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NEWS 20

From the Desk of the Headmaster

It has been a busy year and all of us, teachers, parents and children, probably need the long summer break more than we realise.

As this is my last newsletter via this channel for the year, I shall keep it brief. I still have a Speech Day address to deliver next Wednesday and I shall also be sending a detailed, end-of-year letter, in every report envelope next week, highlighting our accomplishments this year. There is much about which we can feel pleased, so do look out for it. It is designed to act as a re-inforcement of what we hold dear here at Umhlanga College and to put our year into its correct, positive perspective.

In summing up our year though, I believe that we have achieved much, with which we as a school community can feel pleased. School has generally been a happy place for the children and we should always remember that it is first and foremost, about them. That said, we have been blessed with an enthusiastic and hard-working Parents' Association and parent body, most of whom have supported the school in every respect.

John Rae, for 16 years, the Headmaster at the famous Westminster School in the United Kingdom, had this to say about criticism of his school :

When parents are reluctant to voice their complaints and Headmasters are reluctant to listen, it is not surprising that mutual understanding is imperfect. I do not mean to suggest that this is always the case; there are parents who have told me exactly what they thought and vice versa and I am sure that is true in all schools. But too often we are guarded in our exchanges and that is a pity, to say the least, because we are working for the same goal.

What has saddened me this year, have been the few who have criticised our School, without first seeking answers or explanations to their concerns. All schools suffer from rumour-mongering and "car park assassins" and it would be naive of me to think that we are different. Yet it needn't be so. Our teachers are eminently approachable and nice people, as are the various Heads of Phase and the School's Deputy. Even the Headmaster has his good days! It should be a simple matter then, for any concern to be channelled to someone on the staff, or within our Class Mums cohort, who can assist, advise and provide the answer being sought by a parent.

This School has so much potential. We are poised for some major changes in the near future and exciting plans are afoot for developing the School further. As a School Executive, we have planned very carefully for those critically important components needed to complete our School, and rest assured, these will be put into place. Beginning next year, I would like everyone...parents, teachers and children, to throw their full weight behind everything the School undertakes and to be proud, when announcing to the community, that we are part of Umhlanga College.

" EDUCATING HEAD, HEART AND HANDS "



Right...having got that off my chest, it remains only for me to wish all members of the Umhlanga College community, a peaceful and joyful Christmas season. Enjoy spending time with your children. They have worked well this year and deserve to be spoiled rotten.

We look forward to seeing you all back here again on **TUESDAY 17 JANUARY**. It is going to be a busy year, from day one!

Condolences

Umhlanga College extends its condolences to Mrs Robyn Muir, one of our benefactors, on the sad loss of her father, Dr Julian Coller, after whom our Media Centre is named.

Norman Mann Appeal

I am hoping that there might be someone in the Umhlanga College community who can assist former game ranger, Norman Mann, who, about 18 months ago, lost his sight completely after collapsing during a meal, in Japan.

Norman is hoping we can help him, by providing him with audio tapes on any and every subject and my appeal is to ask if anyone has access to material of this nature.

You can find out more about Norman by clicking on www.normanmantrust.co.za

Don't tell me the sky's the limit when there are footprints on the moon!

Till next year,

GREG