



BELLAVISTA

NEWSLETTER

A SAFE HARBOUR SCHOOL

4 of 2023

There is always hope.



At last Friday's assembly, we were all patiently waiting for resolution of a 'HDMI glitch'. Just as I suggested that I hoped it would connect soon, a voice rang out,

"There is always hope!"

It was Asher Jankelowitz in Grade Four. My soul soared. If children *know* this in their inmost being, then it's true, there is always hope and we are a hope-filled school.

In life, there are times when we feel hopeless and defeated. We face challenges and obstacles that seem insurmountable, and it can be difficult to see a way forward at first. In Feuerstein's framework for learning and thinking, a parameter called '*Search for an Optimistic Alternative*' is the closest to the notion of hope. The tool is linked to competence, challenge and goal-directed behaviour. It is a desire for and a positive outcome in any given situation. Searching for an optimistic alternative is within a person's cognitive control. It can be taught and it has an important place in classrooms, schools and wider society. Searching for an optimistic alternative includes a personal vision for the future: I can choose to be optimistic or pessimistic about what lies ahead.

One of the most important things to remember about hope is that it is not a passive emotion. It requires action and effort on our part to cultivate and maintain it. This means taking steps to improve our situation, even if these are small and incremental. It means seeking out support and resources, and being willing to try new things and take risks. These actions and steps form our search for an optimistic alternative. It may be 'too soon', but our pursuit of solar solutions in our homes and workplaces exemplifies this model – taking action to improve our situation even by trying new things. It starts with a LED light and finishes with fully fledged solar panel systems, taking a household off the grid.



In life, a person is faced with both negative and positive outcomes when making choices to solve a problem. Having choices raises a dilemma. In taking a step or action towards an *optimistic* alternative, a person does what is necessary to achieve a meaningful goal, bringing their feeling of competence, their capacity and their focus to the matter at hand. Each action or step taken supports the realisation of that goal or intention. Choosing an optimistic alternative is a **deliberate advancement towards a solution**. Consider when you choose to place your child at Bellavista School. You face a dilemma. You consider your goals and hopes for your child and the educational opportunities before you as a parent. You take a step to assess and then you make many incremental decisions before your child arrives at school.

In the process of searching for an optimistic alternative, challenges arising out of the decision are anticipated. However, an inner drive or determination is buoyed by hope for the end goal. Think about choosing a bigger 'family van' for all the school lifts across town. Filling that petrol tank is a big step up on the cost of your sedan, but you get to run the school lifts safely, and even courier the children's friends.

Hope is a powerful force that can inspire us to keep going, even when things seem impossible. This gives rise to the **resilience and grit** that we need to face challenges and overcome adversity. Without hope, we can easily become mired in despair and lose sight of the possibilities that exist. South Africans need the power of hope right now. How can you add an optimistic alternative to our current realities?

Another important aspect of hope is that it is often found in unexpected places. Sometimes, it can come from the **support and encouragement** of loved ones, the advice of an elder or expert, or from a chance encounter with a stranger. At other times, it can come from within ourselves, as we tap into our own inner strength and resilience. When you are looking for the optimistic alternative, tap into the feeling of competence by reflecting on a time when you overcame something difficult before.

In Asher's words, there is always hope, even in the most difficult of times. By staying focused on our goals, taking action to improve our situation, and believing in ourselves, we can cultivate the resilience and strength we need to overcome adversity and challenges before us.

Be like Asher.

Sports News

Congratulations to the Ter Horst boys on their win against Norwood Primary last week. The Commonwealth players are all now back from camp and are set to face Pridwin on the field.

Whatsapp and the teacher's attention

It has come to my attention that many teachers and therapists are feeling under pressure to provide daily progress updates and photos over Whatsapp over the course of the day. Please know that this practice is wholly **undesirable** outside of:

- celebrating with a parent that a home programme is carrying over to school (a once off or very occasional communication)
- in the early developmental phase of Grade R where the nature of play in the day's programme allows for such moments

Teachers are teaching – I want them *with* your child, working in groups, assessing, engaging, mediating learning and monitoring play. They need to be fully present and ideally not on their phones, splitting their focus. Like never before, children need the adults with them to be available. The COVID experience heightened digital communication to an unhealthy level – perhaps as a means to survive at the time. We must pull back on documenting the minutiae of every activity our children are involved with. They need space to grow and be independent individuals. We have, and always will, send you the communication you need and feedback on progress as required. Trust us – we’ve been at it for years.

Appreciation

THANK YOU to the parents who organised and attended the grade gatherings already held. How good and wonderful it is to be in each other’s company.

Staff news

Our music teacher, Hastings Niyrenda, and his wife are expecting their first baby this week. It may be that there is no music on a particular day. He’ll not have much notice. Our best wishes to him and his family!

Nuts and Bolts

- 🕒 The JP Morgan Event organisers have made further communication to advise that Wingfield, St Andrews and Venus streets will be closed as early as 12h00 on 30 March. We already announced an earlier close of day but this serves as notice to collect at 11h45 for Grade R, 3 and 5 and 12h00 for Grade 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7.
- 🕒 Prof Venter is consulting at Bellavista this week and next.
- 🕒 Grade 5-7 parents are invited (in fact urged) to attend an information evening with Luke Lamprecht this Wednesday at 17h30. Our topic is cyber safety and the types of activities our children are getting involved with online.
- 🕒 Your child’s class teacher will start to make parent feedback appointments with you, using the “You can book me” platform. Please be on the lookout for this.
- 🕒 The BIG event ahead is the UV Family Dash; stay posted to the PA groups for more info.
- 🕒 Its Purim tomorrow, and we wish all our Jewish families a happy celebration.



Enjoy the week!