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#### **Dates to Remember**

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- 15: End of term 4 Last day for Secondary
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# THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

This will be the last Oryx of the school year. We launched it back in September and I do hope you continue to find it interesting and informative.

Inevitably, the end of year is a time to look back and reflect. From my perspective, I think we can be quietly satisfied with what has been achieved. Improvements have been incremental rather than revolutionary and many have been behind the scenes but the school is undoubtedly moving in a healthy direction.

Still, many challenges remain. The addition of new facilities and the upgrading of existing ones has been on the agenda for too long. We must move forward with this. Also, we must continue to improve the employment packages we offer teachers. If we wish to attract and retain the best we need to move closer to what most other international schools pay.

We continue to look for opportunities to participate in competitive sports though our unique calendar works against us here. And I have to believe that school can do more in terms of the performing arts. There is remarkable talent within the school and this year we have enjoyed many musical and dramatic performances. But they have been somewhat ad hoc and small-scale. I would like to see us staging major productions and concerts.

So, the end of year report? Good, but could – and must and will – do better.

Let me thank everyone for your trust and confidence in the school this year and for your continued support next year. Wherever you are going and whatever you are doing, have a safe and relaxing holiday.

With best wishes

Peter MacKenzie



**Teacher Feature** 

Tanya-May Knouwds Learning Support Teacher

Tell us about your educational background and where you grew up.

My educational background starts with my parents - both were teachers and therefore I had no escape! My mum taught me in Grades 1 and 2 ... in hindsight I think it must've been hard for her with me in her class .... at times she even sent me to the principal ... which was my dad!

I was born in South Africa and grew up in a very small little town in the south of Namibia called Bethanie and later in Keetmanshoop. My grandad had a farm in the south, near Helmeringhauzen, so on the farm is where we spent most weekends as well as holidays.

It was a carefree time on the farm - learning how to drive in an old Landrover; riding horses and donkey carts; learning about nature; playing poker and telling jokes around the fireplace; and playing golf and tennis (grandad built a tennis court as well as a 9 hole golf course on his farm).

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## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

It is hard to believe that the end of the academic year is finally upon us. Though we still have one more week of school remaining there are many things happening: Year levels are finishing up their final units of inquiry, presentations are being given, end of year assessments are being completed, portfolios are being finalized, Year 6 students are involved in transition activities preparing them for Year 7, while Lower Primary students are busy practicing and preparing for bringing the Circus to WIS.

The second semester reports will be sent home on Thursday and Friday 16-17 June. If you do not receive your child's report, please contact the office on or after Monday, 20 June. When reading the report please keep the definition of the descriptors in mind along with the comments.

The end of the school year is always filled with mixed emotions - excitement for the holidays and looking ahead to a new school year, while at the same time sadness in saying goodbye to classmates, friends and teachers who are moving away or going to another school. While we are sad to be saying goodbye to Astrid zu Bentheim, Christi Locke, Marc Deragon, and Natasha Dalrymple-George, we wish them all the best in the new chapters of the lives and thank them for their contributions to WIS. Some people come into our lives and guickly go.

Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same. (Flavia Weedn)

Many parents ask how they can help their children at home. The best thing you can do during the holidays to support your child's learning is to encourage reading, whether it be reading to your child, having your child read to you or your child reads independently. The teachers will be posting on the class blog some additional ideas for things your children can do during the holidays.

Thank you to all of you for your support this academic year. For those of you who are leaving WIS, best wishes to you in the new country, returning to your home country, and/or in transitioning to a new school. If you are traveling during the holidays, may your journeys be safe, smooth and fun. To all who are returning to WIS for the new academic year I look forward to welcoming you back to school on August 8th.

Regards, **Beth Smith** 

## From our PAD

We have had a wonderful creative time here in our PAD (Primary Art Department) this year. What immediately springs to mind are all the Friday morning exhibitions! We have tried to have each of our 8 year group exhibit at least once this year!

This could not have been possible without your support and attendance on a Friday morning and other places. Many parents have mentioned that they

#### **Teacher Feature continued**

## What motivated you to study Educational Psychology?

My great love for children and interest in psychology and learning difficulties motivated me to study first B Ed Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch and then from there to go on to complete my Master's degree in Educational Psychology, also at Stellenbosch.

## What do you enjoy most in your job? / What makes you passionate about your job?

I love using play, humour and other creative ways to help my students grasp and learn something new. I see teaching as a great honour, but also as a great responsibility. As Stephen King said: "We never know which lives we influence, or when, or why".

## What do you think are important qualities a Learning Support Teacher should have?

Compassion; an understanding that learning could be difficult; the ability to encourage and uplift; the willingness to learn; and a good sense of humour!

## Can you tell me a little bit about your personal life?

I've been married to an amazing husband, Willie, for 7 and a half years. We have three little children: Liné is 4 years old, Kari is almost turning 2 and their little brother, John-Louis is 7 months old. My children teach me about unselfishness and humility everyday.

## Could you describe your personality?

I'm easy-going and friendly. I enjoy the simple things in life and try to be thankful everyday.

#### Continues on page 4



like these exhibitions at drop off time, saving them time to come again to school during the morning or later.

In addition parents have mentioned that they are able to see the bigger picture (excuse the pun!) of what their child and class are spending their creative time on.

The Year 6's their final artworks, which you should have received by now, was a lovely culmination of their primary art: Myths and Legends Paintings and Ceramic Cupcakes at the PYP Exhibition.

The students, indeed your children, have so enjoyed showing off their work; many explaining exactly how they went about it, what worked and what perhaps didn't work so well in their art.

A big thank you to everyone for a supportive lovely year. We look forward to seeing you many more times in our PAD next year!

Have a wonderful holiday; encourage your child/ren to draw on holiday, and travel safely.

Genie Albrecht and Sigrid Ndadi



#### **Teacher Feature continued**

My mottos in life belonged to my mum and my grandad - two people who both played an immense role in my life. Their mottos "Choose JOY" and "Always be Upright, Honest and Brave" now form part of who I am.

Interview questions by Carin Vogelaar







## **How We Express Ourselves - KG2**

#### **End of the Unit Presentations**

Our last unit of inquiry is **How we express ourselves**. The central idea is *People express themselves using many types of creative art.* Students inquire into the ways in which we discover and **express ideas, feelings**, nature, **culture**, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and **enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic** 

As an initial provocation we shared different types of creative art to give students ideas. We visited the FNCC and their art galleries, watched the Year 7 students expressing themselves during drama lessons, explored with colour, different texture, music, dance ect. The student's responses to different art was incredible. The students provided us with many interesting thoughts about expression. We talked about what ideas we might want to share through art and language. Different types of creative expressions were proposed to engage the student's thinking and provided a common but open-ended starting point for our unit of inquiry.

Throughout the unit students created outstanding work! If you have any doubt, pop into our KG foyer to see a collection of their projects. From paintings, drawings, collages and photos to collaborative time with the Year 9's & 8's. We created recycling art projects and much more. Students were able to chose a type of creative art which they would like to perform during their end of the unit presentation. Their choices ranged from dancing, singing, acting, puppets show, storytelling and 'Creative Hands'.

A special thank you to **Mrs. Catherine Mousseau-** Secondary French Teacher, **Mrs. Mari-Louise Schumann-** Year 7 Homeroom/ Middle School Music/ Drama Teacher, **Mrs. Angatha Janse van Rensburg-** Middle school coordinator/English teacher and the **Year 8 & 9's** for great teamwork,openmindedness, enthusiasm and commitment.

To see our children be such risk-takers was amazing! They performed in front of various year levels, and not once did they hesitate when getting up on stage! Thank you to those who came to watch them perform. It's much appreciated. We would like to congratulate our students on a job well done. We are very proud to see you all grown and being enthusiastic about ART.

Kindergarten 2 Team ( Ms. Jacky , Ms. Beata, Ms. Quaanita, Ms. Jennifer)

## A parent's view of the PYP...

Why can't he read yet? I could at that age. Why can't he colour in neatly between the lines? I could at that age.

Ok, so...some of you may know I'm a teacher in the WIS secondary school and may already be thinking this article is a scam since I work for the school. But...this article is written purely with my parent hat on!

You see....I started working at WIS in 2009 and had actually said to my

husband one day "I'm not sure what will happen if we ever have a child. I'm not sure I understand or agree with the PYP programme and it would be wrong if I worked at WIS but sent my child to a different Primary school. Might I have to leave my job at a school that I love working in?" So...yes, I was a cynic and I was concerned!

Eventually the day came that we brought home our wonderful baby Alexander. And, yes, he grew older and it was time to start school. He started in the WIS toddlers programme and this year he is in KG1. So, through the time he has been at the school (and for a while prior to that) I started to learn more and take more of a vested interest in the Primary school and how it works. My initial opinion? "I started reading in nursery. Why can't the kids here …?" I started writing very early on. Why can't the kids here …?" Well…Alex is now four and a half (although he tells me he's four and a quarter!) and he doesn't yet read or write, apart from his own name. Does that mean he's a slow learner?

Does that mean he's not good enough? Absolutely not! Alex has his interests and his strengths and they are not the same interests and strengths as everyone else in the class. The point is that in this PYP system every child is given the opportunity to develop at the right time for them, and to develop and strengthen their own individual interests. He arrives each morning and there are different activities laid out in different areas of the classroom and he can choose which one interests him most and can go and explore that area in his own way. He is not told what to do there but he can use his own imagination and creativity as to how to play with the items or activities on that particular table. Enabling a student to choose what and how to play themselves gives them independence, ownership of the activity and helps develop their creativity.

I was reading an article recently where a man (whose name escapes me) was saying that in his opinion there is too much pressure for children to be able to read and write very young. Children should be left to figure it out for themselves as they develop the curiosity for it in their own time. He also said that children are sometimes spoilt by parents who feel the pressure to always have an activity for the child to do so that they don't get bored, but that this in itself is spoiling the child. He said that children should know what it feels like to have to create their own fun. Let them have times where they might be bored and have to learn how to deal with that. Let them use their own imagination to create fun themselves. I used to be one of those parents that thought I should make the fun for him. But, now I love that Alex has the opportunity to do that for himself.

The PYP programme does not let children get "bored" but it gives them the opportunity to use their own imagination and creativity and this spills out at home too. My husband and I can leave Alex alone and watch from afar as he finds an old toilet roll or a pile of pillows or an old coat hanger and suddenly he is playing the most wonderful game that he has created himself. These are the skills through which he is able to develop himself at his pace. And for these reasons I am so happy that I do work at WIS and that my son has the opportunity to learn at a school that offers the PYP programme.

Thank you WIS and thank you to all his teachers. I look forward to Alex continuing to develop in this system with his future teachers!

Lian Cohen - WIS Parent



## Hail in Winter!

Tuesday, 7 June 2016, was one for the history books indeed. The last recorded hail storm of this magnitude in Namibia happened 55 years ago; June 1961!

## Diary of a Soon-To-Be-Year 7

By: Naomi Dukes

"BEEP, BEEP, BEEEP!" goes the highly irritating sound of my alarm clock. Half asleep, I lazily creep out of bed. After I've fully adapted to being awake my eyes look at the ticking object



"6:30! I said alarmed knowing I usually wake up at 5:10.

A little bit confused, I sat on my puffy bed to manage my time. I always like to organize my time beforehand.

"Ok I'll take ten minute shower, then I'll take five minutes to get dressed and ready for school, then after I'll take 10-15 minutes to make lunch and eat. Today is a big day, which means big things are happening.

I'm terrified.

As I walk towards the kitchen, the aroma of crispy bacon and freshly made pancakes put me in a daze. Slowly coming out of the daze I continue to walk into the kitchen. As I enter the kitchen a tall figure comes to hug me.

"Aw, my baby is growing up so fast" My mom says gripping tighter with every word.

Wait, did I ever tell you why today is so special and why my mom is happier than she should be and why today has been so hectic?

Well, Simple Answer: Today is my first day of Middle school.

## **WIS Winter Charity Drive**

**Dear WIS Community** 

Thank you, thank you, thank you.....what a fantastic and overwhelming response to the "WIS Winter Charity Drive"! We have had a fantastic collection of clothing, blankets, toys and books donated to this cause. The WIS student council representatives also need a thanks.

They volunteered their own break times to come and help sort the clothing and things that were donated.



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We will be going next **Tuesday 14th June** to deliver these things to the local Soup Kitchen in Katatura. Some of our student representatives will come along to help hand out these warm things to the community.

Again thanks to our community.

#### Best wishes

Avril van Zyl (on behalf of the schools Student Councils)

## Year 6 PYP Exhibition: A journey of discovery



Completed the Primary Years Programme in style! Thank you to Ms Beth, Ms Avril, Mr Danai, Ms Jacky F, every mentor, every parent or guardian, every expert who helped our Year 6's on their Journey of discovery.

Art Exhibition: The Year 6's made "fantasy cupcakes", expressing themselves through sculpting.

During the past couple of weeks, the word "Exhibition" has been a hot topic around the walkways of WIS.

I am talking of course about the "coming of age" event all Year 6 students participate in during their final year of Primary: the PYP Exhibition. For the Exhibition this year, the boys and girls worked under the transdisciplinary theme of 'Sharing the planet' and chose topics which they are passionate about.

Throughout the entire Exhibition process, the spirit of IB Learner Profile was exemplified in the students. They were risk-takers (making connections with the wider community and interviewing experts); they were communicators; they were caring; enthusiastic and showed commitment to their personal learning journeys. And in the end, not only learned new things about their topics but also discovered a lot about themselves.

#### A few comments:

"I know now, that I have perseverance. I wanted to give up, but I didn't."

"This was the hardest thing I have ever done. Now, going to Year 7 is not so scary anymore."

"I learned that time management skills are very important. I also learned that I am not as organised as I thought."

## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Time to take a break - relax, catch up on things that were left lying, visit friends and family and places

This week I would like to take the opportunity to say goodbye to all students, families and teachers who will be leaving WIS at the end of this school year. I would also like to wish all members of the community a peaceful and enjoyable winter break - or summer break, depending on where you will be.

An academic year so quickly passes and we are looking at the end and a new beginning in August.



Reflecting on the year that is soon past, I would like to thank all parents for their support and all students for being great members of our school community. Very often, when we explain to new families who we are, we emphasise the fact that we have great kids at WIS and that the relationship between the school and parents and students is a positive and open relationship. This is a wonderful environment to grow in and to learn in. We appreciate everyone's contribution to creating this positive and open-minded community.

If you go away, enjoy the time with your family and friends and recharge to be ready for the challenges coming in the new academic year.

Our senior students will have to spend some time during the holidays working on certain matters that need time - catching up on academic work, working on the Extended Essay, researching university options and course options and generally getting all expected deadlines organised. So there is some work to be done. However, even if there is a lot of work to be done, make sure you also take a break. Especially our Diploma students should make sure that they get all their work done, but also that they take time to rest and take a break.

To all families leaving, we wish you a great new start and exciting new challenges. May WIS stay part of you in your future endeavours and please be in touch and let us know how things are going. It was great having you as part of our community. All the best for the future.

Our Secondary teachers leaving - Mrs. Keil, Mrs. Schuman and Mrs. Benson - may your plans for your next journey be realised and hopefully we will see you at WIS in the future to stay connected. We wish you success and all the best.

Regards, Maggie Reiff

## **New WIS Peer Counsellors for 2016/2017**

The above group of Year 10 students have completed their Peer Counsellor training and are ready and enthusiastic to be of support to their fellow students from the start of the next academic year. Besides offering good listening skills and emotional support to their peers, these empathetic and responsible



Back row: (L to R): Fausto Leto, Kango Zamuee, Dale Gowaseb, Lafewa Uapunduka, Stella Nghinamundova, Marcia Da Conceicao, Njeri Gichanga. Front row: David Majiedt, Ndili Shixungileni, Gabie de Freitas Bacalhau, Chantelle Pedro, Elizabeth Ros, Kyle Webb. Seated on the floor: Khalil Sawadogo, Luka Spies - Absent: Caitlin Maasdorp, Leart Petrick

young students will also help the new year 7s with their transition into Middle School. In addition, the Peer Counsellors play an important role in assisting new students to settle into their new school environment.

As with the six groups of Peer Counsellors that have gone before them, this group showed commitment and dedication throughout their training. They offer a valuable service to the school in general and to their peers in particular.

Sharon Gorelick - Nurse & Counsellor

## The future of Outdoor Education at WIS

This year has seen Outdoor Education at WIS reaching new heights and I would like to use this opportunity to give you a glimpse of what we have planned for the future.

When we took our students on a ski trip to Austria in December, it served as a "test" to see if this is something that could work at WIS. Afterwards, it was a simple decision, as anyone who went on the trip would tell you that it was indeed a VERY successful trip (and I am sure the parents who had to (and still have to) listen to all the stories will agree).

This means that the way forward has been paved for more of these trips. Currently Mrs. Jeanne Vieira and her team are planning the Foreign Language trip to Europe which will be taking place during December this year, and we have started planning other trips for the future.

These trips can be quite pricey, although we often do get a discount being school groups, but if you know what to expect you can start planning for this in advance. The value of these trips cannot be stressed enough. Students are exposed to new cultures, try new things, eat weird food and all of this is done in a

different setting than it would have been had they done it with their parents or on their own. It would be great, therefore, if students could attend at least one of these trips during their time at WIS.

One of the challenges we have faced was that students feel excluded with our options. If there is only one Ski trip a year, for instance, we are not offering anything to those who are not interested in skiing. I have therefore invited staff to make proposals for more field trips which will hopefully give everyone something to choose from. Some of these trips will have to run consecutively but I still think we can accommodate at least most people in this way. Please do not feel overwhelmed when you see all the plans, as the idea is that you will be able to look at them and be able to make a decision based on this. Most of these plans are still in the planning phase and might or might not happen.

Our trips are categorized as follows:

#### **Category A:**

These are the following compulsory trips every year (meaning all students in the year group are expected to attend it):

- Year 6 (Team Building, Personal Development)
- Year 8 (Environmental Education, Team Building)
- Year 10 (Adventure trip, Personal Development)
- Year 12 (Class trip with CAS as a basis)

These trips always happen during the term. They students an incredible opportunity to get to know their classmates outside of school and often life-long friendships are formed. I therefore want to urge all parents not to withhold this opportunity from your child.

#### **Category B**

These are trips that are not compulsory. They are usually not limited to a specific year group either, although there might be a minimum and maximum age.

July 2017:

- Scuba Diving trip to Malaysia
- Fish River Hike

#### December 2017:

- Ski Trip to Italy
- Academic tour to Europe.

#### Others

- Scuba course and qualification trip: August/September and March/ April
- Swakopmund academic/ adventure trip- Year 11 and up: During a long weekend.
- Adventure/ Culture trip- Year 8 and 9- Spitskoppe (Weekend)
- Arnheim Caves- Year 7.

#### Category C

These are non-compulsory trips where other WIS community members (mainly parents and siblings) can join as well. This might be limited to a certain range of year groups, but if a parent goes along then students who do not fall in this range can accompany them. Currently I have one trip in mind for this category, which is

• Cultural/Adventure trip to South America, including Macchu Picchu hike

More information on each trip will follow. I would also like to give a calendar with the plans for the next three years, which will make it easier for you to choose. Please keep watching the Oryx, class blogs, D6 etc for more information on this.

Safe travels for the holiday!

#### **Riegardt Smit**



## **ABC Fit kids - Winter program**

School holidays will be here soon and most kids won't know what to do with themselves.

We will offer a winter program at that aims to develop the ABC's: Agility, Balance, Coordination and Fitness through a variety of specific or play-based activities.

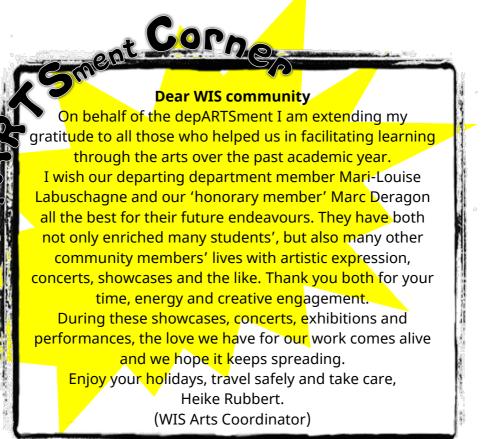
Fitness exercises will aim to develop endurance, strength and flexibility over the next six weeks.

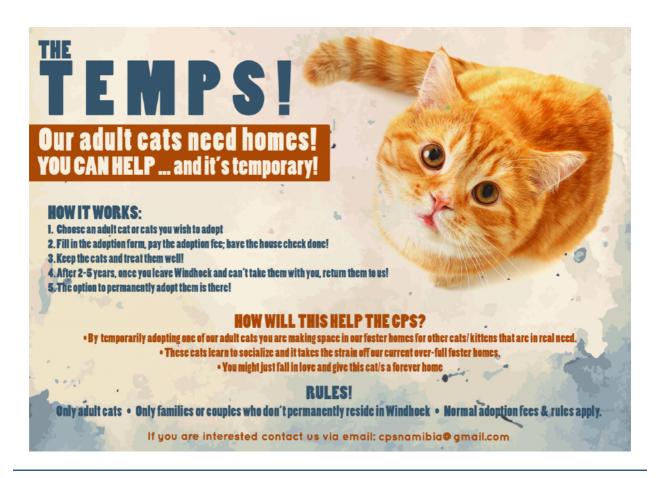
This program will be offered to kids between the ages of 5-11 years of age.

Spaces will be limited to 20 kids to provide a quality program. The program will be offered at WIS on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9:30 - 11:00.

Please email **fbeukes@wis.edu.na** if you interested in signing up your child for this 6-week program.







10 June 2016

Dear Lower Primary Parents

, Guardians, friends and family



Lower Primary Circus Production

## Roll up! Roll up!

The long awaited Circus Production is taking place next week!



Ballerinas, Strong men, lions and clowns have been rehearsing for weeks and can't wait to entertain you with their tricks!

When: Thursday, 16 June

Where: Big Top on the big soccer field

Time: 10:00

The entrance is **free**; donations are Welcome!

Seating is limited.

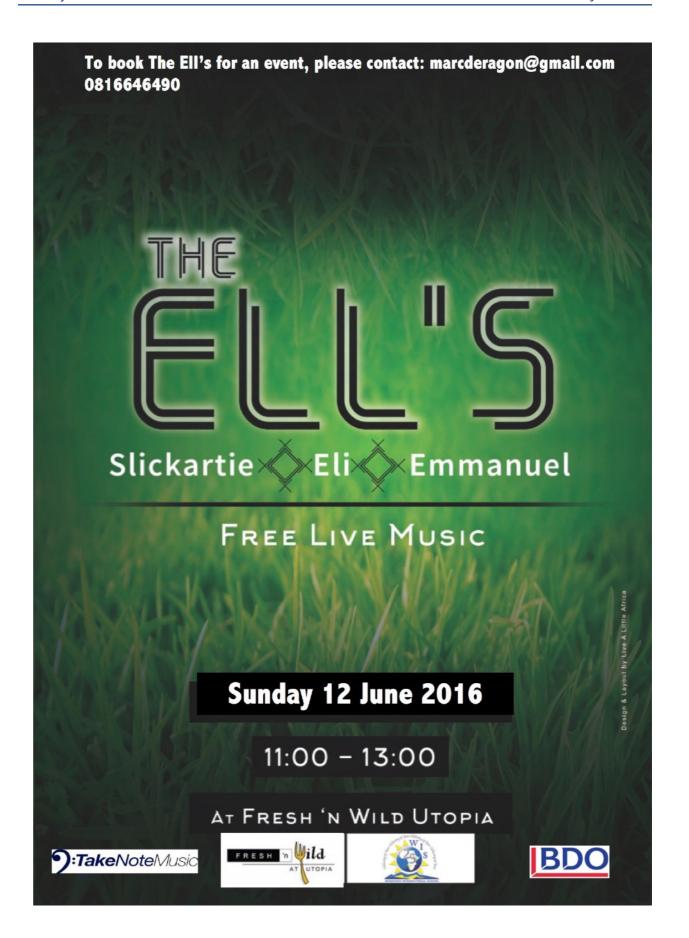
Drinks (cold drinks etc.) and Popcorn will be sold After the performance and returning all costumes, children are free to go home with their parents.

Looking forward to seeing you!









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