



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*



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## Dates to Remember

### November

- **28 - 2 Dec:** *Secondary Week B*

### December

- **2:** *Last Day for AA*
- **5 - 9:** *Secondary Week A*
- **6:** *Annual General Meeting*
- **7:** *Interhouse Matches*
- **9:** *End of Term 2*

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

### Should we get rid of homework?

Schools in Finland have a no homework policy in the Primary Schools. Is this something we should consider and adopt here at WIS?

Teachers often battle with children to complete their homework on time and to complete it thoroughly. Parents battle with children to sit down and do their homework. Some parents do the homework for their children or correct the homework so that it's perfect, while some parents don't have time to support their children with homework and find the school's expectation for parental involvement to be too much. For some children, homework is dreaded and often brings tears and stomach aches. How much does this actually support and encourage student learning?

Children put in a six hour day at school. Many children then participate in a variety of after school activities, either at school or outside of school. They get home in time for dinner and then are expected to do homework when they are tired and haven't had any down time. One of the Learner Profile attributes is balance. So many adults don't have balance between work and play. Shouldn't we be encouraging our children at a young age to develop this attribute?

The purpose of homework is to reinforce, practice or rehearse concepts and skills. At times the purpose is to gather information, which often involves parent support. Homework encourages managing deadlines, organization and responsibility. In some cases the purpose of homework is to finish the work not completed in class. I wonder if these same skills aren't acquired in other ways throughout the day and in other ways? Just because children don't have



## Teacher Feature

### Margarete Reiff Secondary Principal

More than 50 years ago I was born in Grootfontein in the north of Namibia. Coming from quite a big family (5 children) and being in boarding school my whole life, I grew up among people and therefore find myself being quite a sociable person. I attended school in Otavi and Grootfontein and completed my Abitur at DHPS.

When I started studying, I did not know what I wanted to become, but then my journey led me along the path of education and I became a German and Afrikaans teacher. Having started my career as a teacher as a young woman, I had to battle with the big Abitur boys in the first few years of my teaching career.

Hardly older than my senior students, I had to stand my ground and became more and more involved in the profession. Teaching and education has become my passion.

I love to interact with young people and guide them to become the best they can be.

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homework doesn't mean they aren't learning. Socializing and play are equally important and are part of learning.

So, should WIS adopt a no homework policy for Primary School? I am interested in some feedback to this question.

Regards,  
**Beth Smith**



Ever been on a scavenger hunt? Ever seen one on TV? Heard of one? An exploration in Year3 involved **Inquiry & Math & Technology**. [CLICK HERE](#) to find out what happened.

## World Toilet Day

**Roots and Shoots students are trying to create an awareness about the 2.4 billion people of the 7.4 billion people worldwide living without a toilet. That is 23.5% of the the world population, meaning that every third person does not have a toilet.**

World toilet Day was Saturday, November 19. It is a day that is about creating awareness, helping and taking action to help people get toilets and proper sanitation. It is also about the urgent need to end the sanitation crisis.

About 377 schools in Namibia do not have toilets. Over half of the people in Namibia do not have toilets. 1.4 million people in Namibia do not have toilets. One dry eco-toilet can cost N\$13,000. If everyone in the school brought N\$30, we would have enough to buy a toilet for one school.

**Anushka Arya**



## Year 4 Boys vs Gardner Academy

On Tuesday, WIS played host to a friendly soccer match against Gardner Academy.

The match took place during the Primary School second break as it was convenient for both schools.

The match was played in good spirits with a number of our boys demonstrating exceptional football skills.

### Teacher Feature continued

Often seen as "too soft", my responsibility as the Secondary Principal teaches me to be firm and determined in certain situations, and still be empathic and understanding for each and every individual person I work with.

There is good in every person and I see it as my responsibility and an opportunity I have to help young people find themselves and their strengths and work on areas they struggle with in themselves.

I am a Namibian woman and love this country - the diversity, the nature and landscape.

Having grown up on a farm, I have always had pets. I love touring our beautiful country and getting to know the vast corners of Namibia through camping.

I have a 17 year old daughter who just started the IB Diploma at WIS. The more I work in the IB environment and experience the strengths of the different programmes, the diversity, the open minded approach, the current thinking and the rigorous challenges, the more I am convinced that the IB approach is the way to go to ensure that future generations are prepared for the world we let them in once they leave school.

***"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." (Nelson Mandela)***



WIS Soccer Team



Gardner Academy Soccer Team

Quentin Strauss scored a hat-trick and Dante scored a final goal with the match finishing 4-0 in favour of our Year 4 boys.

There is so much undiscovered sports talent at WIS that we would really to see more of these matches offered for our students. As you may know, our school calendar is our biggest obstacle in terms of inter-school participation, but we remain hopeful that we can eventually find a solution.

**Fernando Beukes**

## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

### Feedback on the CIS Forum on International Admissions and Guidance

Last week I had the opportunity to attend this annual conference where admissions officers from around 200 universities from the US, UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, China, North Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and different European universities were in attendance. Schools from around the world attended the conference as well - overall the conferences served around 800 people.

This annual conference is held to bring together university professionals and

guidance counsellors from around the world to discuss and deliberate about the way students are admitted to universities in the different parts of the world. There is, indeed, a great difference between the application procedures students have to follow when applying at universities in different continents.

I was able to speak directly to university representatives of specific universities that our students had named to me. In doing this, I had the opportunity to connect personally with the admissions officers and discuss some application factors with them. Being able to personally meet university representatives gives us as a school some exposure and makes us known in different parts of the world. Namibia - Windhoek - Windhoek International School is quite isolated when compared to the rest of the world, and we are often not as known as we would like to be. Our students grow up in a protected, but also quite isolated environment. Often, the "big wide world" and the challenges international university applications put on students in any case, are underestimated by our students. The competition for university places is harsh and requires students to submit excellent applications - from personal data to their references, their personal statements to the way they use language in their application.

The most valuable information I got from the conference was hands on application advice. To mention but a few: Studying in Germany, Introduction into Higher Education in Canada, An Introduction to the UK application process, Specialized Business Management Programs in Hospitality and Tourism, Counselling the Transnational Applicant.

In practical sessions, we were advised on how Personal Statements, References from teachers and counsellors and the Essay for the Common Application are expected to be written.

When our students start their application process, there are many different matters to consider - who is writing my reference, what standardised testing is required, how do I best convince the university that I am the right fit for them.

In conclusion, the message that was, was, that students need to spend a lot of time to find the right fit. Top universities, traditional universities and known institutions are not the only good places of higher education - there are thousands of lesser known universities that might be a much better fit to an individual student.

WIS has now subscribed to 100Mentors, a virtual college advisory service. Students can sign up for 100Mentors and then have access to advisors from different universities and businesses around the world. These mentors advise students on entry requirements, admissions procedures, financial aid and on specific institutions. In October, we had our first online university fair where representatives from McGill, The University of Essex and Case Western University spoke to our students and answered their questions. 25 students attended this fair and the feedback from that event was overwhelmingly positive.

We advise students in Years 10 - 13 to sign up for 100Mentors to help advise them on their future careers and guide them in the vast array of opportunities and possibilities available.

**Regards,**  
**Maggie Reiff**

## Life is an adventure...

**...live it!**

That is exactly what our Year 11 students did this past weekend. We departed on Friday for an adventure weekend. It was soon clear that these students don't need machinery, scenery or equipment to have an adventure. Every waking moment (and, depending on your dreams, even your sleeping moments...) can be an adventure. From facing the cold of the ocean to the heat of the dunes, the students showed an amazing spirit and grabbed every opportunity to feel alive.



Of course there was some complaining. In the end though, what matters is what we take away from every experience. I believe and hope that the students will remember the feeling of standing on top of Dune 7, rather than the exhaustion felt during the climb.

There were some organised activities as well. Quad Biking to the top of the dunes, then sliding down on a sandboard. Kayaking among the seals at Pelican Point. Having lunch at the waterpark in Langstrand (at least those who were lucky enough to get some before it ran out...).

For 6 students, I believe the highlight was jumping from a plane at 10 000 feet. This is a free activity, but we chose to pay for the add-on option of using a parachute while doing it. The thrill of freefalling is something you cannot explain, it has to be experienced yourself.



When we were not doing activities, the students spent time bonding, making prank calls (ahem...Sonia and Roger), keeping the Swakopmund Fast Food businesses alive and generally giving the teachers grey hair.

I hope that each student took something good from this trip and that their spirit and enthusiasm will never be dampened.

PS- while I am talking about Outdoor Education...spare a thought for the 8 students who will be in the water for many hours on Saturday at Oanab dam, doing their qualifying dives. At a depth of 15 meters

that water becomes freezing! And to spend 3 - 4 hours in it...good luck guys! We are rooting for you! (From the dry, warm comfort of our camping chairs on the shore).

*Riegardt Smit*

## Shoebox project

Christine from House Maerua Orphanage, created a project entitled "The ShoeBox Project". The project's goal is to give orphans from the ages of 1-21 a piece of our hearts in a little Christmas present. It was public to everyone, So Ms. Angie and Middle School Student Council decided to contribute to this project.



They were given a list of goodies and the names of the orphans. Each member could choose who they wanted to sponsor ,and had to get the items on the list. The list of goodies included:

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Deodorant and roll-on
- Hair brush
- Sweeties and cookies
- Clothing item
- Age appropriate toy
- Stationery
- 

"I felt good helping the orphans, because they don't get as much as we do. We don't appreciate what we get and they appreciate everything that they receive."

Li Zhang year 8B

A BIG thank you to those who took the time and effort putting a goodie box together for the less fortunate. You are amazing people showing how much you care for your fellow citizens.

*Angatha Janse van Rensburg*

**"WHEN YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF  
THE WIND – ADJUST YOUR SAILS."**

**H. JACKSON BROWN JR.**



## Carpark Rules!

It has become increasingly unsafe in the car park because of rules not being adhered to by students, parents and drivers.

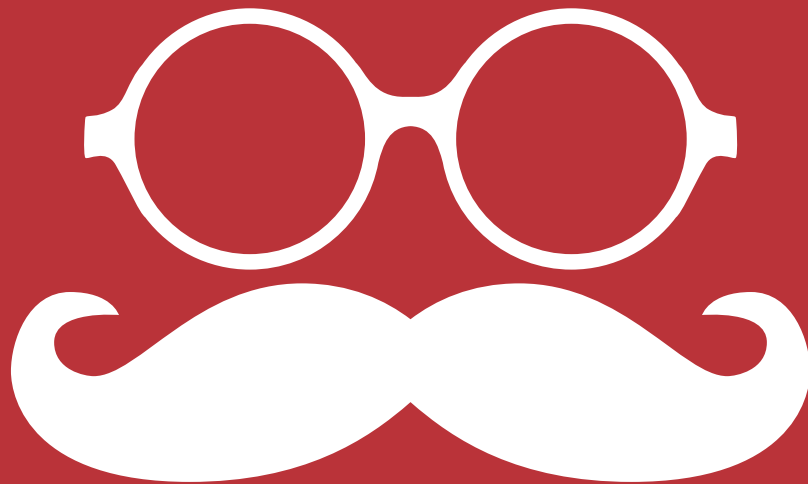
*Please be reminded that students and parents and staff should at all times use the zebra crossings to cross the car park.*

Cars should at all times be parked in the designated parking bays. Parking on zebra crossings prevents a safe crossing for pedestrians and obstructs the view of other users of the car park.

We count on your cooperation in this regard.

JOIN US IN  
**MOVEMBER**

HELP MEN LIVE LONGER,  
MAKE A DONATION AT THE TUCKSHOP OR  
OFFICE



GROW A MOUSTACHE TO RAISE  
AWARENESS OF PROSTATE AND  
TESTICULAR CANCER AS WELL AS  
DEPRESSION

FOR MORE INFORMATION ASK THE SECONDARY  
STUDENT COUNCIL



