



# THE RIDGE SCHOOL



## From the Headmaster's Desk

July 2018 #10

### Dear Parents

The second semester is now in full swing, and notwithstanding the relatively brief three-week period remaining of the 2nd Term, there is, as always, still plenty to keep us all engaged whilst your boys enjoy a full programme of academic and extra-curricular activities and events.

In particular, I would draw parents' attention to the Nelson Mandela 100th Birthday celebrations that the School will be commemorating on Wednesday 18th July and our own Founders' Day celebrations that we can all look forward to on Saturday 28th July. The latter is a full day, family occasion. This is a compulsory day that every Ridge boy is expected to attend.

### Staff News

- ◆ Mbulelo Ntshangana (IT and AV Technician and Basketball coach) and his fiancé, Nosipho, have been blessed with the arrival of their firstborn, a little boy, Aman Junior.
- ◆ Reuben Mandlazi's resignation took us all by surprise. Recognizing that a man of his cricketering prowess and related worth wouldn't be with us for any length of time, we nonetheless, didn't expect his departure to come so soon. We have found a promising young replacement to step in as locum for the 3rd Term. Chris Ndobe is currently learning the ropes first-hand and on a daily basis as Mr Mandlazi takes him through his paces.



### The Grade 7 Drama production ... *Shrek*

Our Upper School English Department and the Grade 7 boys have been working hard in recent months in preparation for being able to perform their very own, uniquely Ridge- adapted version of the modern pantomime, *Shrek*.

2018 will be remembered as the year when the decision was made to break with the long held tradition of staging as the biannual Grade 7 production, a Shakespearean drama. Given that this is the School's 99th year, it was a bold step, but one that has encouraged a certain freedom of expression. This more natural release of their latent talents has allowed the boys to use their acting skills in more comfortable ways that serve to depict an upbeat, modern and contemporary genre.

Many hours of rehearsals and hard work have resulted in the senior boys getting to the point where, having applied themselves with enthusiasm and energy, they are looking forward to be able to share their own interpretation of the globally acknowledged *Shrek* story. The three performances will be taking place on Monday evening 16th July (technical rehearsal), Wednesday evening 18th July and Thursday 19th July.

It goes without saying that the levels of confidence that they are enjoying on stage, together with their engaging embrace of what is essentially a first for Ridge Grade 7 boys, could not have happened were it not for the vision, direction and focused attention to detail of our Head of English, Urvasi Naidoo.



Ms Naidoo, together with Guin Versfeld, have committed long hours, loads of patient encouragement and a fair number of sleepless nights to directing and producing this important Grade 7 play.

On behalf of all, I offer a sincere word of thanks to them both for the hard work that they have put in as they have guided their senior boys through these uncharted waters. Together with their cast of eager young actors, the generous support of a number of mums and so many of the SP teaching team, they have done wonders in producing a play with a difference; one that is guaranteed to keep the audiences entertained and that will undoubtedly elicit a good chuckle or two.



### The Junior Prep Upgrade:

Many parents, having paid attention to developments on the new building front, would have recognised that there has been a noticeable upsurge in activity as the project continues to emerge and really take shape. The most recent site meeting has confirmed that we are now well on track to finish, as scheduled, by mid-December, which bodes well for the promised opening in January.



### Transformation, Diversity and Inclusion:

We continue to look for and explore opportunities to create, within the Ridge's cultural fabric, a deeper and more sincere sense of belonging for all. We are excited about the progress that has been made and recognise that, although the journey will be a long one, we as a school are well on the way to realising a more diverse, transforming and fully inclusive culture.

Some important cross-cultural initiatives have been implemented with a view to allowing staff members to share time in 'nation-building' together. Following the seven Sean Moodley Anti-racism workshop sessions held during the 1st Term, we have embarked on some story-telling, with a difference.

Every member of staff has been given a copy of Nene Molefi's book *A Journey of Diversity and Inclusion*. We then divided the full staff complement into eleven reading groups and each group took a chapter of the book to read and discuss. Follow-up meetings will take place and we will finish off with a final two hour session with Nene Molefi herself.

It has been a very worthwhile time together that has provided for some important bonding, story-telling and self-reflection.

### Points to Ponder:

Perhaps it's my age, or the fact that I've been in and around South African independent schools for as long as I have been, but I am becoming increasingly concerned about what I would call a growing sub-culture of entitlement that has crept into and is negatively impacting the lives of our children.

Understanding, as I do, that times have changed, that our children are exposed to so many more potential external threats, and that the breakdown in social norms and values has led to a worrying level of moral decay, it is no wonder that we as parents draw the cocoon of safety ever tighter. In my view, though, it is one thing to protect in the interests of keeping our children safe, and something else entirely to mollycoddle, pamper and so disempower them in ways that often encourages a very selfish, self-absorbed and increasingly entitled mind set amongst some of the well-to-do in the younger generation.

An article that I came across during the half-term break provides us all with a few useful hints and reminders on this subject:

## Entitlement – 9 Things We Should Get Rid of to Help Our Kids. by Kristen Welch

*She borrowed something from me.*

*And then she lost it.*

*Accidents happen.*

*But it was the whole “It only cost ten bucks-you can get another one” attitude that I couldn’t let happen a moment longer:*

*So, I gave her a job that required hard work and gave her the \$10 she earned and then I made her pay me for what she lost.*

*Listen, when I realized I was more than half the problem in this whole entitlement parenting challenge, it was a wake-up call. Kids naturally want what they haven’t earned, especially if we are handing it out for free.*

*But what we have is an entire generation of young adults who got everything they ever wanted with little or no work; we have a cultural norm and it’s a problem.*

*Because reality is, life doesn’t give us everything we want. We don’t always get the best jobs or a job at all. We don’t always have someone rescue us when we have a bad day or replace our boss just because we don’t like them. We can’t always have what we want when we want it. We aren’t always rewarded in life.*

### Here are 9 things we can get rid of to begin eliminating entitlement in our children:

1. *Guilt: Often we give into our kid’s requests out of guilt. We need to stop feeling guilty for not giving our kids everything they want. It’s hard to swallow, but we foster the attitude of entitlement in our homes when we are ruled by a guilty conscience. It’s okay to ask kids to be responsible for what they lose and to require consequences for actions.*
2. *Overspending: I think it’s good for our kids to hear us say, “We can’t afford that” Or “We will have to save for it.” Because that’s real life. We don’t have All The Money to Buy All the Things. I’ve known families before who are working multiple jobs to keep kids in extracurricular activities, when honestly, the kids would probably be happier with more family time.*
3. *Birthday Party Goody Bag (Mentality)-I’ve been guilty of this like most of us. But, really? We take our kids to parties so they can give a gift, but they take a small one home so they won’t feel bad? It’s not their birthday. This concept of spoiling kids (which usually goes far beyond goody bags) is temporary fun. It’s okay for them not to be the centre of attention.*
4. *Making our day-week-month, our world about our kid. Working in the non-profit world has redirected our extra time. Child-centred homes don’t help children in the long-run.*
5. *The desire to make our children happy (all the time). If you visited my house, you’d find out pretty quickly that someone’s always unhappy. It’s not our job to keep our kids happy. Don’t carry that impossible burden. Typically when our kids are unhappy, it’s because we are standing our ground. And that makes for much healthier kids in the future.*
6. *Made Up Awards: You know what I’m talking about. Rewarding everyone who participates in every area only fosters an inflated self-esteem. Kids don’t need rewards for every little thing. It’s okay to lose, they learn through failure as much as success.*
7. *Fixing all their problems: I don’t like to see my kids struggling. There’s a part of every parent that longs to make things right in their child’s world. But it’s not healthy to create a false reality. You won’t always be there to do so and not only that, if you’re doing it all for your child, why would they need to learn to do it themselves? Fixing all their problems is really only creating more challenges in the future.*
8. *Stuff: We could all probably fill a half dozen trash bags with just stuff. Excess. Try it. Bag it up and get your kids to help you and give it to someone who needs it.*

9. *Unrealistic Expectations: My girls are always asking for manicures. I didn't have one until I was married, pregnant and 27 years old. I'm not opposed to the occasional treat, but it's the attitude of expecting it because you as a parent or others have it. Just because I have an iPhone, doesn't mean my children will get one. We don't have to give our kids everything we have. It's okay to make them wait for things in life.*

## A Final Word:

A World Cup Football story that was shared with the boys at Friday assembly last week is worth relaying to the broader Ridge family.

Following their 3 – 2 defeat to Belgium in the round of 16 knock-out phase, the Japanese players, having led 2 – 0 thirty-five minutes from full-time, and indeed their disappointed fans, could have been forgiven for wanting to slink away without so much as a backward glance, leaving others to tidy up their shattered dreams and the remnants of what had been pre-match celebrations.



Instead, they did something that no one could have expected. Tucking their understandable disappointment deep in their pockets, the players showered and got changed – and then cleaned up their change room and left a thank you note – in Russian. Photographs confirm that the change room was absolutely spotless.

In addition, and possibly even more astounding to those of us brought up in and conditioned by a 'others will pick up after us' culture, the Japanese fans provided the very same courtesy by cleaning the area of the stadium's stands where they had been sitting. What a remarkable example for the rest of the world to pay attention to, learn from and, if only, possibly attempt to emulate.

Wishing you all an enjoyable and stress-free run in to the end of term. I look forward to connecting with many of you at Founders' Day on Saturday 28th July.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Stanley'.

Richard Stanley  
Headmaster