



S P I R I T

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

DONORS NEWSLETTER TERM 1 2019

Our schools in South Africa opened for the new school year on Wednesday 9 January 2019. As always the first few weeks were extremely busy making sure that all our scholars, particularly our 25 new Grade 8's, settled into their new Grades and were well equipped with all they needed in the way of uniforms, textbooks, stationery and everything else necessary for a successful school year. Though busy, it is also a rewarding time as we visit the schools and see our scholars working hard and filled with enthusiasm and the desire to make the most of their Spirit scholarships, often in the face of challenging circumstances. Thanks to the support of our generous and loyal donors, the Spirit Education Foundation is blessed to have 96 Spirit Scholars in ten different schools in 2019, our 25th anniversary year.



SPIRIT CAMP

An important part of the Spirit Education Foundation programme is not only helping our scholars achieve academically and in all areas of their education but ensuring that they are also happy and healthy teenagers who develop personal skills that will sustain them into adulthood. Our annual Spirit Education Foundation camp plays a major role in this as we not only seek to get to know them better on a personal level, but also to provide them with a learning experience through adventure activities and informative workshops. We choose a different but relevant theme to focus on each year and our theme this year was 'Resilience'. Having chosen previous themes such as Accountability (2018) and Tolerance and Diversity (2017), we decided that using the theme 'Resilience' would assist our scholars to develop techniques to cope with loss, disappointment, trauma, difficult circumstances and emotional challenges.

Our camp was held from 20 – 22 March at the wonderfully equipped (best accommodation EVER!) and very picturesque Waterval Country Lodge in Tulbagh. The opening activity was all about resilience – everyone had to get into teams and each team member took turns to see who could hold a brick at arm's length above a rope for the longest time (you *can* try this at home!) All in all, we had three action packed days of good food, fun, cognitive problem-solving activities and activities testing survivor skills and endurance. One of the group rotations was a workshop run by an experienced counsellor who provided our scholars with much food for thought about coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with emotional problems.

This being our 25th birthday year we had a record number of scholars attending and were delighted to be joined on the Thursday evening for our Spirit birthday party by some special guests – Ian Kilbride, our chairman, trustee Marc Wiese and his wife Saskia and the Horwood family from Australia (Len, Sue, Monique and Allira) who now sponsor 24 Spirit Scholars in the Spirit Education Foundation. We had a wonderful time celebrating with them all and enjoyed cake, hot chocolate and a (at times hilarious!) talent contest. We also want to say a special thank you to our five Spirit Alumni (Billie-Jean, Bobby, Mimi, Nzele and Sisanda) who gave up three days to give back in honour of their pledge to support the Spirit Education Foundation in the future. They were wonderful in every way as camp facilitators and mentors and contributed hugely to the success of Spirit camp



SCHOLAR TESTING FOR GRADE 8 IN 2020

On Saturday 16 February we held our second round of testing for Grade 8 scholars in 2020. We were overwhelmed at the number of applicants eager for high school scholarships for our first test (Maths and Logic) in November 2018 and over 140 qualified for the second test (English, Science and Grittiness) in February. Results have been received and selections made for our next round which will be interviews conducted in May. This is honestly one of the toughest tasks for Spirit selectors as we have more bright young scholars than ever before who qualify academically, and it is a huge responsibility for us to select scholars whom we think will benefit the most. We hope to have at least 24 scholarships available for 2020 and we remain ever grateful to our donors for making this possible.



SPIRIT HIKE

Our first Spirit hike of the year took place on Saturday morning 9 March and what a wonderful (if unexpectedly strenuous) hike it was! The hike was led by one of our dads, Riyaad Hess, and his experienced hiking team from the Network Hiking Club who very expertly led us up the mountain from Rhodes Memorial to the Kings' Blockhouse on Devil's Peak. We were delighted to have over 80 Spirit Scholars and their family members and friends who were all determined to get to the top in spite of aching muscles and much panting! We are grateful to Riyaad and his team not only for their professional care and tracking of us all, but also for the adequate rest stops, the time to have a wonderful picnic at the Blockhouse and the very informative history of the King's Blockhouse and the cannons (dating back to the second World War) that he shared with us. Our Spirit hikes are a fabulous way to get to know our scholars and their families and we treasure this special time with all of them.



And lastly, as always, we pay tribute to every one of our fabulous donors who make it possible for us to impact the lives of our scholars in this meaningful way as we continue to seek to *'build our nation through education, one scholar at a time.'*