



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is a great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 2016-2017 school year – the school's 26th.

Many of us have been back at work for some weeks but it is only this week – hearing the sounds of excited and happy children outside my office window – that the place has truly come back to life. A school without students feels rather empty.

You'll see some changes this year. Most immediately, you will notice two mobile offices in the parent car park. **Chris Pretorius**, the Business Manager, and **Marise Du Plooy**, the Finance Officer, have moved there. In the office where they used to be you will now find **Beth Smith**, Primary Principal. And in her old office now sits **Chrizelda Steenkamp**, Secretary to the Educational Director (me!) and the Board of Directors. Another new(ish) face is **Lagia Kandjibi** who has now completed getting on for two months as HR Officer.

Less immediately visible but also important is that we have replaced the roof of the auditorium (which was leaking badly) and we have further upgraded the school's access to the Internet. And of limited interest to parents but of great significance to teachers, we have paved the staff car park. No longer will teachers sink up to their knees in dust or mud when they step out of their cars.

I introduced most of the new teachers when I wrote to parents on 3rd June but let me briefly welcome them to WIS in writing. **Kirstin Hildebrandt** (Australia), **Pamela Mungate** (Zimbabwe) and **Anna Scholtz** (South Africa) are new PYP class teachers in the Primary School and all come to WIS with prior PYP experience. **Angela Krafft** (Namibia), **Kate Matzopoulos** (Namibia), and **Tony Rishchynski** (Canada) join the Secondary School to teach German, Drama, and History respectively.

I could not introduce the seventh new teacher in June because she had not yet been appointed but I am delighted to introduce **Raji Pillai** as a new teacher of Mathematics in the Secondary School. She is Indian and has previously worked in Georgia (the country!) and in leading international schools in Mumbai. She is also a WIS 'mom' with two children joining our numbers.



Dates to Remember

August

- **26** - Heroes' Day: Public Holiday, school closed
- **29** - Back to School Night (Primary)
- **30** - Back to School Night (Middle School)
- **31** - Back to school Night (IGCSE & IBDP)



Teacher Feature

Mrs. Rajalakshmi Pillai: IGCSE and IB Math teacher

Hello there! My name is Raji Pillai and I am from India. I have been teaching for as long as I can remember for a simple reason that I started when I was at school- tutoring the neighbourhood kids. This helped me earn my pocket money.

I qualified as a pharmacist and was working in a reputed Pharmaceutical. However, I realized that teaching was my calling and decided to return back to the profession as qualified personnel. It has been 18 years since I took that decision and I have not regretted it ever.

I always tell students to do what they are passionate about. That way, one is never bored or one never feels stressed about the job that they do.

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Our seven new teachers are all fully qualified and internationally experienced. I am very happy to welcome them all!

The 2015-2016 Yearbook is published! I am sorry that it couldn't be ready before the end of the school year but when you see it I'm sure you will agree that it was worth the wait. It would be a wonderful record of any school year and it is especially appropriate that it was the school's 25th. As always, many people contributed but one name deserves special mention. **Heike Rubbert** worked way beyond the call of duty and deserves the credit for the concept and the creation of a remarkable memento. Thank you, Heike, and thank you everyone who assisted her.

So, as we look back to a year that gave us much to celebrate, we can look forward to another that should be no less successful.

Have a great year, everyone!

With best wishes

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Welcome to the start of a new academic year and a special warm welcome to all of our new students and their families. It has been wonderful this week to see the smiling faces and the enthusiasm of the students for starting school. The children seem to have quickly settled back into their school routines and are already showing confidence in their new classes. It never ceases to amaze me how much children grow and mature during the holidays.

We began the week with a back to school assembly. Children and teachers new to the school were welcomed and since there have been a few changes in teaching assignments all of the teachers and TAs were introduced. Our regular weekly assemblies will be held Fridays at 8:00. Parents will be invited to the assemblies when their children are performing or making a presentation.

As the new year gets underway, I have a few reminders and requests:

Primary School Hours

The school day for all Primary students is from 7:20-13:30. Please do not collect your children before the school day ends. If on the rare occasion you need to collect your child before the 13:30 dismissal, please be sure to sign your child out with Ms Catherine in Reception.

Parking

In the interest of safety for all, please park only in the designated areas. Do not park on the zebra crossings, where there are painted yellow lines, or words indicating no parking. With afternoon activities beginning next week, it should be easier to find parking spaces. Keep in mind that there are usually parking spaces near the PLC.

Dates to Diarise

- August 29 - Primary Back to School Night
- October 5-6 - Primary Conferences

Teacher Feature continued

One of the good things about teaching as a profession is, one is constantly surrounded by young people who have fresh ideas and are willing to try them.

This experimentation and learning forces even the teachers to take risks along with the students and learn as we go along, rectifying our mistakes and develop as individuals.

Most people believe that one has to be bestowed with a "Math gene" to be able to learn the subject. However, I chose to differ there.

If you can understand concepts and you are willing to think and work hard, you would be able to do most concepts in math. I hope that students realize that and put in the efforts.

I have been enjoying being part of WIS community and living in Windhoek so far. I look forward to knowing Namibia as well as Africa.

- October 8-16 Mid-Semester Holiday
- November 5 - International Day

Thank you all for your contributions to a smooth beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. I look forward to a positive and successful year.

Regards,
Beth Smith

Roots and Shoots!

Year 4, 5 and 6 students are you interested in being involved in the community and helping people, animals and the environment? Do you want to take action and help our community? If so, Roots and Shoots is for you.

What: Roots and Shoots was started by Jane Goodall, a famous primatologist and ethologist - who studies and helps to conserve and protect chimpanzees, and anthropologist - who studies people and societies.

How: Students who are members of Roots and Shoots look at our community and discuss problems and ways we can take action. Students who are members must commit to this after-school activity throughout the year. Students who participate the entire year will receive a Roots and Shoots certificate.

When: We will meet every Monday after school to discuss and take part in the projects and activities this year.

Where: Room 23 (3B)

Why: Be a problem solver and a leader of positive change!

Barbara Wilson

U/10 Field Hockey Winners



Afternoon Activities:

AA will start on Monday
15 August 2016 - See the
d6 for details.

On 27 July 2016, WIS finished its first regular school sports season.

Our under/10 field hockey team trained and played four matches throughout the holiday.

We played against schools such as St. Paul's, Windhoek Afrikaans Private School and Windhoek Gymnasium, which are traditionally strong in field hockey at all levels.

Our 'Blues' team played very well against these schools and achieved 3 wins and 1 draw, finishing undefeated in their group.

WIS qualified for the playoff final against Windhoek Gymnasium II. It was an exciting match with both teams putting pressure on their respective goals and coming within centimetres of scoring. The score was 0 - 0 at full time and the match went to a penalty shootout. After 3 rounds of penalty shots and 2 sudden death round, WIS emerged victorious 1 - 0 and finished top of of the table for the 2016.

It is an exceptional achievement for a team that started playing field hockey only in September 2015.

WIS congratulates the 'Blues'.

Fernando Beukes

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Back to school - another year to look forward to

Welcome to the new academic year 2016-2017. Ahead of us lie new challenges and exciting opportunities and we wish everyone great success in this upcoming year. Whether you are just starting Secondary School, whether you are just starting at WIS or whether you start a new course or year group, for all of us there is something to look forward to.

Welcome to all our new families. We hope that you enjoy WIS from the start and trust that you will become an active member of our WIS family.

We would also like to welcome our new teachers in Secondary: Mrs. Pillaj (Mathematics), Ms. Matzopoulos (Drama), Mr. Rishchynski (History) and Mrs. Krafft (German).

There is more to celebrate. During the holidays we received our IBDP results and are very proud to congratulate Eli Eagles on a 44/45 point result. The average of WIS for these examinations was 31.6, which is above the world average for the IB Diploma. On the 11th, the IGCSE results were released on we want to congratulate Mila Krafft on an excellent result. Three students - Mila, Lame Nametsegang and Tebello Khasipe - completed the IGCSE course with distinction.

At the start of the school year there are always some reminders to send out:

- Please do not schedule appointments for your children during the school day if at all avoidable. If you have to take your child out of school, please inform the Secondary Principal (mreiff@wis.edu.na) and copy the School Secretary (reception@wis.edu.na).
- Parents, please sign up for Edmodo - Homeroom teachers will send you your child's parent code. This gives you an opportunity to see what homework is due and when it is due and also find other information concerning your child that might help you support your child.



- Although we have made quite a change to our network, students are still not to use their cell phones during school hours. Please do not contact your child via their cell phone during the school day. They should also not contact you. When a cell phone is used during school hours, it will be confiscated and parents can fetch their child's phone after school at Ms. Reiff's office.

And some dates to diarise:

- *Week 15 - 19 August: Week B*
- *26 August - Heroes' Day (no school)*
- *30 August - Back to School Night (Middle School) - details to follow via the D6*
- *31 August - Back to school Night (IGCSE & IBDP) - details to follow via the D6*
- *12 September - Staff Work Day (no school for students)*
- *26 - 30 September - Orange River Trip (Year 10) & Okonjima Trip (Year 12) - details to follow via D6 and other means.*
- *3 & 4 October - Student Parent Teacher Conferences for Secondary (details to follow)*
- *6 - 9 October - JoMUN*
- *October 8-16 - October break*
- *November 5 - International Day*

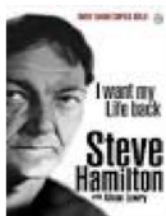


A detailed calendar of this academic year will be posted on the D6 in the coming week.

Regards,

Maggie Reiff

Visit by Steve Hamilton - recovering drug addict



Steve Hamilton is a living metaphor for addiction--and ultimately recovery. A hardened addict in his teens, Hamilton had a heroin habit that led him deep into the drug underworld of South Africa. It took eleven stays at institutions and three times being pronounced clinically dead before Hamilton took his first earnest steps toward recovery. Hamilton eventually became a founding member of Narcotics Anonymous in South Africa and has since counselled addicts in treatment clinics. EXCERPT: "That's the trouble with drugs. None of it is real in the end. The whole thing is one big lie. I wish every day that I could start over, turn back the damn clock and see what the real Steve was like and what he could have accomplished without his dangerous toys and dubious playmates. That's another reason why I want my life back." <https://www.amazon.com/I-Want-My-Life-Back/dp/1592850839>

Steve Hamilton has presented his story to our students. He will also do a parent presentation:

Wednesday, 18th August

18:00 - 19:30

WIS Auditorium

As parents, we should always ensure that we are well aware of our kids' environment and the influences they face and have to handle every day, be it through social media or exposure to drugs and alcohol. Experiences in the last years have shown us that we have a responsibility as a school to contribute to the education of our children in these fields. We have, however, also realised, that we often have resources available that are not necessarily available to our parents in order to inform and clarify.

We are therefore happy to host Steve on Wednesday next week to speak to parents about his life story.

Reaching new heights



It is a bit of a cliché, but the most famous answer to the question “why do you climb mountains?” must be from George Mallory, who replied “Because they are there.”

When you have a mountain as majestic as Kilimanjaro only a few countries away, it stands to reason that it needs to be climbed. Which is exactly what 7 of our students decided to do during the July holidays, along with two staff members.

“Climbing” Kilimanjaro is not exactly accurate. You hike up the mountain. What one needs to know, however, is that it is the same as hiking up a flight of stairs that is between 5 and 12 kilometres long. Day after day, for 7 days. Add to that the fact that it is at a height 4 times higher than what we are used to at Windhoek, and the whole situation changes.

It is a difficult journey. You feel the altitude difference from day one, and although the surroundings are beautiful, it is a harsh terrain to do this in. You sleep in extreme cold, and even going to the bathroom at night becomes a difficult task. Luckily we soon discovered that Ziploc bags does in fact have other uses...

After 5 days of hiking, you reach basecamp, and at midnight you start the summit attempt. The assault on your body and mind is incredible. Your body tells you that you need to turn around. Your mind eventually agrees. Still something lingers, telling you to keep going on. It is painful, exhausting and all around just plain difficult. Yet you keep going. And the feeling when eventually standing at the top, with the sun rising ABOVE the clouds which are below you, is not even worth trying to explain in words. You have to feel it yourself. But it makes all the pain and suffering worth it.



I am proud of all the students who went along. Altitude sickness did not spare us, something one cannot help or avoid, but the courage and determination the students showed was more than impressive. I hope that this experience will stay with each of you for years to come, and that others will be inspired to grab the opportunities they get.

Hakuna Matata!
Riegardt Smit

Afternoon Activities

Click [here](#) for the Afternoon Activity Schedule or alternatively check the d6 communicator under resources.

WIS students receive their Scuba Diving licenses

In March a group of WIS students embarked on a new adventure. They joined the Windhoek Underwater Club to get trained as Scuba Divers. Some months later, the group did their Open Water diving exam at the Oanob Dam. Diving in the Oanob Dam is an experience for itself - freezing water and mostly very limited visibility. But all our students succeeded in this test.

On Tuesday, 9th August the divers received their certificates and diving licenses. They now have a 1 Star Scuba Diving qualification and can advance to the 2 Star training. With a 1 Star qualification, divers can dive down to up to 18m.

Congratulations to all of you and enjoy the adventure.



From left: Hoaran Wang (Year 11), Ashraf Hishamuddin (Year 11), Alicia Reiff (Year 12), Lotti Kross (DHPS), Sam Jarvis (Year 12), Susan Martens (Instructor), Ingo (Instructor), unknown, Kyle Webb (Year 11), Daniel Sindila (Year 11).

Anybody interested in taking on this activity could speak to the students who have just qualified. The next course will be offered in September.

2016 Schools Chef of the Year Competition

On 30th July, the annual Schools Chef of the Year Competition took place in the NUST Hotel School. WIS had two participants entered for the competition - Loic Marques (Year 9) and Alicia Reiff (Year 12).

Students receive a list of ingredients that they have to use in a three course meal and on the day get three hours to prepare the meal. This year, the starter had to be vegetarian and had to include Feta cheese and butternut. The main course had to consist of pork chops, a starch and 2 seasonal vegetables and the desert had to have lemon curd and meringue.



After a challenging three hours of cooking, the dishes were tasted and judged by three of Windhoek’s best known chefs. Even during the three hours of cooking, the judges walked around and critiqued cleanliness, mason plas, technique and other areas of the cooking process.

Loic won the competition with Alicia as the runner up.

Congratulations to both of you.

