



Provisional Accreditation by Umalusi
Member of ISASA
Telephone: 031-5665736/7/8/Fax: 031-5665739
Email: umhlangacoll@mweb.co.za
www.umhlangacollege.co.za

P.O. BOX 3097
PRESTONDALE
4021

11 May 2011

NEWS 8

From the Desk of the Headmaster...

Tich Smith, of LIV Village fame was chatting with me over the holiday, for reasons that will become clear later on and he drew a distinction between **success** and **significance**. To put it more simply, Tich was saying that most children who are the products of independent schools will go on to make a **success** of their lives. They have been afforded an excellent education, they invariably move on to our finest universities and are likely, later, to take jobs in well-established corporations or family businesses. Society will be inclined to measure their success by how much money they make, the car they drive and the suburb in which they live. And there is nothing wrong with that.

But...he asked,

What will they achieve in the world that will mark them as significant human beings, if in their success, they do not reach out a hand to others? I argued that young people setting out in life, probably don't have much time to think of others. They are too busy setting up their own lives, marrying and raising children, coping with bonds and school fees and that it is only at a certain stage of one's life, that one becomes truly altruistic...

Then I was reading the 2010 Michaelhouse Chronicle and in it, the speech delivered by my good friend, Thomas Hagspihl, at the school's annual Prize-Giving ceremony. Thomas's message to the boys that day was this, *What South Africa needs is Michaelhouse boys who are prepared to get their hands dirty and who are prepared to sacrificially give of themselves for the poor of our country.* He concluded his speech by saying, *I venture to say to you Rector that if the education here at Michaelhouse hasn't left an indelible urge in your boys to go out and make a selfless, sacrificial contribution to this country, then their education has been in vain.*

I think that what Thomas was saying, (although in somewhat stronger terms than Tich used), was that success does not always lead to significance, but to be significant means to be successful in one's own right.

The purpose of my meeting with Tich was really to hear his challenge to the children of Umhlanga College. It was a simple one...

Contribute R10 each month to supporting a child less fortunate than yourself.

“ EDUCATING HEAD, HEART AND HANDS ”



He qualified this by stating that there are currently 50 million orphans in Africa, of which 2, 5 million can be found in our country and that locally, the number increases by 12 000 children each month!

His encouragement to our children is to raise their R10 by doing some helpful chore around the house, or to figure out a way in which they can contribute that relatively small sum, without appealing to mum and dad to scratch in their wallets or purses, so that, when it is lumped together with all the other R10 notes, it will make a SIGNIFICANT difference. He threw this same challenge out to the Heads of all the independent schools in KwaZulu Natal, when they met at Umhlanga College for their quarterly meeting last week and asked them to take it back to their pupils. I can tell you that the response was impressive.

Now I think this is a worthwhile challenge for our children and something to get excited about. It calls for sacrifice...one less movie or one less hamburger, and it calls for consistency in giving. It will serve as a constant, monthly reminder to our children, that the occasional, school-arranged, community service outing, although appreciated, doesn't really make much difference in the lives of the poor and needy. What is needed instead is commitment by the givers.

So I took up Tich's challenge, tabled it in front of my staff and then put it to the children in assembly on Monday and we have agreed that we will see how much Umhlanga College can contribute, on an on-going basis, to making a real difference in our community. I am confident, that given the capacity of our children to put others before themselves, that we will make a significant contribution as a school community. At the same time, I want this to be something that the children embrace because they believe in what they are doing and not because, we as adults are putting pressure on them.

Let's see then, how our children rise to the challenge!

Then I took a look in our Parents' Association store room last week and was amazed at how much comes into this school from families who want, in some way, to assist others. We have a few projects that benefit from our generosity each year, Blackburn School being one, the SPCA another and over the past few years Umhlanga College has been collecting and distributing everything from books, to clothing, old computers and jig-saw puzzles, to those in need.

Trouble is though, the items are starting to stock-pile, because we cannot move them fast enough. In chatting with the PA then, we have decided that we shall give you plenty of advance notice when we are going on a collection drive and as far as possible, will specify what it is we are collecting...much like our recent Easter Egg drive which went off brilliantly! That way, we can open a small window period for collecting in donations and then move it to the organisation we have identified, without it piling up in a classroom or store room somewhere on campus.



In conclusion though, thank you for your giving hearts and for demonstrating to your children that it is in giving, that we receive. Albert Einstein said that education was all about what you learned after you left school, but hopefully if our children are learning the lessons that Thomas Hagspihl taught to the Men of Michaelhouse last year, then we are doing something right.

.....
At last the somewhat muddled school holiday period is behind us and we can focus on a 9-week run into the end of the term. I think that the teachers, coaches and children will be pleased with the continuity this offers, as the stop-start affair that has marked this 2nd term, has been quite disruptive.

The fact that school was closed over Easter, did not for a moment mean that work ceased. Indeed, we hosted, last Saturday, part of the Tour d' Urban Mountain Bike race, which had a considerable number of cyclists passing through the school. The 10km Fun Ride also crossed our field and wound its way through the Junior Primary phase and out through the car park. We have Ian Wilson, Nigel Barnes and Mark Tuttle to thank for including Umhlanga College on the route, which was favourably received by the riders. Hopefully, we can make a bigger event of it next year and really show the school off to the ever-growing cycling community.

Whilst still in recess, we also repainted our Junior Primary staffroom, as well as the JP hall and both facilities are looking splendid in their new coats of paint.

Last Thursday, saw Umhlanga College hosting the quarterly meeting of SAHISA, the South African Heads of Independent Schools' Association, of which I made mention earlier. Some 60 Heads from independent schools around KwaZulu Natal meet each term, to discuss matters of importance and relevance to their schools. I had glowing feedback from our visitors, as to how neat and clean the school was looking, but special thanks were reserved for my secretary, Veronica and her team of mums, for the splendid tea and lunch that was prepared for the Heads. Thank you ladies, for a job exceedingly well done. It was most appreciated.

Our after-school sports programme has commenced in earnest and I have been pleased with the turnout at the various practice afternoons. The early start we made to our hockey programme by running the Madsen Academy on campus last term also paid dividends with a good number of players going on to Pinetown and District Trials. Madsen Academy runs again this term as we continue preparing the children for the hockey season ahead. Remember too, that our Cross Country runners can train every Friday morning this term and we hope to enter them in a few training runs before our season proper, commences.

.....



Watoto Choir : Thursday 12 May.

A reminder that the Watoto Childrens' Choir is performing here on Thursday 12 May @ 09:00.

I have had the privilege of hearing them twice in the past week and without wanting to overstate things...they are brilliant!!

I would urge as many parents as possible to join us tomorrow for what I promise you will be an unforgettable experience. Bring deck chairs along, as for our worship time at the end of last term, and prepare to be enchanted by these delightful and energetic youngsters from Uganda, all of whom were orphans until being rescued by the Watoto Village. At the conclusion of their singing, they have a merchandise table which is well worth supporting.

Till next time,

GREG