen** as our new Transport Officer. He will be driving one of our new buses and will help us to be more efficient and organized in this department.

**Tim Paine** joins us as an intern in the Prep School. He will be studying his BSc through UNISA and will help with a variety of activities in this vital area of our school.

**Joanie van Straten** will also be joining us as our new Sport Coordinator from April 2012 and I have no doubt will help us to be more efficient in this area. She has vast experience in logistics and organization in complex systems and this is just what we need as we gear up to developing our own sports facility.

**Jill Warne** and **Marina Kok** have been appointed as Heads of Department of English and Mathematics in the Prep School and I am excited about what this intervention will bring in terms of collaboration and research in the vital areas of literacy and numeracy.

**Linda Lifson's** portfolio will also change from 2012 and she will devote all her time to developing a support centre for pupils and families. As the School Counsellor she will develop facilitations which will help all of us to cope with the rigours of living in a modern world. As our school and our world becomes busier this will become a vital role in our institution.

**Heather Mayne** will have a new role in 2012. We have asked her to head up the sanatorium as well as the school clothing shop in the new year.

**Phillip Mangiza** will now take up the full-time role of IT Technician and will be based in the server room and **Peter Bishop** will continue to develop the role of Old Oaks Liaison in preparation for our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in 2013.

The Preparatory School grade allocations are as follows for 2012:

GRADE	TEACHER
000	Annette Nelson
00	Adele Conyers
R	Caroline Payton and Deborah Seager
1	Caroline Cross and Penny Lamb
2	Barbara-Ann Hayward
3	Debbie Nicoll and Loami Koekemoer
4	Jane Horn and Rene Korsten
5	Jill Warne
6	Herman Hardick and Julie Stevenson
7	James Cross and Rodney Anderson

Pupil allocations will be communicated at the beginning of the term.

I would also like to make mention of two staff members who have faithfully served the school over the last ten years: **Dave Pryke** and **Olga Schoeman**. Thank you for all you do to enrich our pupils experience here.

Oakhill turns 20 in 2012 and this means that we celebrate with two staff members who have been here since the founding of the school. **Barbara-Ann Hayward** and **Elna Brown** were both instrumental in ensuring that our school got off to a solid start and we salute both of them for their commitment and dedication to generations of Oakhillians. We will be planting a tree in celebration of this milestone with a plaque attached commemorating their service to the school at the start of 2012.

- **Facilities**

With the growth in the school comes the need for more efficient administration and new facilities and we will be developing a new office complex for both Sharon Brown (Director of Academics: College) and Dawie Botha in the quad. There will also be an Administrative Secretary based here to help facilitate communication with parents and pupils.

We will also be erecting two new classrooms for the Grade 3 classes which will facilitate the growth in this area. These will be built next to the current Prep School Common Room.

We are also refurbishing both the FP and Little Oaks gardens over the December break and I have no doubt that the young boys and girls in both these areas of our school will enjoy the new interactive play areas we have created when they return.

- **Technology**

Each classroom has been connected to the network during the course of this year and we will be placing interactive Mimio Boards in certain classrooms and data projectors in every classroom in the school for the commencement of Term 1 in 2012. This is the first step to ensuring that our classrooms reflect a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment and we will continue to add to this as we progress through 2012.

- **2012**

We have only just completed the Preparatory School Celebrations of Excellence which have reminded me of how much we have grown in the last while. We will be starting 2012 with a total of 486 students and we will be welcoming 67 new students at the start of the new year. This will certainly place our facilities under pressure but I am comfortable with the fact that we have planned and provided for this continued growth.

- **Finally...**

We have had the most magnificent year in so many respects: there have been wonderful achievements and our pupil body has certainly been vibrant and energetic in all they have been involved in. It has also been a busy term and on behalf of the whole community, I would like to thank the Finance Committee led by Jon Salters and the Board led by Peter Wallington, for their dedication and time devoted to ensuring that we continue to seek excellence here. Teachers are often taken for granted, but I would like to pay a special tribute to all the staff who work at Oakhill and endeavour to make it a true learning and thinking environment - we are truly grateful to you for your commitment and energy. Lastly, to the heroes of our school: the young men and women who make all we do here worthwhile - I learn so much from you each day and am proud of all you achieve.

2012 is already beckoning and we look forward to touring Spain with our Hockey teams and Art Department. We will also be celebrating our inaugural Odyssey for Grade 10's and I have no doubt that there will be other exciting innovations and achievements, but before we get ahead of ourselves, I would like to thank all our parents for your energy and for once again entrusting and partnering with us as we endeavour to raise whole-hearted happy kids. Thank you also for your kindness, encouragement and support. May you have a peaceful, fulfilling holiday with your sons and daughters. (A reminder: Matric results will be released on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 and school will reopen on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2012.)

**kindest regards**



**Shane Kidwell**