

# GRACE CHRONICLES

Issue No. 5 | September 2022



## From the Principal's Desk

It has been another busy term at Grace Primary and in the pages of this issue of our Grace Chronicles, we hope that you are able to reflect back on some of the interesting and enriching things that have been happening in the life of our school.

We always love to share some of the learning that is going on in our classrooms during the term and this time we have decided to make some of our Nature Studies a point of focus of this edition of Grace Chronicles.

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Our habits of focus for this term have been self-control and self-education. The “self” prefix in both of these words is meant to highlight not an introspection, but a sense of personal responsibility that needs to grow in the lives of our children, both in the areas of their morals and passions (i.e. self-control) and in their growth and learning (self-education). We trust that this point of focus will continue to produce positive fruit.

Outside the classroom, our children have also enjoyed a variety of excursions as well as some special sports events. Our annual Sports Day took place on Friday, 9 September at Vista Nova High School and was again a great success. Well done to all our runners and a special thanks to Coach Erin for all her hard work for this event. The tug-of-war fun event at the end of the afternoon was particularly enjoyed by all.

A very exciting focus of this term has been preparation for our school play, Peter Pan. The children have worked extremely hard for this production and so have Mr Louw, Miss Pretorius, Mrs Jack and Mrs Meyer. We are also grateful to various parents who have helped along the way, especially those that have sewed costumes. Enjoy some of the photos of this special time on pg 5.

We are all looking forward to a change of scenery and pace over the holidays and trust that you and your family will enjoy a more relaxed schedule as well as some time out of doors as the days begin to warm up again.

Karen Wood, Principal

## Philosophy Corner: What's in a Word?

Does it matter what words we use to describe things? Possibly more than we realize! Words exert a subtle influence over our minds and conjure up different strands of imagination. For instance, our celebration of Heritage Day this month is a reminder of how certain South African words have distinctive associations when compared to their standard equivalents. Think about the word 'boerewors' for example, which has associations far more intertwined with our braai traditions and food heritage than the alternate word 'sausage'. In the same way the word 'pap' describes the distinctive 'Africanness' of the ordinary word 'porridge' - a staple meal in many South African households or a speciality with “sous” at a braai!



## What's in a Word? (cont.)

Similarly, the words we use to describe certain aspects of education convey much more about our philosophy and approach than we realize. At Grace Primary, we believe that 'splitting hairs' about certain words is worth the effort. Here are some examples:

**Learner vs Person:** Think of the word 'learner' that is typically used to describe the students in South African schools. This word brings to mind a passive recipient in the learning process, someone who is at the end of the 'learning conveyor-belt' as it were, merely receiving, storing and regurgitating the information that is delivered to them. In a nutshell, the word 'learner' strips away too much of what gives a child dignity. Instead, we prefer to use the word 'person' when referring to children at our school - a word that gives far more consideration to the physical, intellectual and spiritual make-up of the children in our care. A person is curious and expectant, filled with appetites for growth. A person engages with new ideas and forms rich relationships with different spheres of learning. A person is a child created in God's image with infinite potential.



**Information vs Knowledge:** We read a lot about the information revolution taking place in our world. In this context, it is important to distinguish between 'information' and 'knowledge'. Over a hundred years ago, Charlotte Mason stated the difference between these two words as follows:

"Information is the record of facts, experiences, appearances, etc., whether in books or in the verbal memory of the individual; knowledge, it seems to me, implies the result of the voluntary and delightful action of the mind upon the material presented to it."

School Education, p. 224

The implication of this distinction is crucial - our children need to intentionally engage their minds on the new ideas presented to them each day, pondering on them, making new personal associations and preferably delighting in their discoveries. Simply memorizing lists of new information is not enough - personal engagement with this information is key.

So what's in a word? So much if we stop and take the time. We have made thinking about these nuances a priority at Grace Primary, which is why we speak so much about our unique philosophy. We hope that you have noticed the fruit of these distinctions in your child's own learning and growth this term.

Judy McComb, Philosophy Director

## Events

### Sports Day

We were so proud, not just of the children who won their races, but of all of the Grace children who participated in our Sports Day on Friday, 9 September. Sports Day is about so much more than just winning - it's about everybody giving of their best, pushing their physical abilities, celebrating others and encouraging those striving to finish their long races in the right spirit.

The final tug-of-war contests were a highlight for all - and yes, the Grade 7s did beat the teachers! Thanks again to Coach Erin for doing such a fantastic job of planning, preparing, and overseeing the event.



## Events (cont.)

### Peter Pan Musical

We were thrilled once again to put on a musical production after 2 years of missing out on this privilege - and we really hope that you shared in our enjoyment of this show on Wednesday and Thursday evenings in the Cannons Creek hall. The cast played their parts with gusto and great comic timing and showed off how much acting and singing talent we have in the school! Well done also to the rest of the singers who greatly contributed to the atmosphere of the musical and also to the stage crew who were excellent with all the scene-changes.



# Glimpses of Grace

## Focus on Nature Study

One of the distinctive aspects of the Charlotte Mason curriculum is its focus on Nature Study. Nature Study encourages children to have 'seeing eyes'.

Charlotte Mason wrote :  
 "Eyes and No Eyes go for a walk. No Eyes comes home bored. He has seen nothing, been interested in nothing, while Eyes is all agog to discuss a hundred things that interest him."

We would list some of our goals of Nature Study as follows:

- To build relationships with ordinary natural phenomena
- To ask questions about what they see
- To enjoy the healthy outdoors and foster wholesome interests and hobbies
- To build a sense of ownership and stewardship of the earth
- To deepen their appreciation of scientific study
- To grow their intellect and character
- To prepare children to worship God.

Enjoy some of the insights gained by our children in Nature Study this term:

Our Grade 1 class studied some of the weeds that grow in our neighbourhood and then inspected their weed samples under the magnifying glass before planting a terrarium to take home. They also learnt a delightful poem called "Weeds" which they recited for the rest of the school with such animation at one of the school assemblies. Who can forget their delightful faces as they recited "I'm standing up for weeds!"

We are always delighted when our children find natural specimens over week-ends or during the holidays which they then bring to class for everyone else to enjoy. Reuben Kruger from our Grade 2 class shared his 'special find' recently and brought a rhino beetle to class which Miss P then decided to expand into a Nature Study exercise. The Grade 2's were fascinated to study this insect closely using magnifying glasses - in particular noting his distinctive 'horn'. Have a look at some of their paintings of the rhino beetle after this observation time. Spot the difference....!



The Grade 3's learnt more about clouds in their Nature Study lesson this term. When last have you studied the clouds in the sky and appreciated some of their distinctive characteristics and colours? Have a look at some of their watercolour reproductions.



## Focus on Nature Study (cont.)



Spring is a lovely time of the year to appreciate the cascade of yellow, pink and purple wild flowers that appear on verges or in public parks. Our **Grade 4's** took advantage of this opportunity and picked a variety of samples to sketch in their Nature Study books afterwards. Look at some of their beautiful paintings of spring flowers.

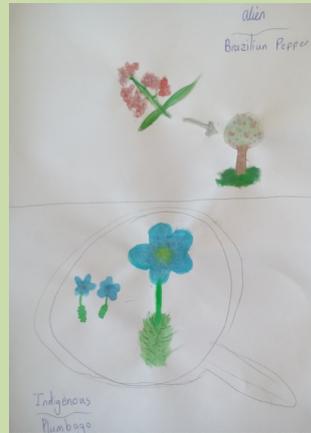
The **Grade 5's** were challenged to explore the variety of plants that grow on our school campus. This was applied through a "Nature Quest" whereby the children had to follow clues to identify different plants by their description (sometimes cryptic). After the quest, the children had to create a background inspired by the colours in the school garden and then bring to the front a particular plant/leaf/flower or just patterns they observed. Since they had studied the French artist Cezanne during the year, they also had to try to create a background in his style - i.e. no smooth lines or edges. Look at some of their lovely creations.



The **Grade 6 class** combined Nature Study and Design and Technology, which was a wonderful integration of these different disciplines. They studied 'birds in flight', taking time to look through a number of birding books and pictures to appreciate how the wings of birds are adapted for flight. Sketches of birds in flight were then attached to a simple machine made from cardboard and gears. They were thus able to see how a simple machine like gears can transfer motion from one place to another by making it appear as if the birds are flying.

## Focus on Nature Study (cont.)

Finally, the **Grade 7's** went on a Nature Walk to identify the difference between alien and indigenous vegetation in our local neighbourhood. They then collected some samples of alien and indigenous plants to sketch using the dry brush technique in class. Dry brush is a painting technique which uses a relatively dry brush to create a textured look to the painting. It is used to add detail and give that organic look that is found in nature.



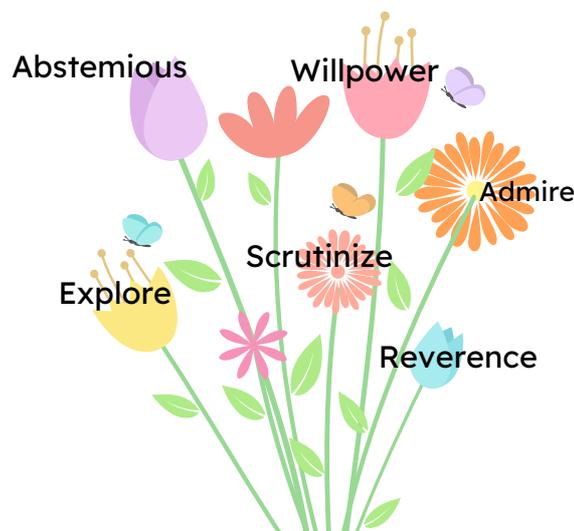
This brief overview of some of our Nature Study lessons during the term shows just how varied this subject can be, all with the goal of deepening our children's curiosity and enjoyment of the natural world. We hope you've enjoyed the tour.

## Increase your word power!

Each term we extend our children's vocabulary by introducing them to some key focus words that also tie in with our habit focus or other areas of relevance. This term we thought about the following focus words:

- Related to the habit of self-control, we thought about the words **willpower** and **abstemious**.
- Related to the habit of self-education, we thought about the words **explore** and **scrutinize**

In the month of August we also thought about the meaning of the word 'August', a month named after Augustus Caesar, the Roman emperor. The word August actually means to inspire reverence or admiration and so our two words of focus during that month were **admire** and **reverence**.



## Out and About

As is our usual practice, all our classes have continued doing a variety of excursions during the term. These times out in nature, or at a local heritage site or focussed on a particular hands-on learning activity are a real highlight for our children. We even had a local pet pig ('Bessie') make an excursion to visit our Grade 1 class who have been reading through Charlotte's Web! This term also saw the first opportunities for our children to enjoy some sporting fixtures outside of the school, for cross-country running and soccer. Enjoy some of the photos of their experiences.



## FUNDRAISING NEWS

### Tuck shop and Uniform Sales

We are very grateful for all those who continue to support the school through donating to and buying from tuck shops, bake sales and second-hand uniform sales.

### Fun Run for Furnishings

Please ensure you have the morning of Saturday 22nd October reserved in your diaries for this event, and start raising funds soon, if you haven't already! There will be an exciting medals and prizes ceremony at Vista Nova Primary School, by the Common that is also compulsory.

### Bursaries Fund

We will soon be launching a Bursaries Fund in order to help those who otherwise couldn't afford to access a Grace education.

Applicants will be required to fill in a detailed form to assess their eligibility. We would love to have some donors from among the school family. Please contact Sophie de Witt should you require further information or know of any persons or companies that might be able to assist us with this initiative.



### Future Plans

We have already started planning for our 10th Birthday celebration in the first term of 2024! This is going to be a community fete event which will both be a fundraiser and birthday party for the school body and broader Pinelands community. If you would like to get involved in any way, please contact Sophie de Witt or Anee Kruger.

## Building Update

We hope you have enjoyed seeing the progress on our new building during the term. Please continue to pray for the successful completion of this building project by the end of the year.



## Heritage Day Handicrafts



At the end of each term, we enjoy a bit of a change of routine as we think about practical activities and handicrafts that can enhance some of the learning that we've done in different subjects. With South Africa's celebration of Heritage Day this month, we decided to theme our handicraft activities on the Heritage Day theme. Our classes have done a variety of different activities from making South African flag-themed bird feeders, to using shwe-shwe cloth to cover their own tins and make their own bookmarks; to doing African-design fabric painting on T-shirts; to designing their own glitzy hats reminiscent of the Cape Minstrel Carnival; to making their own milk-tarts to celebrate South African cuisine. Have a look at some of their lovely creations!

