

SNAP SHOT

Stanford Lake College

ISSUE 16 of 2022 - 20 May



Matters of Principal

Over the past few months, it has been commonly published that (as a result of the incredible pressures and emotional stress) teachers are leaving our profession in droves. The expectations placed on teachers are often unrealistic and the manner in which parents interact with educators more often than not focuses on the negative. Regardless of the pupil's levels of ability, motivation or effort they put in, their performance (or lack thereof) is often attributed to the school and the teachers. Whilst doing some reading about this subject, I came across this article written by a lady by the name of Leslie:

Teachers are always looking for ways to be better than they were the day before.

Teachers are performers and are not allowed "off days". Each day is a balancing act between entertainment, engagement, and informing. Students today are living in a world of nonstop stimuli and teachers need to constantly "up their engagement game" in order for academics to compete with the other diversions vying for students' attention.

Teachers are under more and more pressure to perform every year, no matter the circumstances.

Time is not flexible and the expectations of that time are non-negotiable. The breadth and the depth of content that teachers are asked to convey to students are infinite, but the amount of time to do so is not. What if someone doesn't get it? What if there's a gap in understanding? What if the kids aren't learning at the same rate or on the same level? Well, it's on the teacher to adjust their instruction to make sure that every kid gets what he needs, no child is left behind, every student succeeds, and no time is wasted. The level of talent that it takes to make this symphony happen cannot be measured.

A Teacher's performance is often measured by students' scores.

The evaluation methods used to assess the quality of teacher's performance are standardised yet... children are not standardised. That means that there are 25 little beings that teachers not only have to educate, but there are 25 individual little units of personality, behaviour, and willingness that impact the assessment of how well a teacher delivers that education. Students have very different learning abilities and capacities, and yet the degree to which a teacher is revered or criticised for doing the job well is entirely dependent upon that moving target.

Teachers give every child a fighting chance, no matter their history.

Teachers don't get to pick and choose their class lists each year. They're given a new group of children with varied behavioural issues, social issues, personality issues, and respect issues, and they give them all a clean slate to grow from. For 180+ days (give or take),

"Everyone who remembers his own education remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the heart of the educational system."

- Sidney Hook

they provide the very best instruction and dedication that they can because they legitimately care about every child that enters their classroom. On a fundamental level, this needs to be applauded.

Parents don't always take them seriously, and respect is often a taboo word in this profession.

Because all parents have at one point been students, they think they know what the job of a teacher is all about. How hard can it possibly be to take a group of children and teach them something? Hard. Very hard. The artistry involved in taking students from the point of "not knowing" something to the point of "understanding" something is intricate and complicated and requires a lot more effort and energy than most parents realise, and we should appreciate the expertise it takes for teachers to pull this off each and every day and accept that it is a set of skills that takes teachers time to master.

Teachers create ALL other professions.

Without good teachers, NONE of us would be where we are. This is a verifiable fact. It doesn't matter if you're a chief justice on the Supreme Court or if you work at a water treatment plant, there is a group of people somewhere that is collectively responsible for making sure that you have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the tasks that you have been hired to do. I've never met a single person that is at a loss asked to list the teacher/s that made a contribution to their overall well-being and changed their life for the better. It's universal. Thank you, teachers!

Teachers get out of bed every day for the children... your children.

When teachers sign up for this gig, they understand what they are getting into. They know that they will spend a large amount of their personal time creating and dedicating and loving and investing into a service that will change lives and change the world. Teachers don't expect fanfare or wealth. They don't even expect appreciation in most cases. But they deserve those things anyway.

Just this week I have witnessed our staff going the extra mile for our pupils. Facilitating extra lessons, helping pupils catch up work missed, being a shoulder to lean on for those undergoing difficult times. Driving pupils to see a counsellor and sitting in the hospital until well after 9 in the evening. Coaching sports teams and spending hours on buses getting pupils to fixtures. So many things that our staff do that go unnoticed and all too often un-thanked. Ahead of two very busy weeks which include our two main derby weekends this is a shout out and thank you to all staff for all you do.

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What is adventure racing?

Adventure racing is typically a multidisciplinary team sport involving navigation over an unmarked wilderness course with races extending anywhere from two hours up to two weeks in length. The principal disciplines in adventure racing include trekking, mountain biking, and paddling although races can incorporate a multitude of other disciplines.

It's in our blood

Adventure racing is a proud part of what we at Stanford Lake College stand for. The sport teaches life skills like problem solving, teamwork, perseverance and several leadership qualities, as teams are required to push through physical and mental challenges over long, exhausting hours. Moreover, everyone in the team has to complete the course together, every step of the way.

Stanford Lake College has a long history with adventure racing. In the late 1990s, we started the Adventure Challenge for Schools which was a multi-day event consisting of different adventure challenges each day. We managed to win this event eight times in its 21 years, running from 1998 to 2018.

The Adventure Racing Schools' Series was then developed out of this, starting in the early 2000s, and followed a race structure more similar to how we know adventure racing today. Stanford Lake College won this event a few times over the years.

Over the last few years, we have moved over to racing with the seniors in the big leagues, entering school teams in 60 - 150km races. We have also had a number of individual students race with some of the top teams in the country. Noticeable mentions are Heidi Katzke (Grade 12) who raced with A2A and Benno Kotzé (Grade 12) who raced with "No Frills - No Fuss", all top teams on the SA circuit and teams who have had podium finishes in their respective races.

Jarryd Gosling (Class of 2021) managed to race his own team, "Balega", into fourth place in the SA National rankings in his matric year last year. Casper Venter (Class of 2019) has raced with Red Ants and Jabberwock, whilst Brian Gardner (Class of 2002) started the Red Ants adventure racing team in the early 2000s and they still remain one of the top teams in SA today.

Among our staff, Mr Willson has joined Red Ants on a number of occasions and raced with them in the Double Moon 250km in 2017, whilst Mr Fullard has raced numerous times with teams such as "Gooi Mielies" who came second in the 2017 Double Moon 250km and also joined team Red Ants for the Expedition India 350km in 2017, where they achieved 2nd place.

Latest News

This past weekend, Stanford Lake College was at it again on the adventure racing front. We took part in the Wakkerstroom Adventure Race as part of the Africa AR World Series. SLC had team Ubuntu racing the 120km consisting of Benno Kotzé, Tristan Brett, Michael Scriven and Jethro Clowes, as well as team Badgers racing the 60km consisting of Ryno Schultz, Matthew Scriven, Ben Tasker and Anrich van Wyngaart, all of them new to adventure racing.

The racing kicked off in the small town of Wakkerstroom, running up and over "Osse-wa kop", a well-known mountain standing tall just outside of town. From the top the 120km and 60km routes split and the teams went their separate ways. The Badgers raced hard, but added a few kilometres and a very cold swim to their first hike leg, dropping them back a few hours. They fought hard on the next paddle and hike and made good time. Their last bike leg started in the dark and they were about 5km in when they realised that their team was not in a state to continue. They made the hard and respectable decision to withdraw from the race.

Ubuntu raced hard on the 120km and made good time. The 16km paddle leg was brutal in the cold, icy and wet weather, causing Michael and Jethro to withdraw. This left Benno and Tristan finishing the race in fine style in 22 hours. Heidi Katzke also raced the 120km with team A2A, one of the top SA teams and they managed a third place overall.

Some staff and parents also raced, with Mr Fullard and his wife winning the 60km overall as team Rafiki. Mr and Mrs Katzke won the Mixed pair category for the 120km as team K4. Well done Stanfordians.



HOCKEY NEWS

On Wednesday this week, the Stanford Lake College Hockey teams travelled to Groblersdal to face Ben Viljoen.

After a three-hour bus ride, the U/14 girls did not have much time to rest as they were called to duty. The first half did not go according to plan for the Stanford girls as they struggled to adjust back to grass hockey. The team created chances here and there but nothing substantial enough to worry the hosts. Luckily for the girls, their goalkeeper was up for a challenge, denying Ben Viljoen the slightest of chances to score a goal. At the start of the second half, Ben Viljoen did not give the Stanford girls room to breathe as they kept on piling on the pressure. Halfway through the second half, Stanford seemingly found their feet and started playing great phases of hockey, scoring two goals in succession. The hosts managed to regain their momentum late into the game scoring a late consolation goal. The final score was therefore 2 - 1.

While the U/14 girls played, the 2nd Team girls also battled it out with Ben Viljoen's U/15 side. The Stanfordians started the game off very slowly, allowing the hosts to dominate the game. Ben Viljoen managed to score two goals in the first half. By the time the Stanfordians pitched to the party, it was too late as they were left chasing the game. Ben Viljoen managed to score one more goal, leaving the final score at 0 - 3.

The U/16 girls also had quite a shock, having to adjust back to playing on grass. In between their readjustment interval, Ben Viljoen scored two well worked goals and throughout the rest of the first half, the Stanford girls defended with everything they had. The second half saw the Stanfordians having better passing phases and actually controlling the game but missing a few match changing opportunities in their attacking circle. Things unfortunately went south for the U/16 girls after their shot stopper, Carmen Veldsman, was taken off the field after having had a nasty fall. This gave the home team easy access to the Stanford goal without any form of resistance late into the game. The final score 0 - 4.

The 1st Team girls also did not have it easy either with a back and fourth first half, the score at the break was 1 - 2. In the third chukka, the Stanfordians fought well and tried to come back into the game but they could not find the equaliser. The defence were caught off guard in the final chukka and the home team managed to find the back of the goal

three times. The game ended at a loss for SLC, 1 - 5.

After a long day of waiting, the senior boys finally took to the field. The first two chukkas were very even as chances fell both ways but both teams could not beat the opposition's goal keeper. The home team seemingly lost momentum in the third chukka, but the Stanford boys still could not score. The last chukka saw a brilliant play by Christian Krüger to set Nsuku Shingwenyana up for a goal scoring opportunity which he made sure to utilise! The game was not done as both sides still created chances but there were no other goal scorers for the afternoon. The game ended 1 - 0.

Well done to all the Stanford Lake teams for a great day of hockey.



*Photo credit: Neo Motsinoni (Grade 8).
A member of the Photography Club.*

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NEWS FROM THE XCO TRACK

Lungile Sithole-Wiltshire and Gordon Noel participated in the final Limpopo XCO Cup Race this past weekend. It was a tough course around a 5km lap and had an average of 180m of climbing per lap. Gordon won the Youth Boys category and Lungile finished 7th in the Junior Boys category. Lungile has managed to race all four of the Limpopo XCO Cup Series events this year and we are excited to see where he finished in the rankings once they release the final race points. He was lying in 7th position in the points standing after the first three events. Gordon managed to win the first and the last event of the series, but had to sit out the second and third events due to injury, which unfortunately dropped him down the series standings. He was lying in 11th position before the last event and we are excited to see where he ends up after winning the last one.

The last race of the series also doubled as the Limpopo Champs event, which means that Lungile is 7th in the Limpopo Champs Junior Boys category and Gordon is the Youth Boys Limpopo Champion. Very well done to these boys and great results for Stanford Lake College. Looking forward to some more great racing the rest of the year.



SHARP SHOOTING

Llewellyn Wight (Grade 8) represented Limpopo at a PCC selection match this past weekend. This is the first selection match for the world championship which will be held in the USA in 2023. Llewellyn managed a third place in the Super Junior Division. Well done, Llewellyn.

NICE 'N SPLICY

Over the past week or so, a new server has been installed at school that lead to major network disruptions such as Internet loss etc. The QEF (Queenstown Education Foundation) team consists of Mr Johan Bester, the school's IT manager, and Mr Stephan Coetzer, the support manager, along with Mr Prince Rachidi, the school's technician, who orchestrated this migration. Thanks to them, the school's network is now much more stable, efficient and secure. During this week, Mr Johan Bester also took the time to teach the IT pupils how to splice fibre cables. That involved how to clean, strip and arc single fibre cables together using specialized techniques and equipment. It was a great opportunity for the pupils to learn a skill that is highly valued in the IT industry and to practically apply the theory that they learn in the subject. A big thanks to everyone involved in this massive task.

