



Dear Parents, Old Boys and Friends of Michaelhouse

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Rector's Message

Last week was a very full week with an excellent production of the Audrey Mbuyazi musical, *The Signs*, running until Friday evening. This production saw our boys on stage with a local school, Shea O'Connor, and was very much enjoyed by the full houses to which the thespians played on several evenings. The opportunity which our boys had to work alongside another such school was important to them and something of a logistical nightmare with the schools situated quite some distance from each other. All credit, therefore, must go to the creator of the musical and director, one of our parents, **Audrey Mbuyazi**. More detail of the production follows below.

On Saturday, **the long-awaited clash with Hilton College** took place at Hilton and, though we lost in the 1st Hockey and Rugby matches, we acquitted ourselves creditably with boys giving of their very best in all of the teams. In the upshot, we won slightly more matches than we lost, but all were played in an excellent spirit, befitting such an occasion. Again, more detail follows below.

On Thursday last week I had a visit from **Robin Cox**, one-time Housemaster of Founders, who went on to enjoy a significant career in school leadership and who had particular success in the realm of mentoring, guiding and supporting teenagers, mainly in Australia and New Zealand. He is what one may call a “thought leader” in relationship-building and in helping young people to grow in confidence and direction in their lives.

Robin is a prolific author in the realm of mentoring teenagers and has recently collated much of his advice over the years into his 18th publication called *Choices*. Much of his work refers to the work of internationally reputable psychiatrists and demonstrates a specialist knowledge of the working of the brain. The basis of Robin's work is that the choices teenagers make define who they become and he suggests that there are seven key elements making up the choices framework. They are: having clear goals, developing important interests, organization, interdependence, consistency, a good exercise regime and service to others.

My intention is to comment on all of these over the next weeks and months in the eNews, not necessarily every week, but rather roughly every fortnight.

In his introduction, Robin speaks of the profound changes that occur during adolescence and the fact that the three most significant changes of the life cycle take place during this time. They are: the ability to reproduce, the establishment of an identity and the development of logical and rational thought processes. He also draws attention to the term “neuroplasticity” which refers to the brain's ability to change as a result of experience and interaction with the environment. The brain grows, he says, and adapts in response to external stimuli, so it is malleable like some plastics. Adolescence is



a time of great risk, and it is also a time of great opportunity. He likens the brain to a muscle which gets stronger as we use it. The converse is that if we don't use the brain effectively, we lose the capacity to use parts of it. Other observations in his introduction are that Stanford University psychologist, Carol Dweck, drew conclusions over 30 years of research that the most motivated and resilient students are those who believe that their abilities can be developed through their effort and learning. What matters, she says, is that intelligence is not a matter of *being* smart but of *becoming* smart. This is a lifelong journey. Cox further suggests that the psychologist, Jean Piaget and the educator and medical doctor Maria Montessori believed that a child's mind develops in fits and starts followed by a period of consolidation and that this has been confirmed by recent brain development research.

Naturally, I am only referring to extracts from Robin's work, but I am certain these notions chime with the observations of many of us.

AS Tracking – Mr Tim Jarvis

Last year we partnered with an organisation called STEER to introduce **Affective and Social (AS) Tracking** for all boys. Essentially this is a pastoral assessment and tracking tool and involves an on-line assessment, completed by the boys, twice in each academic year. This tool has provided an additional and important part of the pastoral jigsaw as has enabled us to track each pupil's social-emotional development and, proactively, to give boys the right pastoral support at the right time and in the right way.

Through measuring levels of what are called 'steering bias', AS tracking has helped us identify the boys who need a little more pastoral sign-posting. There are four criteria that are assessed; levels of self-disclosure, trust of self, trust of others and the propensity to seek change. Whilst data is not ordinarily shared with parents, Housemasters and relevant pastoral staff will use the insights gained from AS Tracking to inform our conversations with students.

We are continuing to use this insightful tool in 2022 and next week the first round of assessments for this year will take place. We look forward to continuing to learn how to get the best from this initiative to continue to provide excellent pastoral care.

"The Signs", the Musical

Mr William Le Cordeur writes that *The Signs* musical was an overwhelming success over the past week, filling Michaelhouse and the broader Midlands community with hope and joy. Created in collaboration with Shea O'Connor Combined School and under the direction of **Mrs Audrey Mbuyazi**, Michaelhouse parent and wife of OM **Phidayinkosi Mbuyazi**, this production was truly a community experience of the highest quality. Stand out performances from **Brian Brits** with some outstanding solos, **Gqamile Mbuyazi** as a comic sidekick and hip-hop dancer of note, **Xabiso Ngcine (Mooi)** as the menacing Devil, **Thato Moumakwa** with a rap that brought the house down, are just a few features of the excellent cast which was on stage.



The cast of the musical “The Signs”

The next production in the Schlesinger Theatre is “Origins”, a professional world class production coming off a tour of our state theatres. Early bookings are vital. Book tickets for Origins through quicket.co.za

Co-Curricular and Individual Achievements

Debating

Our Round 4, Junior and Grade 8 debating outing to Pietermaritzburg Girls’ High last week was a resounding success. Sixteen boys and two staff adjudicators travelled to Pietermaritzburg to meet up with all the Junior and Grade 8 teams from the many other schools in the league, and there was an exciting buzz. For the Grade 8 boys it was their first ever face-to-face debate against other schools, and they thoroughly enjoyed their experience.

Both E block teams drew Opposition for this debate, opposing the motion: “This House Regrets the legalisation of recreational drugs for adults”. It was fascinating to hear their take on the topic! Both teams achieved wins, with **Jake McDonald** and **Nicholas French** taking home the Best Speaker accolades.

The Junior teams (made up of D and C block boys) tackled a motion which suggested that no South African public holidays should be religiously based, prompting them to cite equity, cultural exchange and the economic impact of public holidays as part of their arguments. Michaelhouse 2 lost out to Epworth in a very closely contested debate - so close, in fact, that one of our boys, **Roelof Roussouw**, was named Best Speaker, despite the team’s loss; a very unusual situation. And our Michaelhouse 1 team kicked off what was to be a big weekend with a convincing win over Hilton College! **Damian Watson** earned Best Speaker for that debate.



Well done to all the boys, who were enthusiastic, prepared and excellent ambassadors for the school. Congratulations, too, to the boys who were first-timers this year and came along to support their teams.



Michaelhouse Junior and Grade 8 debaters, and supporters, at Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School

Soccer

The 1st team played against St Nicholas this past week and won 3 – 1.

Hockey

Our teams travelled to Hilton College for the much-anticipated Hilton/Michaelhouse derby. The teams played with passion and grit. Overall, it was a good experience for all the boys, with the following results:

U14A drew 2-2, U14B won 3-0, U14C drew 1-1 and U14D won 1-0

U16A won 3-2, U16B lost 0-2, U16C lost 0-2 and U16D lost 0-2

1st team lost 0-4, 2nd team lost 0-2, 3rd team lost 0-5 and 4th team drew 0-0



Anothile Nzimande (left) and **James Gilson** (right)

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MICHAELHOUSE



Ross Rhodes (left) and John Yeadon (right)

Rugby

We had a very good day on the rugby fields with most of our teams winning and some very good performances. It was encouraging to see the true Michaelhouse fight and determination with several teams recording some big wins:

U14A lost 5-10, U14B won 37-0 and U14C won 81-0

U15A lost 3-14, U15B won 19-6, U15C won 62-5 and U15D won 57-5

U16A won 19-7, U16B won 28-14, U16C won 31-0 and U16D drew 5-5

1st XV lost 17-32, 2nd XV won 14-8, 3rd XV lost 5-33, 4th XV won 20-14, 5th XV drew 17-17, 6th XV won 7-5, 7th XV lost 5-24, 8th XV lost 0-33 and the 9th XV lost 7-50



Our rugby teams in action at the Hilton/Michaelhouse derby



Team of the week: Mr Ryan Strudwick, Senior Master: Sport

Mr Strudwick felt there wasn't much doubt which team would win the Team of the Week accolade this weekend. The winner is the U14C rugby team with their 81 – 0 defeat over Hilton. Well done!

Half-Term Arrangements: 19-23 May

On Wednesday 18 May is the D Block Open Day. The Junior and Senior Inter-house Tug of War will take place at 3 pm. Boys may depart for Half Term *with their parents* thereafter, at 4pm. Please inform your son's Housemaster if he will be leaving with you, as his parents, on Wednesday. There is no school transport available on Wednesday afternoon/ evening.

Thursday 19 May:

School transport departs for airports. The Durban and Zoo Lake busses depart at 08h30.

Kindly also ensure you place your bus bookings for the Durban and Johannesburg buses before **Monday 16 May** via the portal and inform **Nirvana Naicker**, the School's Transport Co-ordinator of any flight details and airport drop-offs/collections.

Nirvana can be reached for any queries at:

For any queries please contact **Mrs Nirvana Naicker**, School Transport Co-ordinator:

Cell: 060 562 3954

Office: (033) 234 1170

E-mail: opsadmin@michaelhouse.org

E Block 2024 Registration

A reminder to Michaelhouse parents of boys currently in Grade 6 to please register your sons as soon as possible (but definitely before 28 February 2023), via our website

<https://www.michaelhouse.org/admissions/registration/> or contact admissions@michaelhouse.org.

Old Boys' Weekend and Opening Times of Trade-Inn, Coffee Shop and Old Boys' Club

This weekend there is a "Super-Gaudy" involving Old Boys who come from far and wide to meet with their contemporaries from school days. We are expecting some 700 Old Boys to be here for Friday and Saturday over which time there will be a dinner, a special Chapel Service and an AGM. We look forward to welcoming returning Old Boys.

Please note that the following will be open on Saturday at these times:

- Trade Inn: 09h00 – 14h00
- Coffee Shop 08h00 – 16h00
- Heritage Centre: 09h00 – 14h00
- Old Boys' Clubhouse: 10h00 – 20h30



The Old Boys' Clubhouse will also be open for parents, staff, Old Boys and opposition parents. After the conclusion of our matches there will be a basic bar facility available, but on this Saturday, please note that there will be various points at which a "Howler card" (which can be obtained from the Heritage Centre) can be topped up / loaded by means of cash or a credit card (preferable) to prevent delays at the bar area. There will also be a food court with various external food vendors.

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR