



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Recruitment

The vast majority of international schools operate on an August to July school year. The northern summer is therefore when the game of musical chairs is played and many teachers leave one school and move to another. Teachers like to have their new jobs lined up and schools like to have replacements appointed as early as possible so now – January and February – is the peak season for recruitment for August.

In fact, turnover at WIS is relatively low and this year is typical. At present we have four vacancies for August and we are actively seeking suitably qualified staff.

What does “suitably qualified” mean? Well, for starters, it means having a recognised teaching qualification. Secondly, previous experience of teaching one or more of our educational programmes (the PYP, Checkpoint, IGCSEs and the IBDP) is an obvious advantage. And thirdly, I really want to find people with substantial experience of living and working internationally.

But...

It's hard. The number of international schools is growing faster than ever and competition to attract and retain the best teachers is fierce.

We do have a lot going for us. The school has a good name internationally and Namibia is an attractive destination. Many good teachers would certainly consider us seriously when looking for the next job.

Our biggest handicap, however, is that most (i.e. almost all) other international schools pay a good deal better than we do.

It is a handicap the school is going to have to address.

With best wishes

**Peter MacKenzie**

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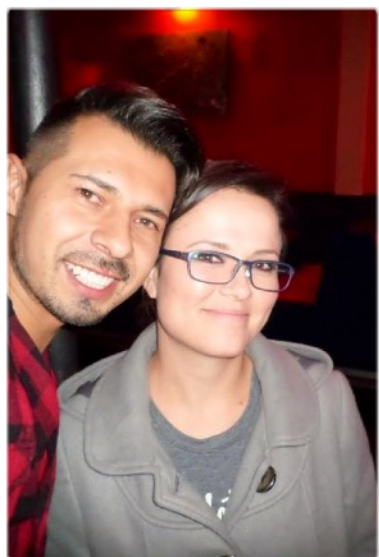
## Dates to Remember

### January 2017

- **20:** PTA Community Meeting
- **23:** Secondary Week B
- **30:** Secondary week A
- **31:** Board Meeting



PTA Community Meeting Tonight at 5.30pm in the Auditorium.



### Staff Feature

#### Jolene Nel - Graphic Design

I was accidentally born in a small town called Graaff-Reinet situated in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. My parents were on holiday with my other two siblings, and boy were they surprised! I basically grew up in Namibia and see myself as a Namibian. I love this country and can't see myself moving to South Africa anytime soon.

I have an older brother and sister who both live in Namibia, we grew up like old-school kids, playing outside, getting into trouble and sometimes getting a hiding if we took it too far.

At around the age of 17 I moved to Tanzania and Malawi for a year, both very beautiful countries, an experience I will never forget. We then moved back to Windhoek and I finished my schooling online. I then went to study Marketing Business Management at a local college called IIT.

I started at WIS in April 2008, so I have been here for almost 8 years.

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## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

### What's so great about the PYP?

Mr. MacKenzie's Oryx article last week focused on why parents would want to enrol their children at Windhoek International School and one of the answers was the IB programmes. One of the top reasons I chose to come to work at WIS was because it offers the PYP. This is the third school in which I've worked that the PYP has been offered and the fifth school offering the DP.

What I've observed over the years is that the children who experience and learn through IB programmes are different in a positive way and stand out amongst their peers in other schools. WIS kids do as well. I believe the IB's Learner Profile plays a major role in how our students think and act. Here are some of the reasons why our students are different:

They know how to think for themselves, are able to communicate their thoughts and ideas and ask questions.

- They are caring about others.
- They are able to look beyond the local environment to a more global view.
- WIS kids are able to interact socially with a variety of people and with their own classmates who come from a variety of backgrounds different from their own.
- They represent the school well when they go on school field trips.
- WIS kids are respectful and friendly.
- They are confident and able to share their learning in front of others.

People outside of the WIS community have commented how our kids are different, be it the questions they ask on a field trip and the knowledge they show about the topic being explored, or how well behaved they are, or the sportsmanship they display at a competition. I think this speaks highly of our programme and of our students. The behaviour, thoughts and actions of our students exemplify what's so great about the PYP and why for the last 16 years I have made a conscious decision to only work in schools where the PYP is offered.

Regards,  
**Beth Smith**

## What's happening in the PYP?

### Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome back to the next exciting part of the year in the Primary Years Programme.



Despite the slow paced break it feels like we have come back and hit the ground running. The thing that has really struck me is the excitement and energy level on the faces of both students and teachers. This is invigorating to witness after such a "hot" and tiring end of last term.

I want to mention both teachers and students have been working hard on many levels. Lots of preparation and planning has gone into the next inquiry and investigations that will taking place in the various year levels. Students are

**Staff Feature continued**

It seems like only yesterday. I first started as a teaching assistant in Year 6 and the rest is history. I love design and creative thinking. In 2012, I decided to study graphic design. This is a huge industry and has so much potential. I'm continuously learning as I go.

I'm very passionate about animals, and this passion made me realise that I had to be a better person and change myself. I therefore went vegan in 2012 and have never looked back, the best decision of my life.

One of my favourite quotes of all time always resonates at the back of my mind "be the change you want to see in the world" - Mahatma Gandhi. Those words ring so true and I try to live by them everyday. We are the keepers of this world and we need to protect the planet and the innocent animals.

My passion helps me to give more; I spend most of my time volunteering for the SPCA and the CPS. Homeless animals on the streets of Windhoek are a huge problem and we need to educate our children, they are the future. That is why I love working at WIS, here students learn to be part of the solution and not the problem.

Even though I dearly love all animals and would not even hurt an annoying fly, I do have a very special love or "obsession" as some may call it, for cats. I grew up with cats around me my whole life and I guess this is where the love for them stems from.

**Continues on page 4**

coming into class and finding their feet with dynamics and friendships again and this is a time of reflection on what we are doing and why we are doing it. This is a great lead into our investigations and also as we progress towards Student Led conferences towards the end of this term.

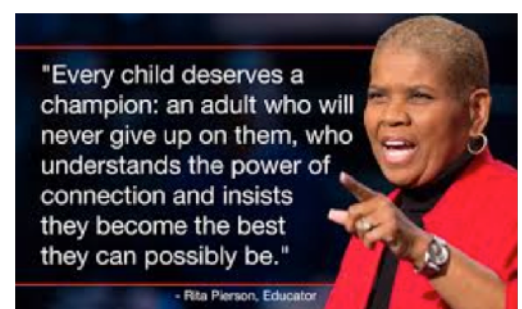
Teachers and students will be endeavouring to plan and create units of inquiry together. Students will be encouraged on independent inquiry and will be bringing this knowledge, artifacts or experience back into the classroom to share and add to discussion and investigations. This week you will be seeing the **PYP Unit Newsletters** circulating on the blogs. There are some nice ideas and suggestions for parents to grab onto in regards to "How can I support my child at home?". As much as possible we want to encourage activities at home to focus on asking students questions and allowing students to take initiative in finding related materials and ideas that they can connect with and that they can bring to school and share.

The Primary staff has also been doing a lot of reflection over the course of this year and at the end of last year. We have been working on our PYP Self-Evaluation study and in inquiry focus groups have spent time discussing and reflecting on our practice in the Primary Years Programme. The sections explored and evaluated included: *Standard A: Philosophy, Standard B1: Leadership and structure, Standard B2: Organisation, Standard C1: Curriculum - Collaborative Planning, Standard C2: Curriculum - Written, Standard C3: Curriculum - Teaching & Learning and Standard C4: Written - Assessment*. All Homeroom teachers, Specialist teachers, Teaching Assistants and Primary support staff were involved in this process. From here I compiled the findings and ratings of our evaluation study and put together a report to send off to the office of the International Baccalaureate. Now the Primary staff is acting on these reflections and you may have noticed development and changes in and around the classrooms. What comes with any review, is opportunity to reflect and develop within this process of movement and change. This is exciting to see and I am very proud of the hardworking staff we have in Primary at WIS.

To follow is a visit by an IB PYP team who will come and see the school, meet the staff and parents and confirm and validate that what we have reviewed and rated in our report is what actually is happening in our classrooms. I know the next term will be full of promise and change as we strive for improvement. The visit will take place this semester; **29.03.2017 to 31.03.2017**. Our two visitors will be travelling from South Africa and Agha Khan Academy, Mombasa, Kenya. Thank you is extended to parents who took time out to fill out the in-depth survey sent out last term as well.

Here is to an exciting term ahead!

**Regards,**  
**Avril van Zyl - PYP Coordinator**



**Staff Feature continued**

They are indeed very special and can be so loving. If you are fortunate to have the love of a cat, you are truly lucky.

I currently have twelve cats, yes I know, but to be fair, I rescued them all. I shall tell you their names: Kali, Isis, Luna, Maya, Akira, Yuki, Stevie-Wonder (he is blind), Bruce-Lee, Tofu, Stan-Lee, Peni and Nghalepo, I love them to bits and I would not change them for anything. They are my sunbeam in a dark world.

So this is me; in a nutshell. Why not make small changes to make the world a better place.

**P.S. Some fun cat facts:**

- a group of cats are called a clowder or a glaring
- cats can't taste sweet stuff
- all cats are lactose intolerant
- cats can only sweat through their paws
- cats sleep 70% of their lives

## Primary Student Council

### Representatives for 2016 - 2017

#### Who We are?

- "We help out in our local community, like the soup kitchen in Katatura."
- "We organise Charity Drives."
- "We take part in organising special days and events."
- "We are involved in things like spirit week in the last week of term."
- "We remind fellow students about the Learner profile and how we should be at WIS."
- "We support our school."



**Our Year 6 team: Zahra and Anushka**



**Our Year 5 team: Salome and Roger**



**Our Year 4 team: Naeem and Adiah**



**Our Year 3 team: Sophia and Hala**

**Secondary School  
Students not picked up  
@ 13:45**

Parents/Guardians are advised that, as of Monday 23rd January, secondary school students not picked up from school and not in an Afternoon Activity will be sent to attend the Homework Club. They will be expected to attend the Homework Club until 14:45 and cannot leave before 14:45.

**What is it about WIS that makes us so special?**

Naeem: "We are an international school."

Evie: "That means that everyone from different countries can come to our school."

Candice: "That we have a Principal, like Ms. Beth."

Kyle: "We are a lucky school! We have friends."

Salome: "We are open to lots of people, countries, and places around the world."



**Year 2 team: Kyle and Candice**



**Year 1 team: Wetufe and Gui**

Wetufe: "We have friends, when we are new we are not always on our own."

Candice: "People are nice."

Hala: "People are kind."

Adia: "People are caring."

Roger: "We have good teachers."

Adia: "We have good learning support."

Gui: "We have student council."

Salome and Evie: "We have a variety of school equipment and learning space to play and learn in e.g. a big playground."

Anushka: "We have the learner profile and attributes - we cooperate with each other, listen to each others' ideas, we can learn about different people's cultures."

Wetufe: "It's special because we can learn new things and from each other."

**Why do I like to be part of the Primary Student Council?**

Anushka - "We get to represent who we are."

Naeem: "We are Communicators."

Roger: "You get to know what's going on at school and can tell people."

Salome: "We can do something to help Primary."

**Reminders to Primary from student Council:**



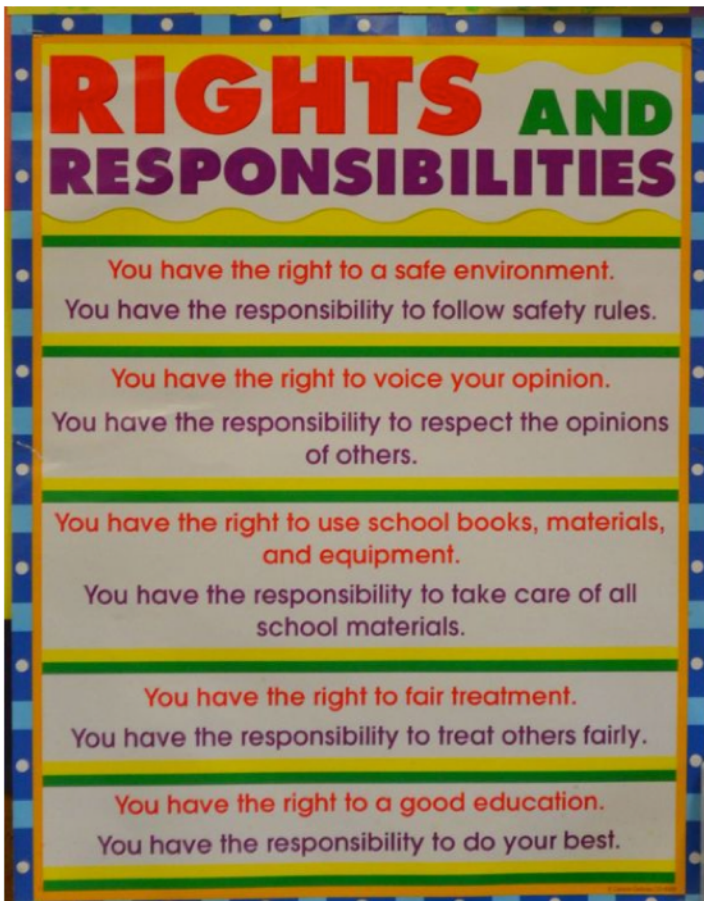
•Remember all teachers and students need to wear hats in Primary school.

•Remember to pick up litter

**SECONDARY PRINCIPAL**

**Supporting students to be ready for class**

There are enthusiastic supporters as well as opponents to the idea of homework for students. One can argue both ways - giving homework to students helps them learn, giving homework to students takes up their time to involve themselves with extra-curricular activities.



At WIS, we do believe that there are compelling reasons for giving homework to our students. It should be manageable and useful. It gives students an opportunity to understand and find out if they grasped the work done in school.

However, especially in Middle School, many children find it difficult to manage their time and be organised enough to complete their homework on a regular basis. This has a negative effect on the student's own performance, but can also have an impact on the class' learning. Therefore, there are consequences for not being prepared for class - i.e. not doing homework, not bringing books, not bringing your iPad.

We have implemented these for a while now. Students who find it difficult to come to class prepared get three chances, but then they are sent to a **Reflection Session** on a Friday after school. We believe that

"punishment" per se does not solve the problem. Therefore we try to sit with the students and discuss the challenges they face to try to find ways to make it better for the future. More detailed information on the procedure for doing this is posted on the D6 and will be added to the Student Handbook for the next academic year.

We appeal to parents and guardians to familiarise themselves with this procedure and to reinforce the expectations at home so that we can support our students if they find it difficult to manage their time or be sufficiently organised.

Regards,  
Maggie Reiff

**SUCCESS IS NO ACCIDENT.**  
It is hard work, perseverance,  
learning, studying, sacrifice  
and most of all, **love** of what you are doing.  
- Pele

**WIS**  
proudly  
presents

# Around the World in 5 Days!

**BOOK WEEK & MOTHER TONGUE DAY**  
**20 to 24 February 2017**  
Discovery! Exploring! Adventure!

More details to come...  
Check e-mails & class blogs & Oryx & D6

Parents! We are looking for:  
Storytellers & Mother Tongue Readers & Ideas...  
email [jstroh@wis.edu.na](mailto:jstroh@wis.edu.na)

