

Dear Parents

“Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.”  
Mother Teresa

Term 3 of 2012 seemed to start only a few days ago but now it is drawing to a close and I am reminded that I need to appreciate each moment with the kids in our care. Our Matrics are writing their prelim exams as they prepare for their final examinations which start on 12 October and in only a few months' time they will be attending their Valediction and final Celebration of Excellence and before we know it they will be starting their university careers.

We are privileged to be able to interact with the citizens of tomorrow and to be involved in their progress as they reach for their dreams. These dreams start at an early age and it is incumbent on all of us to nurture these dreams, to encourage them and to ensure that we allow all who cross the threshold at Oakhill to believe that they can achieve greatness.

We have had the good fortune of watching the Olympics and the Para-Olympics and I am amazed at how well South Africans have done in all areas. How can we forget Chad le Clos, Oscar Pistorius or the Rowing Quad who carried the dreams of a whole nation and won Gold Medals? While watching these successes I was reminded of some core principles that led to these achievements:

- A vision to succeed
- Determination to achieve a personal goal
- Hours of dedication and practise
- The pain and suffering of failure
- The dream of a reward on the world stage

These principles for success start at school and if we can inculcate them in our children we will allow them to dream and experience success beyond their wildest expectation. I had the good fortune of being privy to a sms sent to a school coach the night before the rowing quad won gold - the young man involved had this to say to his teacher:

*“Coach, after our first practice session together, you told me that I could row at the Olympics one day. I didn't believe you. It seemed like an impossible dream. Tomorrow we go out to row in the Olympic final. I can hardly believe it, but we know we will do our best. You believed in me, you gave me a dream. Thanks Coach!”*

All of us are like this young teacher/coach: we can all see the immense talent and potential in our kids and it is important that we remember that our roles as educators and parents are significant in

the lighting and nurturing of these dreams in our children. So often we downplay their dreams or we live our own dreams through them and it is crucial that our words of encouragement and our belief in their ability allow them to achieve their goals and dreams in the future. This nurturing may involve some tough-love or some quiet reflection, some gentle prodding or some forceful encouragement, but we should not shy away from our responsibility to ensure that they start believing in their immense talent and potential. Neil Armstrong, who died recently, first started dreaming of walking on the moon at age 16. What dreams are you nurturing and encouraging in your home?

I have just been interrupted by two young Grade 4 ladies, **Tessa Micic** and **Alexa Shutte** who have recently returned from the Knysna recycling plant and have encouraged their peers to write me a letter challenging us to provide an area for glass, paper and plastic recycling on our property. I have no doubt that their dream of ensuring that we become more aware of the waste that we are producing, will become reality as we head into the future.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”  
Eleanor Roosevelt

In a recent article, journalist Jo-Ann Bekker, wrote that, three years ago, **Caspar Lee** (a Matric student at Oakhill) started making comic mini-videos for YouTube to distract himself from his addiction to computer games. Today he is the winner of YouTube’s next comic prize worth R120 000. Caspar has certainly followed his dream and I have no doubt that he will continue to do so once he matriculates at the end of this year. We are amazed at his creativity and we are humbled that he has thrived at Oakhill. Please take the time to watch his video about Oakhill on our webpage: [www.oakhillschool.co.za](http://www.oakhillschool.co.za)

Another dream come true at Oakhill is that of **Mark Davies** who is an incredible young man in so many ways. Humble, dedicated, innovative and talented are words which come to mind when describing him but he has recently designed and built the Unison. What’s that you might ask? What does it look like and what does it do?



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***Unison Elite***  
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*This is a media centre like the Batmobile is a family car. A full PC embedded in a component amp-style chassis with Wi-Fi, gigabit LAN, a terabyte of storage, a Veris RM200 Windows remote and a backlit LCD screen. It runs Windows 7, is completely customisable and will do anything any media player has ever dreamt of. With 1TB of storage, hook it up to the internet and download / stream your favourite content directly to your TV. It comes with a GPU and a gamepad for a little light gaming, and if it ever gets slow you can upgrade it.*

Wow, what talent, what creativity, what innovation! Mark is truly an entrepreneur who is following his passion and dream and we are immensely proud of his achievements.

Another young man who has excelled is **Niklas Martin**: he has recently participated in the Jerry's Grom Bash Body Boarding Competition in Cape Town where he came first in the u16 category.

Nik has also been participating in the South African Body Boarding Tour. The tour consists of 4 events around SA. Nik finished second overall in the u18 age group. He has been chosen to represent the South African Body Boarding Team at the World Games in Venezuela on 24 November. Another success story, another dream, another young man living his passion! Nik is not only a surfer: he has recently had one of his pieces of English writing published in English Alive, a publication of writing from talented teenagers from around the country.

After having taken a break from the writing of this newsletter to meet some prospective parents in my temporary office - the College Music room - I am amazed at the constant stream of students popping in to chat and, more importantly, to grab a guitar to entertain their friends with. While I'm talking to these new parents, who happen to be asking me some difficult questions, I notice the tentative figures of **Jonathan van der Merwe** and **Ashleigh Weavers**, his girlfriend, hovering at the door. I immediately recognize that this is my chance to squirm out of the questioning and invite them in - on one condition - that they play us a song. Well, need I say more, our prospective parents are signing the admissions forms as Jonathan regales them with a confident classical solo performance. I could not have planned it better - but that is what makes me so proud of Jonathan, Ashleigh and every other young man and woman, boy and girl in our school. They are relaxed yet confident, well-spoken, and erudite and most importantly: HAPPY! It doesn't take much to notice this when you walk around our beautiful campus. All strangers have to do, to be convinced to join us, is to interact with the joy which abounds in each and every one of your sons and daughters.

Another wonderful young man is **Jason Campbell**. He is our Adventure Racing Team captain and we are proud of all he has achieved as he quietly, modestly and confidently leads in this area. Please read about his achievements in the latest addition of the Oakhill Echoes which is available on our website. Also, read of the courage, resilience and pride with which **Joshua Buchalter** has led our first ever 15-man rugby side - he is truly another amazing young man!

Our Prep school has also excelled at the recent George Eisteddfod: **Emma Gibson** won second place overall in the George Eisteddfod in the Speech and Drama category. All Oakhill children who participated in the Speech and Drama category achieved Gold Awards. What an amazing achievement. Something that Oakhill and Mrs Hardick can really be proud of.

Before I get too carried away and continue to boast about events like: Music in the Blue, Light Blue, our Prep Derby Day against Holy Cross, our magnificent Matric Dance, our celebration of Madiba's 94<sup>th</sup> Birthday, the Independent Schools Golf Festival, hosted by Oakhill, the Ugly Bug Ball at Little Oaks, and a myriad of other activities, I would like to conclude this part of my newsletter by mentioning our school motto: The Joy of Learning. We see an amazing range of success here - in fact - it completely overwhelms me at the end of each term, because with each success we boast about, we have allowed equal failure, and this proves that we are truly a learning organization.

Our motto is truly significant, because before we can learn through our successes and our failures we need to have trust, strong relationships and buckets-full of love. Before learning can unfold, we need to feel safe and happy and I can truly say that at Oakhill we have JOY before LEARNING in more ways than one - we have truly found the Joy of Learning here!

- **Round Square Schools**

As we move into the last term of the year and start considering what we should be doing to ensure success in the future, we have decided to formalize some of the fundamentally important tenants of developing wholesome young men and women. Oakhill will be making application to join the Round Square group of schools and the core values which embody this organization fit particularly well with our ethos. Their ideals encompass:

- Internationalism
- Democracy
- Environment
- Adventure
- Leadership
- Service

We are currently involved in so many of these areas and I am confident that we will be able to build on experiences like the Odyssey and the President's and Headmaster's awards, to ensure success for our young men and women as we grow in these areas.

- **China Tour 2013**

I have been overwhelmed at the impact that Mandarin teaching has had at Oakhill and it is exciting to announce that we will be taking a tour to China in 2013. We will be visiting both Shanghai and Beijing and I have no doubt that the young men and women who have signed up for this adventure will grow immeasurably from the experience and remember it for the rest of their lives. I am grateful to Dawie Botha for all he has done to make this dream a reality.

- **Scholarship Awards for 2013**

The following young men and women from Oakhill Prep have won scholarships to Oakhill College in 2013 and our sincere congratulations are extended to them and their families.

Alex Patz  
Tamara Foyn  
Erin Young  
Anna Reid

Francine Olivier  
Bianca Mincione  
Julia Lamprecht  
Scott Armstrong

- **Parent Forums**

We have recently had Dr Morley speak to parents and staff members about nutrition and wellness and I for one learnt a great deal which I will be applying in my own life. If you have not yet been to one of these events I would encourage you to chat to Linda Lifson, our resident School Counsellor. She continues to organise world-class speakers and I look forward to hearing Michael Griffin, a world renowned educator and emotional intelligence expert in Term 4. The details of this talk are posted on our webpage and I would encourage you to join us on this occasion.

- **21<sup>st</sup> Birthday celebrations**

Oakhill will be celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday in 2013 and we are planning a community celebration which will include our whole town. **Please book the weekend of 28 February to 3 March 2013** in your diaries to ensure that we can celebrate in style. All of our pupils will be involved in these celebrations which will culminate with an all-inclusive function on the evening of Saturday 2 March 2013. Details of these functions will be shared with you in the near future.

- **Celebration of Excellence and Valediction ceremonies**

Please take note of these important dates for next term:

**19 October at 17:00 - Matric Valediction**  
**20 October at 09:00 - College Celebration of Excellence**  
**29 November at 17:00 - FP Celebration of Excellence**  
**30 November at 17:00 - IP Celebration of Excellence**  
**5 December at 17:00 - Little Oaks End of Year Concert**

Nelson Mandela said: 'It seems impossible until it's done' and this term has felt surreal and all I have mentioned in this newsletter seems impossible - but it has been done, by your sons and daughters and we can all be immensely proud of every single individual who has contributed to our success this term. Thank you for positively supporting us in every endeavour we make to indulge in the Joy of Learning at Oakhill and I wish you every blessing as you spend time with your families in the next two weeks before we make the final dash through the last term of the year. Travel safely and celebrate your sons and daughters successes!

**Kindest regards**



**Shane Kidwell**