



THE PLATFORM

NEWSLETTER: VOLUME 20 ISSUE 3

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FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Despite the difficulties presented to all schools this year, 2020 started and ended on a positive and exciting note for Hermannsburg School as you will see in the articles below.



Thank you to Westville Senior Primary School for submitting the thought-provoking poem, *Multiplying Molecule*, written by sisters Husna and Yusra Kara, who are proving to be budding poets.

I'm looking forward to organising your 2021 festivals which we are offering live at your school as done in the past, or as a virtual adjudication. The latter is a successful and enjoyable alternative which several schools took advantage of during this challenging year.

Booking details and other office info can be found below, but first a message of thanks from our Chairman, Mervyn McMurtry.

Vyvienne



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN, DR MERVYN MCMURTRY

As of midnight on 26 March 2020, the Speech and Drama Association faced an uncertain future. As a non-profit organisation, the Association is dependent on entry fees for its financial existence, and the Coronavirus lockdown ban on public gatherings soon resulted in the cancellation of all festival bookings.

The creative foresight of a number of teachers and adjudicators provided a solution to the challenge. With some misgiving, given that the performance of speech and drama depends on live interaction, for the first time since its inception more than 75 years ago, the Association conducted a virtual adjudication, with pupils having to record their entries for adjudication. With adjustments and guidelines formulated, other schools and studios began to follow on from the first pioneering project.

Since March, 11 virtual, and with the easing of lockdown regulations, 10 live festivals have been held. And what a pleasure it is to state that all have been a courageous and gratifying success, from which the pupils, teachers, parents and adjudicators have gained so very much. Hopefully, then, more festivals will be booked for the new year.

On behalf of the Association, I extend our sincerest thanks to every person involved, with the knowledge that, despite the enormous challenges that we, and so many individuals and organisations have had to, and continue to endure in this uncertain present, there is hope for the future.



SADASA

Founded in 1943 by Elizabeth Sneddon we were originally known as Durban Speech and Drama Festival. During the mid-sixties this name was changed to Speech and Drama Festival of South Africa and in the millenium year 2000 we were officially registered with the Department of Social Welfare as Speech and Drama Association of South Africa, which is still our official registered name.

However, in keeping with the modern world, and appropriately in this year of so much change in all our lives, it was decided to rebrand ourselves to be more contemporary and appealing to our youth, whilst still retaining our registered name - hence SADASA was born.

Our thanks to Fenella Rivalland and Loud Crowd Media for our contemporary and punchy SADASA logo.



HERMANNSBURG SCHOOL

For over 20 years Hermansburg School has been an active member of the Speech and Drama Association, entering items in the festival in English, Afrikaans, German and isiZulu. This year, Nqobile Sithole's outstanding monologue, performed during the school's online adjudication, earned her the Bruce Piper Award.

Founded in 1856 the school is one of the oldest private co-educational boarding schools in KZN.

At the beginning of this year it was bought by ex-pupil Zula Mkumla who, with the principal, Trevor Arbottle, staff and board of directors, is implementing plans to renovate and modernise the school's facilities.

Read the inspirational story about Zula Mkumla and Hermansburg School below:

Entrepreneur buys his old school

Aims to ensure pupils continue to get top education

ZIYANDA MGANDELA

AN ENTREPRENEUR who built his success on an extraordinary school experience has bought the school he attended to ensure others continue to receive the same opportunity he was given.

The school, Hermansburg School, near Greytown, was founded in 1856, and is one of the oldest private co-educational boarding schools in the province. It has an impeccable academic track record.

Zula Mkumla, 40, grew up in Pietermaritzburg's Mballi 18 township with his parents, his father Njongo Mkumla, late mother Dikeledi Mkumla, and two sisters, Funeka Magagula and Nompilo Mhlambi.

Growing up in the township was fun for Mkumla, who said he would play in the street with his friends and go back to a warm home with two loving parents and siblings.

He attended Fezokuhle Primary School, where the principal, Edgar Ngubane, helped to change his life forever. Ngubane was instrumental in connecting Mkumla with teacher Volker Allendorf, from Hermansburg School, where he would later become a pupil.

Allendorf had been sent to South Africa by the German government to locate children from disadvantaged areas and offer them a better education. Allendorf met Ngubane while on a search for township schools that produced good results.

Fezokuhle was among those schools, and Mkumla among the pupils who received a scholarship to study at Hermansburg School.

Life at Hermansburg School was different for Mkumla, but he said it was one of his greatest experiences. He joined the school in 1993 as a Grade 8 pupil.

He formed friendships that have endured to today, but what stood out



ZULA Mkumla has bought Hermansburg School, near Greytown. The school inspired his journey to success in business.

for Mkumla were the teachers, and how they treated him and his friends who came from the township.

"The teachers were very open-minded and understood the country's political landscape at the time. They made sure we felt at home; we were never discriminated against because of the colour of our skin," Mkumla said.

Mkumla's Zulu teacher was Stella Cockburn, who, said Mkumla, spoke the language far more fluently than he and most of the Zulu people he knew did.

Mkumla said he had received wonderful support from her, and she was a great teacher.

Cockburn is currently one of the school's board members.

Mkumla bought the school because of his love for education, saying his wife, Ntombincane Mkumla, had always made sure he remained focused on making his dreams a reality.

After matriculating in 1997, Mkumla studied for a BCom through Unisa, and

went on to complete a postgraduate diploma in business management.

Between 2005 and 2008, he served in an executive position at FNB, and chaired the bank's IT Seta committee. He then ventured into the sustainable energy sector, and held an interest in three photovoltaic farms in the Northern Cape.

After years in the industry, he accumulated enough capital to realise his dream of entering the education sector, and bought Hermansburg School.

Together with principal Trevor Arbottle, the staff and board of directors, Mkumla is implementing plans to renovate and modernise the school's facilities.

Since taking over at the beginning of the year, Mkumla has helped to oversee the purchase of a new fleet of vehicles to transport pupils, has started a golf academy, and aims to refurbish classrooms and boarding facilities.

"I was raised by a teacher; my mother was a teacher. It's always been a dream of mine to get involved in education through having a school that would do well and raise future leaders for the country," said Mkumla.

He intends to give other children with disadvantaged backgrounds the same opportunity he was given by Allendorf. He has started an education trust, called Dikeledi Mkumla, with his sisters, to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged communities receive good education, with the main focus being on empowering girls.

"We believe that girls can go on to improve and grow the community once they're given an opportunity; that's a very big focus for us," he said.

His advice to children is that they should persevere and never give up on their dreams. There was nothing pupils could not achieve if they put their minds to it and applied themselves.



BRUCE PIPER AWARD

The 2020 Award for the best monologue by a high school student was awarded to Grade 12 student, Nqobile Sithole, from Hermansburg School.

Adjudicators Mervyn McMurtry and Margie Marnewick found her outstanding performance from *Kramer vs Kramer* heartfelt and sincere.

Nqobile was recently presented with her Award at the Hermansburg Matric Awards Ceremony.



Hermansburg School Principal,
Mr Trevor Harbottle, with Nqobile Sithole.



MULTIPLYING MOLECULE

By Husna and Yusra Kara
(Westville Senior Primary School)

Theorists theorise the beginning of the world
From a miniscule atom to an ever-growing planet.
However, between all these theories and ideologies
Could they ever foresee 2020?

We started the year with goals and plans
And now can't do a simple act of love, holding hands.
What happened to this being the year when we achieve
the opportunities we had?

This virus is a thief.

Distance is the new norm and suddenly everyone is clean.
We love a world that obsesses over health
and hygiene.

But then there are those who take advantage of one's patience,
who drop their masks when they speak,
who hang out like people aren't becoming weak,
Who ignore all the protocols because they've decided
this pandemic should be called fake.

We are glorifying a pandemic
We are sugar-coating a disease
This world is becoming hostile
And yet we sit here at ease!

What happened to fighting for our beliefs?
What happened to empowering the weak?
What happened to educating those in need?
We've lost our sense of humanity.

So I stand before you all, criticising my people
for their actions - but for their inaction too.
You've abused the future of the youth
so stop acting like this is some big laugh.

Stop acting like this is something crafted for a story.
Please just pause your mimicked reality
because this isn't some movie scene.
This isn't some plot conspiracy.

Predictions aren't concluded, Oscars aren't awarded. Director? Hahah! What are those?

It's just you, 7 billion others and a multiplying molecule
So let's defeat it.

Submitted by Westville Senior Primary School



2020 SPEECH AND DRAMA BURSARIES

Thank you to DURBAN PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL, WESTVILLE JUNIOR PRIMARY SCHOOL and WESTVILLE SENIOR PRIMARY SCHOOL for their generous donations to the bursary fund.

The recipients of these, as well as the Elizabeth Sneddon, Jilian Hurst and Hazel Meyer Bursaries, will be announced when they have all been notified.



2021 BOOKINGS AND FEES

Bookings for your 2021 festival - live or virtual - may be made by phoning or emailing the office on:
031 201 6356 / 082 445 5365 / vyvienne@sadasa.co.za

There is no increase in fees for 2021.

Membership Fee - R475 per school/studio

Individual items - R35 per item

Group items - R85 per group

Admin fees - from R220 to R660 according to total entry fees.

Please note that the office will be closed during the school holidays.