

2020

VULEKA ST JOSEPH'S ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA SCHOOL FOR BOYS ANNUAL REPORT



ST JOSEPH'S
ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA
SCHOOL FOR BOYS

One hundred and twenty-four years ago, a man named Hermann Tobiansky bought a piece of land just west of Johannesburg. He bought the land out of hope, his hope was that the land would possess gold and other mineral resources. He named the place after his wife, Sophia and today the plot of land is home to Vuleka St Joseph's. Hermann's hope gave us the community of Sophiatown.

In this report, we look back at the most extraordinary year in recent memory. A global health crisis, an abridged academic year, online learning, and more than 300 days of a national lockdown later, we stand to report on life under the "new normal".



PUPIL DEVELOPMENT:

Spiritual Growth:

In December 2019, we said farewell to Reverend Sammy Masemola, who served our school as chaplain. Father moved to St Thomas Anglican, Linden. In his place, Reverend Colette Saldanha was appointed as the priest of Christ the King Parish.

Reverend Colette conducted exciting bible lessons for our children from January to March 2020, before services were halted due to the global coronavirus pandemic. We were fortunate to observe one of the sacred Christian festivals in the Anglican calendar, through an Ash Wednesday service.



Academics:

Vuleka is an Anglican diocesan school that provides an excellent and affordable quality education for all. A normal school year runs over 200 days of contact learning, where children get taught in class by a qualified teacher. On the 15th of March 2020, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, the president of South Africa announced that schools would be closed as a precaution to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. The initial period of closure was slated as twenty-one days. Three weeks soon became three months. At this time, the leadership of Vuleka Schools adopted a remote learning plan, which would see children receive teaching using non-contact methods: Online through video and offline through learning packs prepared by

teachers. This move "saved" the academic year, as we were able to teach and reach most of the children from as early as April the 14th.

Curriculum Coverage:

In partnership with ISASA, the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa and the Department of Basic Education, a new (adjusted) curriculum was adopted. The changes included removing some non-core concepts from teaching plans in the different Grades, for instance, Data handling was removed from Mathematics at Grade 5 level, to allow learners more time to work on basic arithmetic operations and consolidate their number sense.

Celebrating success:

Prize giving is an annual celebration of learning and in 2020, we were able to celebrate the special achievement of all the children with short in person ceremonies. These ceremonies were also supported by smaller celebration of learning activities such as the Spelling Bee.



Teaching Methods and Strategies:

The motto of our school is “Enter to learn, leave to serve” and this is exactly what happened to all members of the school community, from the school bus driver to the school principal, everyone had to learn how to navigate the world of technology, working from home and adapting to the new way of doing things. Vuleka St Joseph’s follows the National CAPS curriculum, with special enrichment programs such as music, sport (Swimming and Athletics), Arts and Culture, as well as Technology in the form of computer lessons. We believe Technology is a tool of transforming how learning takes place. We implemented some measures to ensure a suitable environment for the development of a holistic and fulfilling school experience, even during lockdown. Some of the ways we did this are:

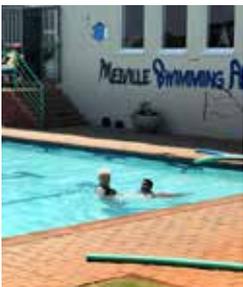
- Microsoft Teams Accounts for learners.
- Remote teaching plan.
- Learning packs.
- Live video lessons.



Our learners were blessed to receive a special Mathematics workshop, sponsored by TransUnion. This enrichment program helped both the teachers and students to get deeper understanding of the ways in which learners learn.

Sport and Cultural:

Sport has the power to unite people from all races, genders, backgrounds. It is built on the idea of a national identity. At St Joseph’s, we explore sport as a skill, specifically swimming, which helps children develop survival skills and builds their confidence.

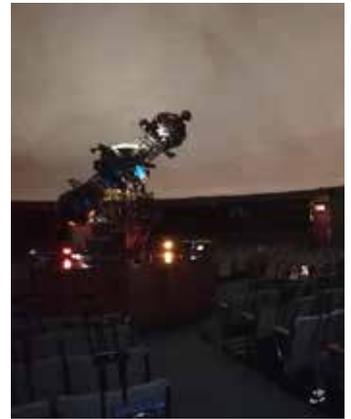


In 2020, our annual Derby day and Athletic day were cancelled. In their place, a virtual bootcamp, with Live training sessions , together with video recording of Grade-Specific drills and skills were used, produced by Mr Liam Gallagher.

Outings/Innings:

Learning is a continuous process, and it can happen anywhere, if the environment is suitable. We explored the world of performance through a visit to the Children’s theatre, and our learners got a chance to meet the actors, and to see a live show.

Elon Musk is a South African inventor and entrepreneur, and his fascination is to create a civilization beyond Earth, specifically in Mars. We explored the Earth and beyond with a visit to the planetarium, helping the learners connect what they learn in class with what is real and practical in the world of science.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In July we said goodbye to Mr Kirwin Moore, our Language teacher, who wanted to seek new opportunities elsewhere. We welcomed Dr Klara van Wyk, who has become an important member of Team Vuleka St Joseph’s.

We were also joined by Mr Lehlohonolo Makwela, a student teacher on the ISASA /Investec Student Teacher Program. Mr Makwela is passionate about developing mathematics skills and a love for numbers in the children.





PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Dorothy H. Cohen wrote “No school can work well for children if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the best interests of the children” and this was no truer for us at St Joseph’s when our Grade 6 parent group took the initiative of sponsoring the sale of Hot chocolate.



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

We saw the emergence of new norms in how learning and teaching take place. One of the key features of Vuleka’s strategic plan is to create digital citizens, and the national lockdown accelerated our move towards becoming a digital school. One of the enduring images from the period of early adoption of Technology is a Grade 2 “Hello” meeting between the learners and their teacher, at the height of the hard lockdown. We see how learners are easy adopters of technology.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Buildings

Change the space, change the experience. We made some cosmetic changes to our learning space, painting all our classrooms, in bright beautiful colours. The changes have energised the learners and helped them feel a sense of pride for their learning space.



As part of the long-term sustainability of the school, we also considered the installation of automated water pumps and rainwater storage. This was in response to the many water shortage issues in our area.

The future

Our school will become a coeducational facility, educating both boys and girls. This is an exciting time in the history of our school, and we look forward to building a thinking school that is safe, creative and that embrace change and innovation.

Conclusion:

In the bible, the book of Romans chapter 5 vs 2-5 says “He has brought us by faith into this experience of God’s grace, in which we now live. And so, we boast of the hope we have of sharing God’s glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God’s approval, and His approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit who is God’s gift to us”.

Now that we know the source of our hope, we can rest in harmony knowing that this hope will not disappoint us. It is a hope that comes from the holy spirit. Can we hope for what we already have? The truth is that hope comes from not knowing, but believing that something is true, and waiting patiently until its truth is revealed. Like Hermann, we hope to find riches of gold and mineral resources hidden in the minds and hearts of the children we teach. We have hope that the effort we put will find its reward, and that we will be here to witness it. We must be agents of hope, we must bring hope to our families, and the wider the school community. We must carry this hope in what we say, what we do and in how we carry ourselves and how we approach each school day.



On behalf of the staff, pupils and parents of Vuleka St Joseph's, I would like to thank all our sponsors, donors, benefactors and Vuleka Central Office for all their support this year, without all your backing, we would not have had such a successful year.

THATO MAJOLA
DEPUTY HEADMASTER

SCHOOL ARTWORK

