

JUNE 2024

Q2 NEWS



NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2024



WELCOME FROM THE FOUNDER



Warm Greetings

The second term at OGS was both enriching and dynamic. It is truly humbling to witness God's abundant blessings across all facets of our vision. Our gratitude extends to the Mzuri Foundation for their generous contribution towards the White Rhino Wilderness Foundation, a project that has greatly impacted us. Collaborating with Mr. Dave Hood and six senior students was a rewarding challenge that pushed us beyond our limits, an experience detailed in this edition.

As the cold weather gradually settled in, an unexpected flu outbreak affected a significant number of our students and staff. Our collective hope and prayer are for swift recovery and restoration of health throughout this holiday season.

The term was marked by spirited competitive sports and a commitment to academic excellence, emphasizing our unwavering dedication to nurturing each student's potential.

Welcoming many guests during the hunting season allowed us to showcase the vibrant spirit of the Orange Grove community and our shared vision.

Thank you for your support in every way great and small, without YOU and our Faithful Father, nothing would be possible.

Blessings!

Kitty Phillips

K Phillips

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ITHEMBA NEWS



This term, our school received two long-awaited assets that have been highly anticipated. While the old farmlands were transformed into an athletics track years ago, the absence of a level sports field was a persistent challenge. The athletics track was constructed on a sloping terrain, resulting in a 400m track with both downhill and uphill sections.

Approximately four years ago, a small section of the land was leveled and grassed to accommodate a 100m sprint track. Recently, with the collaborative effort of our parents and a generous contribution from *Mr. Jason Willingham*, a significant portion of the remaining land has been successfully leveled and prepared. The funding facilitated the completion of the leveling process, installation of additional irrigation systems, and procurement of grass seed, which is scheduled for sowing early in the spring season.



Another valuable addition to our school's resources was a versatile multi-function tractor (**see the next page**). The farm has numerous tasks that require manual labor, which is not only time-consuming but also physically demanding. Thanks to a generous donation from *Mr. Jeff Holmes*, we were able to acquire the new tractor along with the necessary implements. Upon its arrival, the tractor was promptly utilized to repair the roads damaged by recent heavy rains.

Our anticipation grows for the forthcoming tiller and grass cutter attachments, both essential tools that have been on our procurement list for a prolonged period.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors for their generous contributions, which have transformed our longstanding dreams into tangible realities.

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Habakkuk 2:3-4 (NKJV)



"Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty."

Proverbs 1:5 (NLT)



The Mac Taggarts have successfully relocated to their newly completed residence. In April 2020, *Duncan*, our Operations Manager, initiated the project by clearing the land and establishing his presence. Subsequently, construction progressed steadily, with *Duncan* taking a hands-on approach alongside a small team. Due to unforeseen circumstances, they transitioned to the completed garage section in August 2022, following the sale of their rental property in town. Progress continued, and by early June of this year, the remaining sections of the main house were finalized.

Future plans include constructing five additional homes for staff and their families who wish to reside on the farm. Emphasizing the integration of families into the fabric of both the school and the farm aligns with Ithemba's core vision. The Mac Taggarts' residency marks a pivotal first stride towards realizing this vision.



Visitors

In a heartwarming exchange of faith and culture, Orange Gove Schools welcomed a group of visitors from the United States again this quarter. The rural town of Tarkastad, nestled in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, became a hub of cross-cultural learning and connection as the American guests immersed themselves in the daily life of the school and its community.

The visitors, hailing from various states across the USA, were eager to experience firsthand the unique blend of education and faith that defines Orange Grove Schools. From attending classes, receiving prophetic art, to engaging in extracurricular activities, the guests embraced every opportunity to interact with students, teachers, and staff members.

One of the highlights of the visit is the singing by the students sharing their traditions, music, and stories. The American visitors were deeply moved by the warm hospitality and genuine curiosity of the Tarkastad community, while the local students were inspired by the diverse perspectives and experiences brought by their international guests.

Through this enriching experience, both the visitors and the hosts gained a deeper understanding of each other's faith, culture, and way of life. Bonds of friendship were forged, transcending geographical boundaries and uniting hearts in a shared celebration of diversity and unity in Christ. The exchange served as a reminder that, despite our differences, we are all part of a global community bound together by love, faith, and the pursuit of knowledge. May this exchange of faith and culture continue to inspire us to embrace diversity, seek understanding, and build bridges of friendship that span continents and generations.

We would like to thank the *Donaldson, Plesuk, Dorman* and *Blackwood* families as well as *Russell's, Shaffers, Frank Ferraro, Lisa Cook* and *Connie Meleski* for taking time out from their safaris to visit us.

We would like to make a special thank you to *Dan Cabela* for visiting us in his very busy schedule of traveling around the world filming his series, *The Hard Truths of Conservation*, bringing attention to the role that sustainable use can play in a modern conservation landscape. The children were enthralled listening to his many adventures as he shared them with them.

We extend a heartfelt round of applause to our sponsors and donors for their steadfast support of our mission. Your generous contributions have played a pivotal role in advancing our team, enabling our students to accomplish extraordinary achievements.





PRESCHOOL NEWS

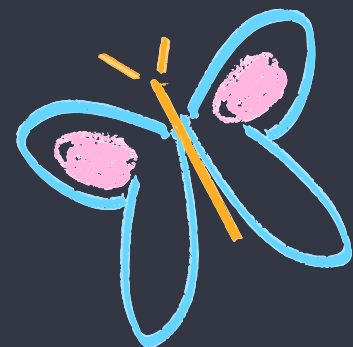
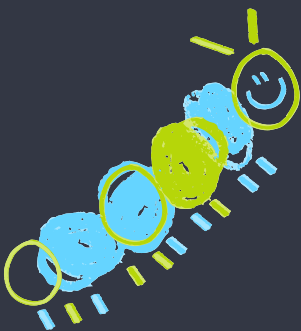


The school term was filled with engaging activities. Among them was a delightful show-and-tell session where students proudly showcased their pajamas to their peers. Additionally, students planted parsley seeds and presented the resulting plants to their mothers on Mother's Day.

For Father's Day, they crafted handprint key-rings. Art sessions were particularly enjoyable, featuring projects such as creating winter hats with puffy paint, crafting autumn trees with fingerprint leaves, and making colourful maize meal lizards.



Furthermore, some Grade R students participated in their inaugural hockey matches, while the school's annual cross-country event included a 1km mob race where *Aunty Nandi* joined the preschoolers in the run.





OGS NEWS

ACADEMIC NEWS



Classroom news

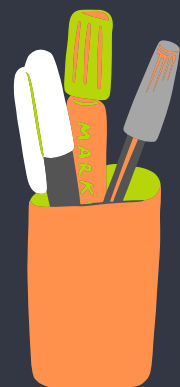
It has been a fulfilling and eventful term for our school. We take great pleasure in announcing the selection of four senior students as prefects. Congratulations to *Mesuli Skomolo*, *Lara Hood*, *Dylan Wait*, and *Okhanyo Ndzala*. These individuals have already demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities within our school community and have garnered significant respect from their peers.

We were delighted to receive a supportive visit from our longstanding supporters, *Martin Booysen*, the Regional Manager from AEE, and his wife *Anita*. Their continued dedication to our school has been invaluable, and we appreciated their recent visit, especially as they approach retirement later this year.

In a significant milestone, our students participated in the Grade 4-7 South African Maths Challenge, with five students qualifying for the second round. A special commendation to *Sam Millar*, *Inathi Mabece*, *Jonathan Hood*, *Scarlett De Lange*, *Amo Smouse*, and *Joanna Hood*. Furthermore, our Grade 8-10 students took part in the SA Maths Olympiad, with *Lara Hood* progressing to the second round. We eagerly anticipate the outcomes of these competitions.

Currently, our IEB students are immersed in their mid-year examinations. We extend our congratulations to *Mesuli Skomolo* for securing the 2nd position in the Online School for Top Improvers and to *Lara Hood* for achieving 4th place in Grade 10 for Top Achievers in Cycle 1. *Lara* also clinched the 1st prize in the Online School's National Tell a Story Day writing competition with her captivating short story, "The Lady and her Leopard."

A heartfelt congratulations to *Amo Smouse* and *Joanna Hood* for their remarkable achievement in completing the Grade 7 curriculum well in advance. Their swift progression to Grade 8 is commendable, and we extend our best wishes to them as they embark on their high school journey.



Skills program

During the second term, the skills program for girls included knitting and beadwork, with each student assigned a task to complete by term's end. Witnessing the dedication of the skills girls in their work was truly inspiring, as they successfully fulfilled all tasks by crafting scarves and small blankets through knitting. Moreover, the girls found pleasure in engaging with hospitality duties and assisting with tea service.

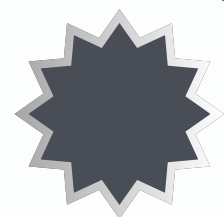
Kudos to our skills boys for a successful term 2, focusing on metalwork and welding. The students had the opportunity to operate various machinery and equipment, with the highlight being the construction of a new GO Kart for the school. Their hard work and dedication are commendable. Additionally, the boys have been actively involved in overseeing the school's cattle herd at OGS. Looking ahead to term 3, we are eager to delve into the practical and theoretical aspects of Electrical training.

Horse riding

Our adventurous riders had quite the whirlwind term filled with lessons and thrilling challenges! From nail-biting competitions to mastering obstacle courses and soaring over jumps, they aced it all with flying colors and bucket loads of fun. They were judged on their riding finesse, horse pampering skills, and overall horse-care magic. With sheer determination, they all leveled up to new heights of equestrian greatness. Wrapping up the term, they got to pick their favorite horses for a week of enchanting rides outdoors, showcasing their skills beyond the arena. Hats off to these horse-riding superstars!



Great job on mastering the term! We are oozing with pride
for all our rockstar riders!



SPORTS & CULTURE





The second term at OGS has been notably engaging and dynamic. Our focus encompassed a range of sports including hockey, netball, soccer, and cross country. Competing against formidable opponents such as Cradock Primary, Bedford, Winterberg School Trust, and Tarka High School in hockey and netball matches presented varying levels of challenge. Despite fielding limited teams, we consistently delivered commendable performances throughout all our matches.

Concluding term 2, we hosted the regional cross country event for the Eastern Province Christian Schools Sport Association (EPCSSA). This event holds special significance for our athletes and drew participation from schools like Alexandria Christian Academy, Winterberg School Trust, Kowie Foundation, Threefold Cord Academy, and Fountain of Life.

We extend our congratulations to *Ree Smouse* (**pictured below**), a parent from our school, for achieving a silver medal in the SACSSA chess tournament this term.





Our athletes exhibited exemplary performance, showcasing remarkable endurance and resilience. Special recognition is extended to all qualifiers for the upcoming South African Christian Schools Sport Association (SACSSA) National event in Mpumalanga later this year.

Looking ahead, term 3 promises an invigorating athletics season along with anticipated matches in netball, hockey, and soccer. We commend our students for their unwavering dedication to training diligently for their sporting endeavours and cross country races. Well done to all participants for a successful term of sports activities.





Regional Cross-Country 2024

1st Place

Girls Age 7

Awarded to

Kamo Smouse

The exceptional
Smouse family

08 June 2024

Date



08 June 2024

Date



Regional Cross-Country 2024

1st Place

Girls Age 13

Awarded to

Amo Smouse

08 June 2024

Date



08 June 2024

Date



1st Place

Girls Age 10

Awarded to

Khumo Smouse

08 June 2024

Date





OUTDOOR NEWS

White rhino trail

Imagine the serenity of spending a night in the wilderness with only a camping mat, a sleeping bag, and the vast expanse of stars above you. Envision the responsibility of safeguarding your fellow campers while being vigilant for any wild intruders, ranging from lions, elephants, buffalo, rhinos, leopards, hyenas, and more. Five senior students and Ethan, our former matriculant, had the unique chance to transition from mere contemplation to firsthand experience in the untamed wilderness. Accompanied by Kitty, Dave, and two armed guides, they embarked on a remarkable five-day expedition in the expansive wilderness of the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi park in the Northeastern region of South Africa.

Their return was marked by a countless hair-raising encounters—from unexpected run-ins with elephants en route to the restroom, to narrowly escaping the stealthy pursuit of a leopard (later identified as a cane rat), and even unintentionally sharing a space with a python. One student had a close encounter when a snake descended upon her during her night watch duties.



This was not just another 'bush experience'. No phones were allowed and our trailists were completely immersed in the raw, wild, African bush for five unforgettable days. Carrying all essentials in substantial backpacks, meals were prepared over open flames, and campsites were meticulously maintained, leaving no trace of human presence. They were transported back in time to a world untouched by modernity, confronting primal fears of untamed creatures, walking among rhinos, elephants, buffalos, and hyenas, and even daring to swim in the Imfolozi River alongside crocodiles. This transformative encounter led many, if not all, to ponder their place in the world, recalibrate their life's trajectory, and reassess their duty to the natural environment.



We express profound gratitude to the Mzuri Wildlife Foundation for enabling this expedition for our students, hoping that all seniors at Orange Grove will have the chance to partake in a similar revelatory experience in the days ahead.

hello, I trust you're doing well. This journey has truly left its mark on me in unexpected ways. Firstly, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in making it happen. It certainly tested my limits, but it was undeniably a remarkable experience I'd readily embrace again. The key lesson learned? Discovering that what I once deemed essential for survival pales in comparison to the value of time itself. Being immersed in nature's vastness, away from the constraints of schedules and deadlines, was a revelation. The freedom of not being controlled by the ticking clock allowed me to fully appreciate the beauty of the present moment. Each sunrise and sunset became more than just markers of time; they were opportunities to simply exist and soak in the wonders around me. In these moments, I felt a profound connection to the rhythm of nature, where time flowed gently, like the Innisfree river. Moreover, the absence of constant time pressure provided space for introspection and self-discovery. I realized how often we allow ourselves to be dictated by the relentless march of time, often at the expense of our own well-being and happiness. In nature's embrace, I found solace in the simplicity of just being unburdened by the constant demands of a clock-driven existence. In essence, this journey taught me that true richness lies not in the accumulation of minutes and hours, but in the depth of our experiences and connections with the world around us. It's a lesson I'll carry with me long after the echoes of this adventure fade away.

Yours Sincerely,

Eden Wait

Dear Wilderness Leadership School, Zondi, Mandla, Mzi, Mzi,

Thank you for the honour of going on trail in imfolozi.

Before this trail I knew exactly where I was going in life, but knowing one path blocks all the other options out.

I now see all the options, and though I do not know my path, I think I am in a better place than before.

Being so forcibly disconnected has made me feel so much more connected, as the wilderness has a way of doing.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Lara Hood

Back 2 Nature

The Back to Nature experiments, initiated with plant cuttings in the previous term, were concluded this term, emphasizing the correct methodology for documenting experiments. Throughout this period, students delved into topics such as photosynthesis, atoms, and the distinctions among various animal classifications. Additionally, a new project was introduced aimed at fostering environmental stewardship, requiring students from grade 4 onwards to devise ways to give back to the environment for its invaluable contributions. Amidst these activities, birdwatching sessions were conducted with younger students, complemented by a nature walk that showcased the seasonal responses of plants and animals to the changing environment.



Archery

Throughout this term, our primary focus remained on enhancing the skills of our archers by extending their shooting range. To assess their progress, we organized a competition that attracted participants from various locations, including East London. The morning session was dedicated to traditional field targets set at challenging longer distances. In the afternoon, a more lighthearted approach was taken with archers aiming at life-size 3D animal targets, ranging from small rabbits to majestic Blue Wildebeests.

This event not only provided a delightful day for all involved but also served as a platform for our archers to engage with peers, unwind by the fire during a braai, and gauge their proficiency against fellow archers.

Adventure race

In early June, we hosted what is set to become an annual event known as the 'Adventure Race'. The event featured a trail run offering participants the choice between a 5K and 10K route, interspersed with various obstacles to add excitement. While the runners traversed the course, attendees and families had the option to enjoy pony rides, savor pancakes, hot chocolate, or even gin, while children reveled on the jumping castle.



Our top 3 winners, all Orange Grove Alumni, are: *Simba Pita* (left), *Liyabona Mayedwa* (middle), and *Calvin Mbirimi* (right).

Despite forecasts predicting cold and rainy weather, the morning unfolded beautifully, it was a little on the chilly side, but the rain held off until we all went inside for prize-giving. Runners have to follow orange tags through the bush and along farm roads between navigating obstacles including a balance beam, cargo net, zip-line and more. The event proved to be a resounding success, with approximately 40 participants successfully completing the course, including several students from Orange Grove. Special congratulations are extended to three of our Orange Grove Alumni (**pictured above**), who secured the top three spots; with *Liyabona Mayedwa* securing first place in the 10K race. His achievement earned him a prize of Merrell running shoes generously sponsored by Splitting Image Taxidermy.



Prefects camp

During this term, we organized a leadership camp at our outdoor center for junior prefects from the local school in Tarkastad. This year marked the first participation of a second group from a school in Hofmeyer. True to tradition, we engaged them in a series of thought-provoking games aimed at cultivating their leadership skills and fostering teamwork. While some of the obstacle challenges posed significant difficulties for the students, we were encouraged by their willingness to tackle each task, including the zipline activity. We extend our best wishes to them as they continue their term as prefects in their respective schools.

Staff news

Training and development play a pivotal role in boosting employees' confidence in their positions, fostering personal growth, and advancing their professional skills. By investing in training and development programs, organizations demonstrate appreciation towards their staff, leading to heightened job satisfaction, loyalty, and a stronger commitment to achieving organizational objectives. It is for that reason that we have arranged for four of our staff members, namely *Alicia Solani*, *Ayola Sqhaza*, *Yolanda Cimilanga*, and *Sam Heath*, to engage in the AEE Supervisors and Monitors Training in East London for a week during the upcoming holiday period. We extend our best wishes to them for a fruitful week of professional development and enrichment.





IF YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN JOINING THE ITHEMBA SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM, PLEASE
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