



12 September 2011

Dear Parents

GUILD PARENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

It's been almost a month since the newly elected parent members of the Guild sent out our first communiqué. We felt it important to report back to all parents on our progress, as well as challenges faced towards achieving the objectives outlined in our last letter.

The most important initiative we have undertaken in the past few weeks is the establishment of the Parent Forum under the guidance of Lisa Thompson. The first meeting of Guild parent representatives and class representatives was held on 22 August. The class representatives were both enthusiastic and very supportive of the initiative. Subsequently many of you have been involved in meetings to provide feedback; and this appears to have been a very successful way of identifying key collective issues that the Forum can address. We encourage you to submit any further written feedback to the Guild email, or to your class representatives before the 15th of September. The Guild parent members will then meet with class representatives to discuss the list of topics raised. While we readily acknowledge that we shall not be able to discuss all the issues raised during this first round, we shall endeavour to provide feedback to parents on a continual basis. This process will involve the wider Guild committee which includes parents, staff, management and Board representation. Thank you again to everyone who has taken the time to contribute thus far. A special thank you from Lisa Thompson to the class representatives for their enthusiasm, constructive insights and most especially for the extra time spent on collating feedback from parents.

We'd also like to highlight some of the other activities and successes of the past month.

- Somerset House hosted an ICT evening with guest speaker Tim Keller. Thank you firstly to the School for hosting the evening and to all the parents who participated in what was a most interesting discussion forum on an issue that not only affects our children, but also illustrates the challenges many of us may face as parents. Perhaps even more exciting were the discussions we had as parents during the break away sessions, where we could share our current experiences and deliberate possible solutions to challenges we are currently facing. Through the Guild Parent Forum, we hope to organise similar events, and we sincerely hope that we will continue to enjoy your support in the future. We are sure that all parents and teachers that attended are subsequently convinced of the enormous benefits of constructive collective debate. This is a central value that the Parents Forum can endorse at future events.



- The Fun Day remains on track for the 5th of November. While more communication will be circulated after the September school holidays, suffice to say we have some very exciting activities planned and have already booked a wonderful band that will be performing from 6pm onwards. A special word of thanks to those who have already offered to provide prizes for the raffle, or to organise particular stalls. Currently the Guild is responsible for organising two fundraising events, for the school, the Fun Day and the Golf day (although we will be revisiting the format of the Golf day, and may add a further fundraising event this year). As such, the Fun Day is both an important fundraising, as well as family event, and we are actively seeking sponsorship, prizes and any other form of assistance to make the event a success. If you can contribute in any way, please email us at guild@somersethouse.co.za (all contributions or suggestions are gratefully received).
- In terms of the allocation of Guild funds, we have received a list of priority items for additional funds from the school and are extremely thankful to note just how much is already being covered by the school funds.
- Finally, we are nearing a point where we shall be introducing the new Vergelegen vintage in support of the Somerset House Bursary Fund (that provides bursaries for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend Somerset House). This project has already yielded some fantastic results and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved thus far. Numerous submissions have been made through the Parent Forum requesting more social interaction involving the parents of Somerset House. Please email us any ideas on how we can incorporate the funding of the bursaries into a fun/social evening.
- We also welcome any ideas on fun/family events that will help to foster the family spirit that Somerset House continuously seeks to cultivate. We will collate all suggestion into a list for circulation, and parents can specify those events that they would wish to be involved in.

That's all for now. We look forward to further continuous engagement with parents via the Guild website, and through the Parents Forum. We will continue to strive to engage in enhancing constructive collective communication in a way that underpins the values and family spirit of Somerset House.

THE GUILD COMMITTEE