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Headmaster / Skoolhoof: David Schenck

Dear Parents and friends of Parel Vallei

The stoep at Ledbury is a place where I often sit and reflect (unless it rains and then I move inside to the hearth and a log fire). I am usually initially consumed by the panorama that is our campus but it is not long before my thoughts settle onto matters of a more weighty nature. Many thoughts go through my mind but the one that has occupied pole position of late is...

what on earth is going on in this country?

Just when you think that nothing else could surprise us, somebody rises to the occasion and plunges human relations to a new all-time low. Comments where the pain, suffering and death of people is celebrated with delight send icy shivers down my spine and make me wonder about the future of the human race. What are we teaching our children? I do not know when this is going to end unless good people stand up and say...

**ENOUGH!**

I have 4 sons and I am trying to teach them right from wrong but the senior and middle management of our country is making my task very difficult. Our courts are filled with political turf-wars and the media is full of social and financial scandals. Is there no one with any moral fibre anymore? How can we inspire our young people when their role models are involved in allegations of corruption, theft, racism and hatred? Hot topics that are bound to receive emotional responses include the Guptas, BEE and quotas, corruption, colonialism, racism, white monopoly capital, Eskom, SABC, social grants, land grabs, gang-wars, poaching, 700 criminal charges (!), terror attacks, arson, domestic use of dagga...

I believe the vast majority of people in this country are good people who want nothing more than to live in peace and earn an honest living, but the people who have been put in place to make this possible are displaying a failure so spectacular that it boggles the mind. That fact that nothing is done about their failure defies belief!

The continued atrocities perpetrated against children (and women) is staggering and when seen alongside the violent crime and murder rate, as well as everything I have mentioned above, it forces us to ask deep questions about the quality of the basic education that our children are receiving. This basic education is not only the school's responsibility but is actually a cumulative effort involving all input that a child receives during the formative years. This includes prenatal care and the provision of basic medical care and instruction for young mothers and fathers.

I believe that we need to make our voices heard in a constructive, solution-seeking manner whenever we get the chance. Let's start by talking to and with our own children and encourage them to have conversations with their friends. Parents need to spend more time in the presence of their children and vice versa in order for these conversations to happen. Have supper as a family and talk to each other without any

electronic distractions. Touch is vital – hug your kids! Tell them you love them. Let's put the basics back into our children's lives.

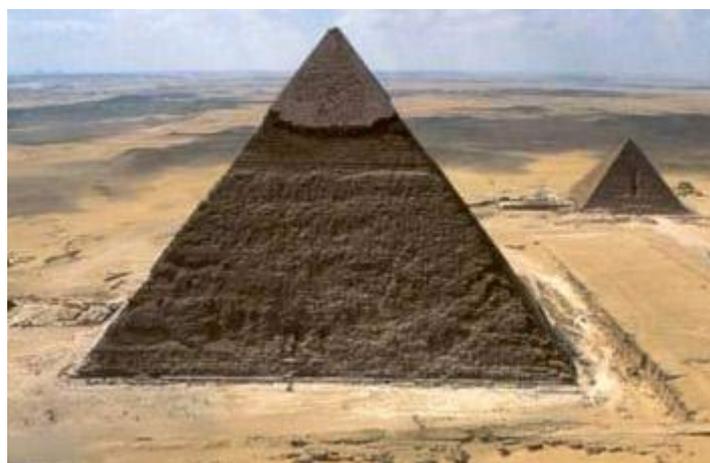
Encourage your children to see school as **the** most vital component outside the family – in fact, we should make school part of the family! At Parel Vallei, we are doing everything we can to offer a broad spectrum of opportunities but sadly there are those who choose to do nothing yet expect to receive tertiary opportunities. We do not have time to continue chasing those who do not contribute positively. The school is so busy that I do not want the staff having to deal with misbehaviour and socially unacceptable practices. There is no place for this at PV!

Let us make a difference by **all** contributing positively to our immediate sphere of influence. Lead by example and be the difference you want to see.

Parel Vallei unashamedly strives for excellence in order for our children to be at the very forefront of the next generation of leaders. But what does "excellence at PV" actually mean?

Ultimately, it means that every person, staff or student, is expected to deliver work that is consistently recognised as high quality in their area of strength and to strive to improve in the areas where they are weak. Where you are strong or weak will be different for every person because everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. What I am really saying is *make the best use of the opportunities on offer at PV!* If we all do this then we are laying a very strong foundation for our future.

I am very proud of Parel Vallei and delighted that we are already on this road to excellence but there is still a great deal of hard (but exciting) work to do. The communicator has been full of very exciting results and announcements recently across academic, cultural and sporting activities and it is good to see that the bar is constantly being raised. There is no short cut to success. It takes time and effort but with that comes rewards that are based on firm foundations and last a long time. The great pyramid of Giza took 23 years to build and is the only 1 of the 7 wonders of the ancient world that remains. Build slowly from the bottom up focusing on the process and the end result takes care of itself.



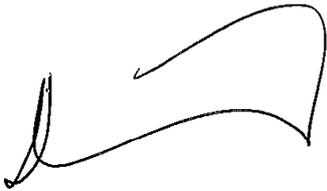
We must build a school that will withstand the test of time!

The holidays are upon us and thankfully the rain has arrived. I hope it pours with rain and all the children can sleep late and indulge in hot chocolate. If you have a fire place – use it! Hearty stews and baked pudding season – gotta love it!

The Schencks will be off on the E. Cape/Karoo pilgrimage again to put some venison in the freezer and visit our friends on the farms. Winter is a special time in the Karoo and I recommend it to anyone looking for solitude and peace. Just make sure you pack warmly.

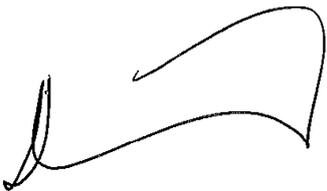
Please take time to discuss your child's report and let's work together towards excellence.

Warm PV greetings

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

David

Happy holidays and safe travels.

A handwritten signature in black ink, identical to the one above, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Warm PV greetings

David

