MARTIE DU PLESSIS NEWSLETTER

AD LUCEM

In this Newsletter:

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Newsletter Team

Felicia Pelser, Janka le Roux, Hene Cilliers, Anli Starke, Andri Henning, Arina Nicolaisen, Kea Mokate & Donovan Enslin

FROM THE DESK OF OUR Principal

A term for change, courage and hope



“A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for”

Term 3 has certainly been a Term of Change at Martie du Plessis School.
It has been a time to step outside our comfort zones, make choices that affect those around us, and sometimes sail into uncharted waters. Change is not always comfortable, but it often creates opportunities for growth.

For me personally, stepping outside my comfort zone has been a tremendous privilege. It has allowed me to grow, to learn and to experience our wonderful school from a different perspective.

And we did not do it alone. We did it together.

A heartfelt thank you to every staff member, parent and learner who helped make this transition as positive and comfortable as possible. Your support, patience and willingness to embrace change have meant so much.

Spelling Competition – Together We Reached for R100 000

Our annual Spelling Competition once again demonstrated the incredible spirit of the Martie du Plessis family.

Our goal was to raise R100 000 towards teaching and learning resources, and our teachers, learners and parents once again rose to the challenge. I am so proud of you!

Every contribution represents more than money. It represents opportunities, resources and hope for our learners. Thank you for believing in our school and investing in the future of our children.

Evening of the Stars – Teamwork at Its Best

On 17 September 2026, we hosted our annual Evening of the Stars, one of our important Trust projects. What a wonderful success!

An event of this size takes a team, and I would like to give a very special word of thanks to Mr Johan Grobbelaar – “Grobbies” – the backbone of this event. Your commitment and dedication are truly appreciated.

To every staff member who worked behind the scenes – thank you!
You planned, organised, moved tables, served guests, arranged food, managed traffic, sorted out electricity, worked with the décor and took care of all the many details that made the evening possible.

You went the extra mile. And that is what makes Martie du Plessis special - it is the person who says, “I will help.” It is the person who steps outside their job description.
It is the person who carries the load when someone else needs support.
That is teamwork. That is family. That is Martie du Plessis.

This term has reminded me that we do not have to know everything that lies ahead to move forward. Sometimes, we simply need the courage to take the next step – together.
I am incredibly privileged to be part of this school and to work alongside people who care so deeply about our learners and about one another.

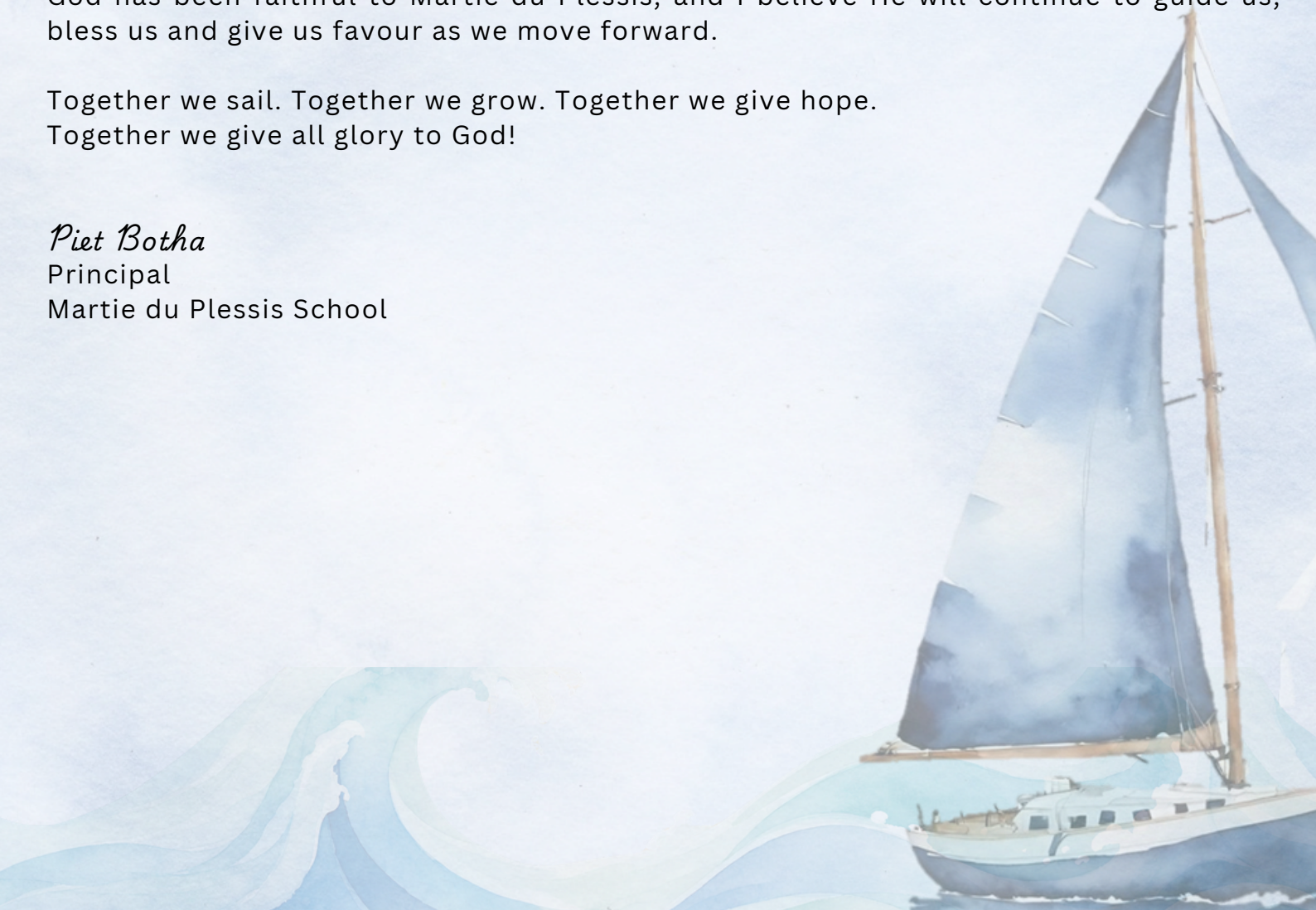
To our staff, learners, parents, SGB and everyone who supports Martie du Plessis: thank you for walking this journey with me.

As we continue to rebuild dreams, create opportunities and give HOPE, let us remember that our greatest strength is not found in one person, but in what we can accomplish together.

We may be sailing into uncharted waters, but we do not sail alone.
God has been faithful to Martie du Plessis, and I believe He will continue to guide us, bless us and give us favour as we move forward.

Together we sail. Together we grow. Together we give hope.
Together we give all glory to God!

Piet Botha
Principal
Martie du Plessis School





Mnr Piet Botha's Inauguration

HONOURING OUR PAST
EMBRACING OUR FUTURE



A New Chapter at Martie du Plessis

Term 3 marked a very special milestone in the history of Martie du Plessis as we officially welcomed our new principal, Mr Piet Botha, during a special inauguration ceremony on Friday, 4 September 2026.

As part of this meaningful occasion, Mr Botha was presented with the school tie and blazer, symbolising the acceptance of his new role and the beginning of an exciting new chapter for our school. It was a proud and memorable moment for the entire Martie du Plessis family.

We were especially honoured to have Mr Botha's wife and mother present to share in this important milestone and to celebrate this new journey alongside our school community.



We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr Botha and wish him every success as he takes on this important responsibility.

May this new chapter be filled with wisdom, growth, meaningful opportunities and many special memories. Welcome to the Martie du Plessis family, Mr Botha. We look forward to the journey ahead and to all that we can accomplish together.

Evening of the Stars













Our annual evening of the Stars once again reminded us of what makes our school community so special — the opportunity to celebrate every learner, regardless of their abilities or challenges. At Martie du Plessis, we believe that diversity should be celebrated and that every child deserves to feel valued, included and given the opportunity to shine.

This year's event carried an especially meaningful purpose. Funds raised through the evening will contribute towards the complete redevelopment of our playground for our Grade R and Grade 1 learners, creating a safe, stimulating and inclusive space

where children of different abilities can play, interact, develop and learn alongside one another, regardless of ability. Inclusion does not stop at the classroom door — it belongs on the playground too. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all our sponsors whose generosity and support helped make this special evening possible. Thank you also to everyone who attended and contributed to the wonderful atmosphere of the evening. Your support allows us to turn a vision for greater inclusion into something tangible for our learners.

A very special thank you goes to Mr Van Heerden, Cindy Swanepoel, Ignus Rocher and Jacobus Silwer for generously giving of their time and talents.

. Your contributions brought joy to our evening and, more importantly, helped instil hope in our learners, parents and the broader community. Your willingness to support our school and our children means more than words can express.

The Meeting of the Stars is more than an annual event — it is a celebration of possibility, belonging and hope. Together, we are creating spaces where every learner can participate, connect and shine.

✨ Because every child deserves a place to belong and a space to shine. ✨

We look forward to welcoming you to our next Evening of the Stars on 16 September 2027!

Celebrating Difference. Inspiring Inclusion. Building Hope.

STAFF CONCERT

The 2026 teacher concert at our school was a resounding success, showcasing the remarkable versatility and enthusiasm of our educators.

Teachers and support staff stepped beyond their usual roles to entertain and inspire, engaging in a variety of performances that ranged from singing and dancing to comedy and dramatic skits.

Each phase of the event highlighted different skills, making for an exciting and diverse show. The audience was treated to a memorable evening, especially when “60 Sixty,” a group of talented teachers, captured the coveted prize with their outstanding performance.

In a delightful twist, teacher Nadia de Swardt, true to her word, dyed her hair pink on stage after the tickets sold out, adding a splash of color and fun to the night. This event not only celebrated the hidden talents of our teachers and support staff but also fostered a sense of community and joy, leaving everyone eagerly anticipating next year’s concert.













Congratulations to "60 Sixty," the winners of the teacher concert! Your remarkable performance and dedication truly shone on stage, captivating the audience and judges alike. It's a testament to your hard work, creativity, and passion. We celebrate your achievement and look forward to seeing what you accomplish next. Bravo, "60 Sixty"!

Empowerment



Autism Awareness

Every learner experiences the world in their own unique way. Understanding autism goes beyond the diagnosis — it means seeing and supporting the individual behind it.

On 1 August, we hosted our Autism Awareness Workshop, focusing on autism diagnosis, classroom management and behavioural support.

The workshop provided valuable knowledge and practical strategies to help educators and parents to better understand and support learners. With 104 attendees joining both online and in person, the workshop was a wonderful success.

A sincere thank you to all our presenters for sharing their expertise and insights. Your contributions made the day informative, meaningful and inspiring. Together, we can build greater understanding, acceptance and inclusion



#DoorTalk

Door Talk is a therapeutic initiative where members of our multidisciplinary team share practical, nformative, and easy-to-understand insights with our school community. Through these sessions, we aim to educate, empower, and provide support on topics that matter to learners and their families.

This term, our #DoorTalk initiative took readers on a journey through our therapy corridor, highlighting the valuable work of our multidisciplinary teams and sharing practical information to support learners, parents and educators.

From the Speech Therapy Department, we explored the building blocks of communication, including stuttering, phonology, voice, language, articulation and comprehension — essential skills that help learners communicate effectively and confidently.
Our Social Work Department shed light on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), reminding us that not all childhood wounds are visible and that understanding, safety and connection can make a meaningful difference in a child's life.
Our Psychology Department and Admissions Team provided valuable guidance on our school's admission criteria, referral process and required documentation, equipping parents, therapists and School-Based Support Teams with essential information when considering support and placement at Martie du Plessis.

Through #DoorTalk, we continue opening doors to knowledge, promoting collaboration and strengthening the support network around every learne

Accommodation and concession training to schools



On 17 August, an Accommodation Empowerment Session, held in collaboration with SAOU, brought together educators and support staff from schools across Bloemfontein. Approximately 27 participants attended the event.

The session focused on the effective implementation of accommodations and included practical examples to support understanding.

The aim was to equip attendees with the knowledge and skills needed to implement accommodations confidently and effectively within their schools, ensuring that learners receive the support they need to reach their full potential.

The session created an opportunity for learning and the sharing of ideas. Participants engaged positively throughout the session, demonstrating their commitment to inclusive education and to supporting learners who require accommodations.

Preparing for 'My Life in a Suitcase'



Beth Mackay, social worker, and Mr Piet Botha, principal, recently went to the University of the Free State (UFS) for an orientation session with theology students in preparation for the upcoming 'My Life in a Suitcase' project, which will take place on 9 October with our grade 4 and 5 classes.

Mr Botha gave the students a valuable introduction to Martie du Plessis Special School. He shared insight into our school, the learners we serve, and how the school functions, helping the students gain a better understanding of the environment they will be entering and the diverse needs of our learners.

Beth Mackay focused on preparing the students for their one-on-one interactions with our learners.

Using the suitcase as a metaphor, the students explored how children may choose to share different aspects of their past, present and future. The outside of the suitcase represents what a child is comfortable sharing, while the inside represents things they may prefer to keep private.

We look forward to welcoming our theology students to Martie du Plessis and to see the meaningful connections and stories that unfold through this special project.

2nd year M-Students of UFS - Bridging Theory and Practice



On 21 September, our multidisciplinary team joined hands to give the University of the Free State's second-year Psychology Master's students valuable insight into the role of each discipline and how our professionals collaborate during learner assessments.

This initiative not only provides students with practical knowledge to support accurate report writing but also offers a deeper understanding of how a multidisciplinary school like Martie du Plessis operates and supports learners with diverse needs.

Behavioral Difficulties of Learners - - A discussion



Behaviour is communication. What we see on the outside is often only the tip of the iceberg. Behind challenging behaviour there may be an unmet need, an emotion, an environmental factor, or a message that a learner is struggling to express in another way.

On 20 August, we explored this and much more at our Behavioural Challenges of Learners Workshop.

The workshop provided an opportunity to look beyond "What is the learner doing?" and ask the more important question: "What is the behaviour trying to tell us?" Participants explored what behaviour means, where it comes from, and practical ways of understanding and managing challenging behaviour — both in the classroom and at home.

The workshop was a wonderful success, with 107 attendees joining us both online and in person.

A sincere thank you to all our presenters for sharing their expertise, practical knowledge, and valuable insights. Your contributions helped us to view behaviour through a different lens and provided our attendees with useful tools and strategies to take back into their classrooms and homes.

Together, we can move from simply managing behaviour to understanding it — and, in doing so, better support our learners.



What an outstanding achievement by **Chris van der Westhuizen!**

Chris van der Westhuizen, a matric learner at Martie du Plessis School, achieved one of the **highest youth accolades in Die Voortrekkers by earning the President's Scout award**.

Well done, We are incredibly proud of you!



Congratulations to **Kayleigh Stroebel!**

Kayleigh achieved gold at the **Free State Flip Championship**s and was selected to proudly represent the Free State.

Well done, Kayleigh! We are incredibly proud of you!



A huge round of applause for **Leam Liebenberg!**

Leam, grade 3, competed in the Free State Eisteddfod Association and achieved a **B+ for his outstanding performance playing drums!**

Well done, Leam! We are so proud!

A special shout-out to **Lexi Britz**!



Lexi and her horse, Strawberry Cheesecake, achieved an outstanding **1st place in the 40 cm Show Jumping class!**

Lexi was has also been included in the Free State Rising Star team.

Well done, Lexi! We are so proud of you!



Well done to **Lleerinne van Rooyen and Geraldine Pienaar** that has been chosen to represent Martie du Plessis in the **FS Cross country team.**

Well done, athletes! Keep running, keep pushing and keep making us proud!



Hats off to to the talented learners selected for the South African special schools cricket tournament!

Merwe Grobbelaar, Benco Olivier, and Luan Pieterse will represent their peers in Paarl, hosted by Free State LSEN Cricket.

This is a great opportunity for these young athletes to showcase their skills and passion. It's a proud moment for the participants, their schools, coaches, and families.

Best of luck to Merwe, Benco, and Luan as they make lasting memories at this prestigious event!

We celebrate **Marlo van Zyl, Luca van Vuuren and Lian Husselman** on being selected among the **final 23 players of the Iqhawe Free State rugby squad**!

Their hard work, dedication and outstanding performances have earned them the honour of representing the Free State at the upcoming tournament in Worcester from 27 September to 1 October.

We are incredibly proud of you, boys, and wish you the very best! Go make the Free State proud!





What an outstanding performance to our **Martie du Plessis U/18 Boys Hockey Team!**

Our boys were crowned the Best LSEN Hockey Team, bringing home the trophy after an outstanding display of skill, teamwork and determination. We are incredibly proud of this achievement!



<u>Cape Recife Tour</u>

The recent tour to Cape Recife in Gqeberha was a remarkable experience for our hockey, rugby, and soccer teams, as well as our chess players. Facing older opponents, our learners showed impressive determination, sportsmanship, and team spirit. Each member demonstrated resilience and skill, earning respect from all. This tour was about competition, personal growth, and bonding, with students supporting each other. We are proud of our teams for their dedication and commendable effort, setting a wonderful example for future participants.



Junior chess,

Known for its young talent and strategy, recently won the senior D league. This victory showcases the team's dedication and skill.

Facing experienced opponents, junior chess proved that age is no barrier in chess. This win boosts morale and inspires young enthusiasts to pursue their passion.

Ad Lucem Sport,
FSSAPD AWARDS



New Comer of the year- Zihan Cronje
Junior Female Sport Star- Yolanda Kabinga
Junior Male Sport Star- Brendan Warden
Senior Male Sport Star- Lehloane Leshoro

Denzel Mokone, Jimmy Ozoude, Nichischa Slabbert, and Zihan Cronje will compete in the Cycling South Africa Road Championship during the September holidays with the FSSAPD team. Their participation underscores determination and inclusivity in sports, showcasing their skills while promoting adaptive sports. Fans eagerly anticipate witnessing their dedication on the national stage.



Benco Olivier, SG Lombaard, and Lehakoe Nthare recently showcased their skills at the FS Metropolitan Education District Welding Competition.

This event united talented individuals, all eager to demonstrate their welding proficiency. Olivier, Lombaard, and Nthare not only competed but also learned from peers and industry experts.

The competition aimed to promote technical education and highlight skilled trades' importance. It was an excellent platform for these budding welders to gain recognition and advance their careers.



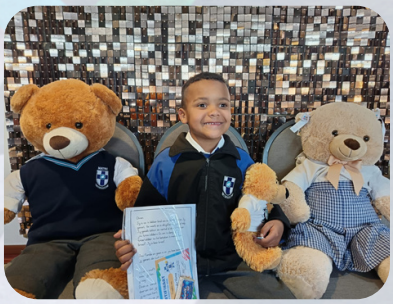
Well done, to those celebrating in silence

We are proud of every learner who shares their extracurricular achievements, as well as those whose efforts often happen quietly and without recognition. Every learner's journey matters, and we value the hard work, dedication, and perseverance shown in all forms. We continue to support and celebrate each child's unique strengths and contributions, and we pray for continued growth, confidence, and success in all that they do.















FOUNDATION PHASE POSITIVE FEEDBACK



On 19 August, we celebrated our Foundation Phase learners for their positive behaviour. These learners stood out this term by living out our school's values. We are incredibly proud of each and every one of you!

Grade 1:
Divan van der Merwe, Eon Swanepoel, Liam du Preez, Ruagh Labuschagne, Oabile Lebaka and Katleho Kopa

Grade 2:
Zetzke Parkin and Dayne Mintoor

Grade 3:
Leam Liebenberg, Tyler Victor, Keisha Conley, Sume du Plessis and Kenitia Kusakana

Special Class:
Lethabo Ramorare

Congratulations to all the learners – Your positive behaviour and exemplary conduct make our school community proud. Keep living out our values every day!

TOIBO

TOIBO, thank you for your generous donations, unwavering support and continued commitment to our school throughout the year. Your kindness and generosity make a meaningful difference in the lives of our learners and contribute to the growth and wellbeing of our school community.

We are truly grateful for all that you do and for being such a valued part of the Martie du Plessis family. Thank you for helping us rebuild dreams and give hope!



DEONCERONIO audiology • audiologist

A big thank you to Deon Ceronio Hearing Centre for their willingness to always assist with our children's hearing aids, from batteries to repairs! We sincerely appreciate your generous and caring support.

WITH THANKS



NEW SOCCER BALLS AND ATTIRE

We are incredibly grateful to Mr. Bruce Buchler for his generous sponsorship of new soccer balls, and Mr Nicholas Koupis for our soccer team's new artire. Their support will not only enhance our training sessions but also boost team morale and performance. With these new resources, our players can practice more effectively and enjoy the game even more. Thank you, Mr. Buchler and Koupis, for your invaluable contribution to our school community and for investing in the future of our students. Your kindness and support are truly appreciated.



CONTRIBUTIONS

We love celebrating the accomplishments of our learners, both inside and outside the classroom. If your child has participated in or achieved something special in sport, culture, academics, or any other extracurricular activity, we would love to hear about it!

Parents are invited to share photos and a brief description of their child's achievement for possible inclusion in our school newsletter and social media platforms.

Facebook / Instagram / Newsletter

Please send your contributions to Bib@mdup.co.za

Staff news

Welcome, Mr Francois Lombard



It is a pleasure to officially welcome Mr Francois Lombard to the Martie team.

We are delighted to celebrate and acknowledge him as part of our team. May you continue to grow, thrive, and live out your passion here with us.



Teacher Gerda Strauss is engaged!

A very special congratulations to Teacher Gerda Straus on her engagement! What a beautiful and exciting new chapter to begin.

May this journey towards marriage be filled with love, laughter, joy and many wonderful memories. Wishing you both a lifetime of happiness together and a future filled with God's richest blessings.

Congratulations teacher Charne Bakema



Congratulations to teacher Chané and Heinru Bakema on the wonderful news of their pregnancy!

This is an exciting time filled with anticipation and joy as you prepare to welcome a new member to your family. May your journey through pregnancy be smooth, healthy, and filled with beautiful moments to cherish. Wishing you both all the best as you embark on this incredible adventure of parenthood.



Best wishes to teacher Nedine Theron

Sending heartfelt congratulations to Teacher Nadine Theron on the arrival of their precious baby girl!

May this new chapter of life be filled with endless joy, love, and cherished memories. Wishing you and your family an abundance of happiness and wonderful moments as you welcome your little one into the world.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN TERM 4

October

School re-opens
RCL election takes place
Matric farewell
School photos
Last day of grade 12's
FSSAPD Boccia interprovincial
Positive reinforcement
Price giving
Design exhibition
Cake-sale
High school exams start
Pre-primary Christmas function

November

Positive behavior / reinforcement
FSSAPD athletics, bicylcle and soccer trials
Intermediate phase exams start
Pre-primary fun-day
Sponsors-function