



THEODOR
HERZL
SCHOOLS

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With HEART

NEWSLETTER

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Issue # 18



Principal's Corner

Dear Parents / Guardians

“Allowing the space, the mental space and the actual curricular space, for students to explore and do the challenging work of thinking. Because thinking takes time.”

Jeannette Garcia Coppersmith, Harvard Graduate School of Education

I was having an informal chat with fellow colleagues the other day and reflecting on the almost 40 years I have been teaching. Exciting years, to be honest – most of the time! It was a profession I chose in primary school and one from which I have never veered. Our conversation strayed to what has changed during these 40 years and what hasn't. I thought that I would share one of the ideas that struck us all. Not a new thought really, but one worth reflecting on again.

We live in a world that is becoming increasingly good at **removing difficulty**.

Food arrives at the touch of a button. We can find almost any answer in seconds. Maps tell us exactly where to go. AI can now write, calculate, explain and summarise for us almost instantly.

Much of this is brilliant and makes life easier. But it does raise an interesting question for us as parents and educators:

Are we sometimes too quick to remove difficulty from our children's lives?

There is a phrase used in education called *productive struggle*. I rather like it. It does not mean making life unnecessarily difficult for children. It simply recognises that some of our best learning happens when something does not come easily.

You can see this right from Grade 000.

It may be a child trying to fit the last piece into a puzzle, fastening a shoe, building something that keeps collapsing, waiting for a turn or sorting out a disagreement with a friend. As adults, our instinct is often to jump in and help.

Sometimes, though, the better response is simply: *“Have another go.”*

As children get older, the challenges change. A Maths problem does not make sense immediately. A paragraph needs to be rewritten. A musical piece needs more practice. A sporting skill takes time to master. Friendships become more complicated.

And by High School, the difficulties become more real: a disappointing mark, not making a team, missing out on a leadership position, managing deadlines or having to deal with a difficult conversation.

By Matric, our young adults are expected to balance academics, friendships, decisions about the future and a growing amount of responsibility. I believe that it is important to understand that these things are not “interruptions to education”. Essentially, they are part of education.



This is also becoming increasingly important as we work out how best to use AI and technology at school. These tools have enormous value, and they are certainly not going away. But if technology always provides the answer before a child has had a chance to think, struggle, question or try, we may unintentionally remove the very learning we are hoping to develop.

Sometimes the answer is less important than the thinking that gets us there. Or, the “process” is more important than the end result in many cases.

I think there is something in this for us as adults too. Perhaps we do not always need to solve the problem immediately, send the email, deliver the forgotten item or step into every disagreement.

Naturally, there are times when our children need us to guide, support and protect them. That will always be our role.

But there is a difference between supporting a child through a difficulty and removing every difficulty from the child’s path.

One of the questions I would love our children at Theodor to become comfortable asking themselves is:

"What can I try next?"

That applies whether you are four years old dealing with a stubborn shoelace, fourteen years old dealing with algebra, or eighteen years old wondering what comes after school. It applies to us as adults too.

Perhaps part of preparing children for life is not making the road perfectly smooth. It should be more about them becoming confident enough to handle the bumps.

I came across this article that may be helpful for both parents and teachers. Written by Kristen Cook in her blog, *Psychology Today*, it is entitled ***Stop Fixing, Start Strengthening: How to Raise Resilient Kids***. The article explores how we as parents (and maybe teachers) are tempted to step in and solve every difficulty for our children. It explores why supporting children through discomfort, rather than always removing it, can help build confidence, independence and problem-solving skills. Happy reading. The link is:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/parenting-redefined/202604/stop-fixing-start-strengthening-how-to-raise-resilient-kids>

Perhaps part of preparing children for life is not making the road perfectly smooth, but helping them become confident enough to handle the bumps along the way. As our Jewish families prepare to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, I wish our Jewish families a meaningful and peaceful New Year. May the year ahead bring sweetness, good health, happiness, and renewed hope to your homes and families. Shana Tova U'Metuka.

Have a wonderful week ahead.

Kind Regards

Viktor

Viktor Kurz

Executive Principal



Primary School

On Spring Day at our Primary School, pupils had so much fun planting beautiful flowering plants, adding colour, life and a little extra sparkle to our school grounds. A HUGE thank you to all the wonderful parents who generously donated plants to make this initiative possible.



Our Grade 1s had an absolute **ARRR-some time** presenting their Pirate Orals! From swashbuckling stories and fabulous pirate costumes to confident voices and plenty of personality, our little pirates certainly knew how to put on a show!



High School

A very special THANK YOU to our amazing Can-Do-Moms for their wonderful Plant Collection Initiative! We also thank Eco Club, under the guidance of Mr Osmond, along with its members. Your efforts are helping us bring a little more colour, life and love to our school grounds. We are so grateful for the HEART you put into making our school a beautiful place to grow. Another big thank you to our new Dance Com for their delicious Spring Cupcakes! You certainly added an extra sprinkle of sweetness to our Spring Day celebrations!



The High School **Sport Forum** would like to say a HUGE **THANK YOU** to everyone who supported Bokke Friday last week. Thank you to all our pupils and staff who got into the spirit, proudly wore their green and gold and helped make the day such a fun celebration of South African sport and school spirit! We hope to make Bokke Friday even bigger this week.



Images supplied by **Jessica Hickman**

High School Sport

Mr Christo Scriven reports:

EQUESTRIAN:

Two of our Equestrian riders participated in the Spring Show held at PE Riding Club two weeks ago:



Chloe Wiese on **Callaho Summer Love** won the 90cm Show Jumping Championship at the PE Riding Club Graded Spring Show.

Bella Muller on her pony **JonJon** placed 1st & Champion for Open Working Riding Pony, 1st & Champion for Open Working Hunter Pony and won Reserve Supreme Working Hunter of the show. At the recent EC Eventing Awards Ceremony **Bella** and **Jon Jon** won:

Eastern Cape Eventing Pony Rider of the year 2025

Eastern Cape Eventing Pony of the year 2025

Eastern Cape Pony EV 85 Rider of the year 2025

Eastern Cape Pony EV 75 Rider of the year 2025

Bella and Jon Jon also placed 1st at SA Pony Club Eventing 85.

SWIMMING:

Eli Kannemeyer achieved excellent results in the recent "BEST" Gala.

Eli achieved gold medals in 5 individual events and 2 relay events:

Boys 13-14 100m Butterfly – 1:07.08 (1st place), Boys 13-14 100m Freestyle – 57.88 (1st place), Boys 13-14 200m Individual Medley – 2:28.41 (1st place), Boys 13-14 200m Freestyle – 2:08.43 (1st place, improving his time by 3.68 seconds), Boys 13-14 100m Backstroke – 1:08.62 (1st place), Boys u14 400m Freestyle Relay – 4:19.75 (1st place) and Boys u14 400m Medley Relay – 4:53.98 (1st)

Results from last week's Interhouse matches:

Interhouse Cross Country – Congratulations Weizmann!



Interhouse Mixed Soccer – Congratulations BG



Images supplied by **Donna Schewitz**

Interhouse Netball Round 1 - Congratulations Weizmann



Images supplied by **Jessica Hickman**

Interhouse Boys' Soccer - Congratulations Weizmann



Images supplied by **Donna Schewitz**

Interhouse Netball Round 2 - Congratulations Weizmann



Images supplied by **Donna Schewitz**

Interhouse Chess Round 2 - Congratulations Weizmann

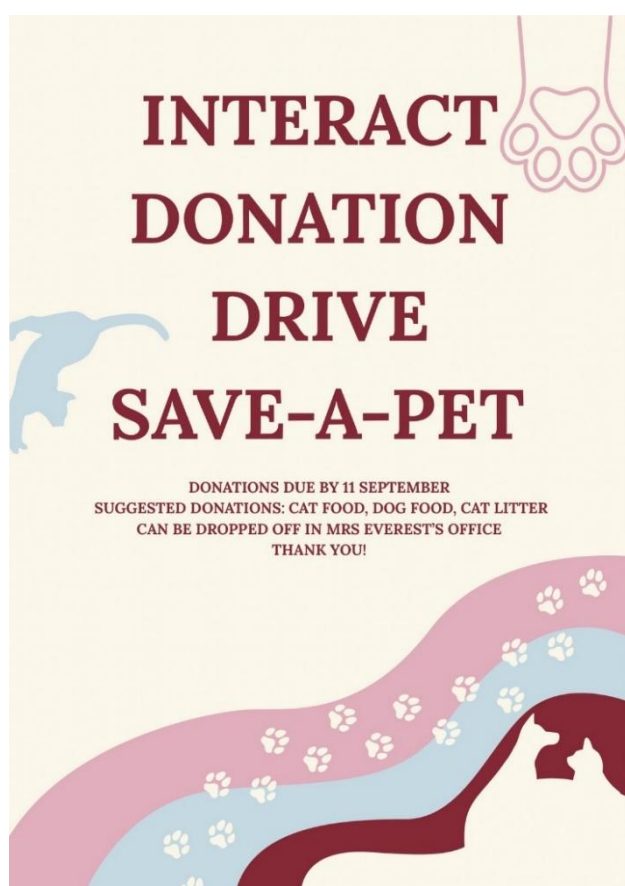


Images supplied by **Donna Schewitz**

BOYS SOCCER:

The boys' u17 team played out to a hard-fought draw 1- 1 against a strong Chapman High School side on Friday. Their last match of the season is today against top of the table Urban Academy 15:00 at Theodor Herzl.

Important Notices



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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE WITH HEAD AND HEART