

## Andy Woodage

Here we are in another June that seems to have arrived far too soon after January, and we find ourselves halfway through another year. The first two terms of 2025 have been very busy with sports, academics, visitors and even our first 'Readathon'. Plus, we are gearing up for our **25<sup>th</sup> Birthday** celebrations in November.

**25 years** - what a wonderful achievement! In that time, the school has had a huge impact on our town of Clarens, and there have been so many amazing people who have helped us to make a difference. Therefore, we would love as many as possible to join us in our celebrations, on 7<sup>th</sup> November. Please see the invitation that is further down this page, or which you may have received by email, or seen on our Facebook page. Whilst we appreciate that many of our sponsors and friends are in the UK and across the world, if you are able to join in with the celebrations, please contact us as soon as possible, so that we have an idea of numbers. Contact us on the email address on the invitation, or use either of the email addresses shown at the top of the newsletter.

In other news, after 11 years volunteering at the best school in the world, Becky and I feel that God is calling us to move on. We have had the most wonderful time, have met some beautiful people, and have enjoyed work which has been both worthwhile and rewarding. We want to thank everyone who has supported us through prayer and resources. We are still exploring the next steps for our family, knowing that there are no schools that can compare to Dihlabeng!

At the end of this year, I will hand over the role of Principal to Mme Bohlokwa Mofokeng, a highly respected and much-loved teacher at DCS. She joined us in 2018 as a grade teacher, taking on the senior teacher role of Head of Intermediate Phase in 2022. This year she has been Vice Principal. She carries our vision and values and will help to take the school into all that God has ahead of us. She will be ably assisted by Lizzie Mbele, who will remain the school's Deputy Principal. Along with the rest of God's hand-picked team, I know they will lead the school into the next season, making a difference to the lives of the DCS children in our community.

Many blessings, much love, and hopefully see you in November,

Andy

**25 YEARS!**

From small beginnings we have grown and are proud to be celebrating **25 years** of **Dihlabeng Christian School.**



*You are invited to*

*Our 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party*

*7 November*



**Dihlabeng Christian School**  
Love God - Love Others - Love Learning

We are inviting all of the DCS family to celebrate 25 years of Dihlabeng Christian School. Join us for a free evening of food, fun and festivities and afterwards for a buffet reception (R100).  
RSVP to Andy at [principal@dihlabengschool.com](mailto:principal@dihlabengschool.com)

**@ Dihlabeng Church @5:00-7:00pm - FREE**  
This event is open to all who have been part of our amazing adventure over the years.  
(It is not open to current learners [GrR7-7] as they have their own party.)

**@ Clarens Golf Club @7:15-9:00pm - R100**  
This event is a ticketed event. We are restricted to 100 places which will be given out on a 'first come, first served' basis. To book your ticket, email Andy at [principal@dihlabengschool.com](mailto:principal@dihlabengschool.com)



New Staff for 2025

Rachel Kendon - Age: 23 qualified with a B Ed Foundation Phase at Stellenbosch University in 2024.



*'I currently teach Afrikaans as a First Additional Language to Grade 4 and 5, Creative Arts with Grade 6 and also help out in Grade 1 on Fridays. The school community is what I enjoy most about working at DCS. The staff are always supportive and friendly. When I need help, I know that I just need to ask. As I teach different classes, I am able to form connections with learners all over the school. This is very special'.*

Karabo Monoko - Age: 22 qualified with a B Ed Foundation Phase at the University of Johannesburg in 2025.

*'I'm from Gauteng, Orange Farm to be exact. I studied for a Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase through the University of Johannesburg and graduated in 2025. I used to work at Pridwin Preparatory School as an intern for four years, from 2021. There, I taught Library Lessons, IsiZulu and Technology. In the classroom, I taught grades 0, 1 and 2. I also coached sports: rugby, soccer, hockey, basketball and cricket. I currently teach grade R at DCS. I have enjoyed the sense of community at DCS and the willingness of the staff to support one another'.*



Terms 1 and 2 Curriculum Focus and Activities



‘Readathon’ - Reading Challenge

In May the children all took part in the ‘Readathon’ or Reading Challenge to help develop their love for books and stories. This activity was launched just after World Book Day. Each child took home a sponsor form with the intention of reading their books to as many family members, and members of the community as they could.



Many reading activities happened throughout the week , including the older learners reading to the younger children in Grades RR and R



They recorded the number of pages they read and hopefully, received a small donation for their efforts too. At the end of the week the learners in each Grade who read the most books/pages received a small token from the Principal, as did those who raised the most money. All proceeds will go towards new books and reading materials.

As part of the many reading activities that happened through the week, we held a **Bedtime Story Pyjama Party**, which was great fun and a big hit! Here are a few pictures and comments from the children. Remember - it is winter now in South Africa!



Karabelo: ‘I enjoyed the Pyjama Day because some teachers were also wearing their pyjamas and read us nice stories.’

David: ‘I enjoyed the Pyjama Day because we got to wear Pyjamas on a very cold day. I liked the story time as well because we got to sleep in class’.



Nompilo: ‘The Pyjama Day was fun and we got to read stories to the grade R and RR classes. Teacher Andy read us a book that he had written, it was a sad story.’



Bonolo: ‘Ntate John read us some Fairy Tales. We got to sleep and play Mom and Dad.’



## Break the Rules Day

In early May we held a fundraiser day to support the upcoming DCS birthday celebrations. Learners were allowed to break school rules, for a small fee! They could: chew gum, bring gadgets and cell phones to school, wear different coloured socks or shoes, wigs, coloured hats or make-up! It was a lot of fun. Here is what the children thought, but don't ask the teachers what they thought!

Olerato: '*... It was the most wonderful time, we enjoyed stressing the teachers a bit!*'

Boteng: '*We had so much fun. The best part was bringing my cell phone with me to school, I got to play music and games.*'



## Visitors from New Life Church

In March we had a visit from a team of people from **New Life Church, Biggin Hill**. Amongst them was a young man named Dexter, whose parents sponsor a child in Grade 3. Dexter spent several days as a learner in Grade 3, getting fully involved with the class and all that the children did.

Dexter spent time with Grade 3 joining in lessons. He even made his own model insect, a bee, working with Gd 3 on their natural science theme for the term.



This was a wonderful experience for him, learning about education in a different culture. He fitted right in and made new friends. The rest of the team were involved in activities throughout the school. They also spent time in the community and worked with the youth group and various other projects at Dhilabeng Christian Church.

## Grade 6 Horeb Hike

The 16th of June is '**Youth Day**', a public holiday in SA. This commemorates the role young people played in the national struggle against Apartheid. Grade 6 chose to mark the day by hiking up Mt Horeb, the mountain that overlooks the school site. This is no mean achievement. They started at 1800m, the height of the town of Clarens, climbing to approximately 2400m. They also used the event to raise funds for their Grade 6 residential trip, later in the year. It was a very strenuous, character building day! Well done Grade 6!



Grade 6 and supporting staff reached the point on Mt Horeb known as, 'The Smiley Face'.

## Grade 4 Garden and Soup

Our Grade 4 teacher, Rabson is always keen to teach the children important life skills, as well as academics. Using their small garden plot, which is behind their classroom, the children have grown a variety of vegetables throughout the year including spinach, spring onions, carrots and pumpkin. Grade 4 enjoyed harvesting their crops and making delicious, nutritious soup using all they had grown, thereby learning the whole process from seed to plate. Also, they learnt important skills such as working as a team, food preparation and kitchen safety.



Preparing the vegetables in the church kitchen.

Teacher Rabson with his Grade 4 learners.



Enjoying the fruit of all their hard work.



## News Update from 2024

### Rorisang (Melli to her friends)

Many of you will remember from our June 2024 Newsletter that we raised funds last year to provide a teaching assistant for Rorisang, one of our young students who was registered blind. This was very successful and Rorisang flourished with the extra help from her assistant, Dieketseng, whom we employed specifically to help her. Thank you to those who supported this.

At the end of 2024, DCS was able to secure a place for Rorisang at Thiboloha school, in Qwaqwa, a specialist school which is about 50 kms from Clarens. In April Yolanda and Liz, her previous sponsor, paid a visit to find out how she was getting on. This has been a huge adjustment for Rorisang, but she is beginning to settle and learn how to use a Braille typewriter. Initially she attended the school only as a day student, but she has just started to board during the week, which allows her more time and concentrated learning in this important skill. She is doing really well and proudly displayed the Braille alphabet that she had typed.

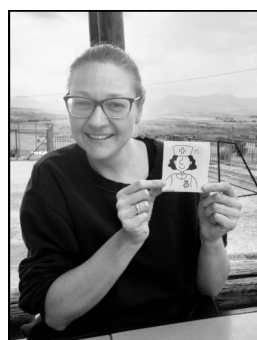
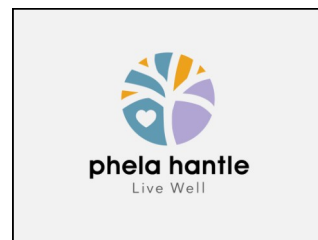


### New Life Church Fund Raiser - Oct 2024

**First Aid and Health Education** - In October 2024 **New Life Church** organised a fund raiser '**Quiz Night**' (see our December 2024 Newsletter) to raise funds for First Aid equipment, and to support Fiona Knight, a qualified nurse, in her First Aid treatment of the children, and to facilitate a programme of Health Education teaching for the children and their families. Fiona has been busy in the first two terms of this year and has sent this report of all she has achieved. It is an impressive list!

**'Phela Hantle'** which in Sotho means, **'Live Well'**, has been able to offer health support at DCS in many ways. Over the last 6 months we have:

- provided first aid support & health education to children and staff at DCS on a weekly basis.
- provided mandatory training to staff at DCS around health and safety & first aid.
- held health education sessions for parents and caregivers, exploring topics such as burns, stomach bugs, dehydration, hand washing, the importance of sleep, good nutrition and hygiene, the importance of exercise and imposing limits on screen time.
- been able to inform parents about a local vaccination programme on HPV carried out by the Department of Health.
- provided teaching sessions for children looking at infectious diseases & disease prevention, and with the older children the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse.
- provided sessions with the children teaching them about the importance of hand hygiene in preventing sickness, and taught them to make their own soap bars which they were then able to take home.
- been able to offer pastoral input to children needing a bit of extra TLC'.
- carried out routine eye testing for children to assess their visual needs.



'Nurse' Fiona at DCS

- been able to signpost parents and refer children to other healthcare professionals such as dentists, opticians, counsellors, general practitioners & pharmacists.'

**'My huge thanks to everyone at NLC for all your support and the health supplies that you so very generously donated to DCS last year'.**



Fiona, bringing First Aid and Health instruction and information to members of the community, including parents and young people.



**'Thank You' to all our Sponsors and Friends**

