College Chatter

Issue #82

NISI DOMINUS FRUSTRA
DURBAN GIRLS' COLLEGE

From the Helm

Life has become faster than ever before and families are feeling this daily. Our girls, likewise, are feeling pressure and becoming more anxious. It is our role as a school, and yours as parents, to offer the support required to negotiate the many challenges faced by young people today. In addition, we also need to be mindful of the ways we inadvertently add to the pressure.
With all of this in mind, one of our strategic goals was to grow the support we offer. Hence, the planning to develop our CORE Centre, which is now operational.

Our school counsellors, Ms Erin Naudé and Mrs Shelley Kerr operate from offices in the CORE Centre and I am delighted to share that Mrs Kerr's hours have been extended and that she is now employed in a full-time capacity. Additional services offered, currently, include Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Therapy. We have advertised for a part-time Remedial Teacher, and the team will be joined by a part-time Educational Psychologist in the new academic year.

There are some alarming statistics regarding children and their emotional well-being, including an increase in loneliness, and I would like to make reference to an article by Dr Luis Rojas Marcos on how we can attempt to ensure that our children are happy.

Because of increased engagement with technologies, we need to set boundaries. No cell phones at meal times would be a great start! No cell phones in bedrooms – even better. Involving everyone in the family with age-appropriate chores at home develops a sense of responsibility. Spending an hour together outdoors, more healthy food, and less junk food also play an important role in mental wellness. In fact, boredom also has its place and it is often the latter, which leads to the growth of creative ideas. Knowing how to wait and delayed gratification are more skills worth developing when everything happens so fast.

Respect and relationships really matter! Greeting, taking turns, acknowledging mistakes and saying sorry sincerely, all contribute to how we engage.

Dr Marcos concludes with the following:
"Connect emotionally – smile, hug, kiss, tickle, read, dance, jump, play or crawl with them".

Mrs Marianne Bailey
Executive Head

College Moment

Our CORE Centre Team: Shelley Kerr, Erin Naudé, Stella Cotsiou, Kate Rowland.

Erin-Zoe Naudé

Junior School Counsellor and Senior Primary Life Skills Teacher

After beginning my career path in the field of architecture, I decided to redirect my studies towards a more people-oriented profession due to my deep interest in the human brain, behaviour, and relationships.

I studied Psychology, and was ranked the top student in my year at UNISA. Thereafter, I received a cum laude for my Post Graduate Certificate in Education, after which I joined the Durban Girls' College staff as the Junior School Counsellor and Senior Primary Life Skills Teacher.

Over the years, I have received training in child therapy, trauma counselling, diversity and inclusivity, socio-emotional intelligence, and much more. My goal in counselling is to enhance children's understanding of themselves and others, and to equip them with the appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will allow them to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Counsellors

are fundamental in schools

Today's children attend school whilst bearing a broad array of societal, moral, environmental, technological, occupational and financial dilemmas on their young minds. They are expected to learn, and even thrive, in complex, unstable and shifting environments. This is why school counsellors are essential.

Firstly, school counsellors offer stability and familiarity in a world full of micro and macro changes and challenges. The sustained presence of the counsellor creates a sense of safety and consistency.

Secondly, school counsellors allow for impartiality, objectivity and confidentiality in societies dominated by judgement, pressure, and social media exposure. Children can open up and be vulnerable, and feel understood and valued, without the fear of disclosure.

Thirdly, school counsellors allow for availability, flexibility and accessibility. Children's socio-emotional or behavioural issues can be addressed promptly, in context, by a trained professional. This can prevent the development of further problems later on.

Fourthly, school counsellors can promote inclusivity and diversity, by helping children to identify and celebrate the traits that make them unique, as well as those that connect them with their peers. This develops their emotional and social intelligences.

Fifthly, school counsellors can work collaboratively with the children's teachers and parents, both in and out of the classroom, to enhance their strengths, reduce their limitations, and empower them with 21st Century skills.

Therefore, it is clear that counsellors are a fundamental part of schools. The future of our youth depends on what we do in the present for their physical, cognitive and socio-emotional well-being.

Shelley Kerr

High School Counselling Psychologist

As a young person navigates the often bumpy road into adulthood, it is to be expected that they will encounter a wide variety of challenges along the way. The transition from childhood into adolescence is accompanied by a number of significant physical, social and emotional changes. Although these changes are essential to forming an independent identity and becoming an adult, this time can also be experienced as confusing, overwhelming and unpredictable. Schools – in partnership with parents, families, and the wider community – provide an ideal space to support and promote the mental and emotional well-being of a young person, as they navigate through the ups and downs of adolescence. One of my roles as High School Psychologist, is to work with girls who are experiencing a range of challenges; and to support them to grow in their understanding of themselves (their emotions, thinking patterns and reactions) and others, process their experiences, and identify positive coping skills which they can use in the future.

Counselling is not a quick fix or an easy solution to a simple problem. Rather, it is the co-creation of a space in which a young person feels safe, heard, acknowledged and supported; a space where they are given permission to express themselves and their emotions fully without feeling judged or misunderstood.

I am encouraged and inspired by all the girls who I have met this year. They have had the courage to step out of their comfort zones, embrace vulnerability, and share their stories. As Brené Brown so aptly puts it, "Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity". In today's world, perhaps these qualities and characteristics are equally, if not more, important than school grades and sporting achievements.

When thinking of what to write for this edition of the College Chatter, I was reminded of a beautifully conceptualised poem a friend of mine wrote for her children, a few years ago, which I would like to share:

"Dear doted on and beloved.
Dear longings and dreams made powder soft flesh.
Dear sweet children, born of my stretched heart, body and white knuckled prayers.
Your lives lie before you like a long banquet table.
I hope you feast on its bounty and know that there's plenty to go around.
I pray that you leave a seat for Joy, Peace, Grace, Truth and Love. And that they all show up and stay.
I pray that Prosperity and Fun, Fulfilment and Adventure pay many visits.
But oh dear ones, sweet children with thin skins still on the soles of your feet and on your souls too….
There are two other guests who arrive.
And they always arrive – unannounced and uninvited.
Their names are Hardship and Heartache.
I pray that they knock gently and don't stay long,
But when they come to dine with you, be a gracious host.
Serve them just as well as you do the other guests.
While they're with you, you'll be tempted to order a side of blame and vindication, but don't.
There are so many choices at this buffet, but these guests' presence at your table will leave you bitter or better.
Never both. You can pick only one.
Choose the latter.
Choose to look them in the eye.
Lean in to see the gold they carry with them. It's yours to keep if you find it.
Don't flinch from their touch.
They mean to not break you, but to make you…
More humble, compassionate, human.
If others brought these guests to you, raise a toast to them for bringing the VIP's to your door – life's greatest teachers – then let them go.
And kiss these two as they leave too.
For when they leave, and they always always do,
you will find that the old you leaves with them.
No longer so thin skinned, you will be beautifully battle-worn.
With a heart that is no longer whole or broken,
but cracked open.
Like a seed."

- Julie Williams

Kate Rowland

Occupational Therapist

I am a fun, loving and hardworking individual, and am passionate about helping school-aged individuals reach their full potential. I studied my BSc Occupational Therapy degree at the University of Cape Town, qualified in 2012, and I have worked in Private Practice for 5 years. I love being an OT because I get to play every day. Occupational Therapy for children combines science, humanism and compassion. Through play, we are best equipped to help our children reach their full potential. I have a special interest in sensory integration and am in the process of obtaining my qualification. In my free time, I enjoy spending time outdoors and playing various sports, which allows me to be fit enough to keep up with the girls!

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists assist individuals to engage in the specific activities that make up daily life. For children and youth in schools, Occupational Therapy works to ensure that a student can participate in the full breadth of school activities – paying attention in class, concentrating on the task at hand, holding a pencil or book in the easiest way, or just behaving appropriately in class.

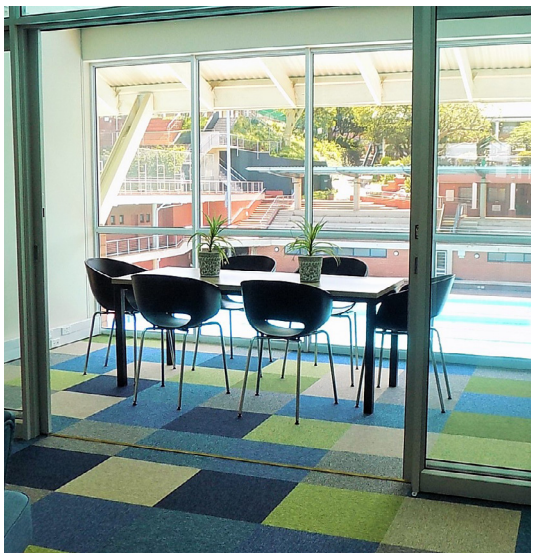
Occupational Therapy may be recommended for an individual student experiencing a range of difficulties which could affect their learning or behaviour – such as motor skills, cognitive processing, visual or perceptual problems, mental health concerns, difficulties staying on task, disorganisation, or inappropriate sensory responses.

A common manifestation of difficulties in school involves handwriting – a key "occupation" that students must master to succeed in school.
A teacher might notice that a student cannot write legibly or has difficulties in other motor tasks.

Occupational Therapists can work with the teacher to evaluate the child, and to identify the underlying problems that may be contributing to their difficulties. The Occupational Therapist looks at the child's skills, and other problems (including behaviour), in addition to their visual, sensory and physical capabilities.

Key areas of focus:

- Gross motor development
- Fine motor development
- Visual perceptual skills
- Cognitive strategies
- Handwriting
- Sensory processing and integration



Stella Cotsiou

Speech-Language Therapist

I was born and raised in Durban, by a big Greek family, which is where my love and passion for people began. I completed my Bachelor of Communication Pathology (Speech-Language Pathology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, after a productive school career where I was a prefect at Maris Stella School. I have been a part of the Student Youth Hellenic Society in Durban since 2010, and became Vice-President of the committee in 2014. Following my community service at a hospital in rural KZN, I developed a passion for paediatric Speech-Language Therapy.

I joined Reconnect Lifestyle in 2015, and have further developed my skills in the areas of paediatric communication, school-based language learning difficulties, as well as therapy for auditory processing disorders. I practise from the Umhlanga practice and also conduct school-based therapy at Durban Girls' College, DPHS, Clifton, and Maris Stella.

What is Speech-Language Therapy?

Speech-Language Therapy involves the study, diagnosis and treatment of disorders that are related to speech, language, literacy, swallowing, fluency, voice, and communication. Of particular importance are the aspects of language that are heard, read, said and written, as well as central auditory processing disorders.

People often think of speech and language as the same thing. However, the terms have very different meanings. If a child has trouble with speech, this suggests difficulties with the "how-to" of talking – the coordination of the muscles and movements necessary for speech production. If a child has trouble with language, they may struggle with understanding what they hear or see. They may also struggle to retrieve the correct words and/or organise those words in a meaningful way to communicate a message or hold a conversation.

A Speech-Language Therapist is trained to help people who struggle with communication disorders because of developmental delays, strokes, brain injuries, learning disabilities, cognitive impairment, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, autism, and other problems that can affect communication. People who experience problems with stuttering, speaking clearly, swallowing, and other tasks that make communicating challenging, can make use of the services of a Speech-Language Therapist in order to overcome such obstacles.

By using standardised tests and assessment tools, a Speech-Language Therapist can diagnose the specific communication difficulties of each person. After diagnosing the problem, the Speech-Language Therapist then devises a treatment plan suited to the needs of that person.

Results

SENIOR PRIMARY RESULTS

Swimming
On Tuesday, 5 November, DGC swam in a mixed gala hosted by Clifton. There were 3 girls' teams, one mixed team and 4 boys' teams. Our girls swam particularly well, finishing in the top three positions overall in most of the races. Our U10 Team came first overall in the backstroke. Well done, girls!

Water Polo
On Friday, 8 November, DGC played in a mini tournament hosted by St Mary's. Results are as follows:
U13A vs Curro Hillcrest: won 8 - 0
U13A vs Thomas More U13A: drew 4 - 4
U11A vs Thomas More U13B: drew 2 - 2
U11A vs St Mary's U11A: won 4 - 1
U11A vs Highbury: drew 3 - 3
U11B vs St Mary's U11B: lost 2 – 1

Ballet
Certificate of distinction awarded to Divya Ramklass: Grade 4 Cecchetti Classical Ballet and medal for Gala Performance participation. Well done, Divya!

HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

Action Netball
Congratulations to the following girls who have been selected for the KZN and Midlands Action Netball teams:

KwaZulu-Natal:
U19
Nika Govender

U16
Callie Varikas
Tanna de Freitas

U15
Sarah Andrew
Maxine Port
Marlise Pretorius
Storme Dunford
Erin Girodo

Midlands:
U15
Jessica Ramini
Chelsea Murray
Georgie Stephenson

Swimming
Mikhaela de Oliveira has been selected for the South Africa Schools Swim Team to compete at the 2019 National Summer Games Championships.

Congratulations, Mikhaela, on this wonderful achievement – we wish you all the best for the Games!

The Week Ahead

18 November - 24 November 2019

Monday 18	**Day 6** **HS: IEB Exams** SP: 08h00 - 11h00: Gr 7 Photographic Course: Lecture Theatre SP: 14h30: Water Polo vs Chelsea & Maris Stella: DGC JP: 17h30: Christmas Celebration (Gr 1C, 2L, 3P): JP HS: 17h45 - 1915: Gr 12 Boarders' Farewell Dinner: Centenary Hall
Tuesday 19	**Day 7** **HS: IEB Exams** JP: 07h30 - 08h10: Gr 1 Parents' Muffin Morning (overview of Gr 2): JP Hall JP: 08h10 - 09h00: Gr 1 Moms Morning: Gr 1 Classrooms JP: 10h10: Birthday Tea: Centenary Hall JP: 17h30: Christmas Celebrations (Gr 1D, 2S, 3B): JP SP: 17h30: Gr 6 (2020) iPad Information Evening: Lecture Theatre
Wednesday 20	**Day 8** **HS: IEB Exams** JP: 07h30: Gr 2 Parent Orientation for Gr 3 2020: JP Hall JP: 08h10 - 09h00: Moms and Daughters activity: Gr 2 Classrooms SP: 10h35 - 12h30: Inter-House Quiz: Lecture Theatre JP: 11h00 - 12h00: Gr R Teddy Bear Picnic: JP SP: 17h30 - 18h30: Gr 4 2020 Parents' Orientation Evening: Lecture Theatre
Thursday 21	**Day 9** **HS: IEB Exams** 07h30: 'Moms Who Pray': College House JP: 07h30 - 08h10: Gr 2 Parents' Muffin Morning (overview of Gr 3): JP Hall/Gr 2 Classrooms JP: 08h10 - 09h00: Gr 2 Moms Morning SP: 08h30 - 13h00: Gr 7 Etiquette Course: SP Drama Room SP: 18h00: Gr 7 Leavers' Dinner: Durban Country Club
Friday 22	**Day 10** **HS: IEB Exams** HS: Gr 8 - 11 Exams End SP: 08h00 - 13h00: Gr 4 Outing to Ushaka: Ushaka JP: 09h00: Gr 3 Market Day: Peace Garden SP: 13h30: U13 Water Polo Tournament
Saturday 23	SP: 08h00: U13 Water Polo Tournament: DGC
Sunday 24	

"If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow."

- Alfie Kohn