

ALUMNAE NEWS

Rustenburg Girls' Schools Alumnae Newsletter

December 2019

President's report

It has been a time of positive changes; the Alumnet database was implemented and can be used for networking by all alumnae who register on it. Our name and logo have been updated and going forward we will be Rustenburg Alumnae. We also have an official Facebook page and Instagram account (Rustenburg Alumnae).

Members of the committee attended the annual South African Schools Alumni Association Conference where it became apparent that RA is relevant to the needs of a modern school in terms of bursary and assistance to the schools and to its past pupils in terms of reunion organization, Alumnet communication, fees and structure.

Thanks to Pat Hanger, who has done a fantastic job of updating the Alumnet database and chasing alumnae for their current contact details. Pat is retiring at the end of the year and we wish to thank her for all her hard work and dedication over many years of service to RGHS and this past year to RA.

The Rustenburg Old Girls' Choir was formed earlier this year by Mr Hendrik Marais and old girl Lauren Davis (E'12). The journey has been one of friendships, memories and wonderful music making which has proven to be a legacy of which we can be proud. To join the choir, please contact their Facebook page (ROGU choir) or get in touch with the office.

We have implemented an Alumnae support programme. This programme aims to foster healthy relationships between past and present students, to support and guide students who may find themselves struggling. We are guided by the guidance team at the school and work in conjunction with them.

The Mavis Wakeford Bursary for tertiary education in the teaching profession was awarded for the last time as the interest on the bequeathed funds is no longer sufficient to maintain this bursary. A new RA bursary of R10 000 will be offered to/shared between one and three successful applicants who are studying in any field.

RA has committed to supplementing bursaries given out by RGHS. A very generous donation from one of our alumnae will be used to help fund a deserving learner whose parents may not be in a financial position to keep her at RGHS. The school will identify the learner and she will receive R10 000 per year to subsidise her fees. This will be awarded in 2020.

Thanks to the 1968 E's who responded to the challenge from the 1956 E's to match or better their donation towards the RA bursary fund. They raised R6250 at their Founders' Day reunion which they donated to the fund.

Thank you to all alumnae who contributed to the 125 Club helping to boost our bursary fund.

As grade reunions foster good relationships between past pupils, we continue to host a very lively one-year reunion each year in Charlie's Hope. We encourage all alumnae to organize reunions and to update us on these events and other news for inclusion in our newsletter.

-Ruth Romburgh



Our new logo

Thanks to Pat Hanger, who has done a fantastic job... Pat is retiring at the end of the year and we wish to thank her for all her hard work and dedication over many years of service to RGHS and this past year to RA.

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E'18 reunion

A one-year reunion was held for the class of 2018 by the Rustenburg Alumnae committee at Charlie's Hope on Friday 6 September 2019.

Unfortunately the majority of the class was not available on this date, but the alumnae who were present were very pleased to get together again to swop news and share their experiences. The evening was topped off with a large cake printed with their matric class photo.

Many thanks to the committee members who were able to help on the night.



The Armed Man

Rustenburg Girls' High School Choir, Rondebosch Boys' High School Choir, South African College School Choir and a combined orchestra, performed "The Armed Man" at the Cape Town City Hall on 23 & 24 July 2019. It was gratifying to see that a number of Alumnae attended the concert, some of them travelling from a considerable distance.

Both performances were given a standing ovation by the audience, in appreciation of a truly memorable concert. It was the culmination of countless hours of practice and rehearsals from both educators, learners and many others involved in the production.

There were a number of Alumnae playing in the orchestra, Kaitlin Visser-Downie (E'18), Alexandra Wittenberg-Scott (E'16), Camilla Driver (E'92), and Seul Jung (E'14). Conductor, Alexander Fokkens, is married to pianist Margaret Foxcroft (E'90). Thanks go to Sheila Chisholm (E'49), who interviewed Mr Jaco Goosen and then arranged a live broadcast on Fine Music Radio on Tuesday 16 July.



Ms B Cameron (RGHS Staff) and Ms Katharina Brock (E'06) (SACS Staff), dressed warmly for rehearsal on a cold winter's night, at Rustenburg.



Dress rehearsal at the City Hall

No longer treason: Cathi Albertyn delivers Helen Joseph memorial lecture



Cathi Albertyn

Cathi Albertyn (E '76) was invited to be Guest Speaker at the Helen Joseph Memorial lecture, at the University of Johannesburg in October. Her talk was entitled "No longer treason. Equality and the South African constitution" in which she reflects on the struggle for equality pre-1994 and what it means to strive for equality in the current environment.

Cathi is a Professor of Law and Research Chair in Equality, Law and Social Justice at Wits University, former Commissioner on the Commission on Gender Equality, and the Law Report Commission and candidate for the Constitutional Court.

Listen to her full lecture on the UJ Humanities Facebook page at <https://web.facebook.com/UJHumanities/videos/444708432817083/>

New RGJS Headmistress

We'd like to introduce you to Rustenburg Girls Junior School's Headmistress - the newly appointed Ms. Belinda Petersen. Belinda, previous principal of Ottery Road Methodist Primary School began her new journey at RGJS at the beginning of the third term.

She brings 16 years' experience in education. After graduating with her Higher Diploma in Education (Foundation Phase), she worked as a youth and children's worker. This role involved counselling as well as character and leadership development amongst diverse, multicultural groups of young people.

Her teaching experience spans grades one to seven. She holds a Masters degree in Mathematics Education where her research focused on problem-solving in the Foundation Phase.

Belinda is a member of the Education Management Association of South Africa (EMASA) and the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa (AMESA).

Her leadership capabilities have also been enhanced through programmes such as Partners for Possibility and the Principals Academy. She is passionate about fostering a collaborative community and developing the leadership capacity of others.

Belinda's vision is to encourage and create a connected culture where building relationships, understanding others and giving everyone a voice is key. She believes in creating space for partnerships that encourage a spirit of purpose, positivity, and possibility.

Belinda was selected for her relevant and well-rounded experience in education, her leadership development capabilities, experience, passion and knowledge in collaboration, diversity, and inclusion. The Rustenburg family is thoroughly enjoying working with her to realize the vision for the school.



Belinda Petersen

Alumnae coaches and mentors

Tamsin Metelerkamp (E'15), the Senior Debating Team coach joined the team at the recent Western Province Debating Championships at UCT. The team reached the quarter finals.

Tamsin has been coaching the Senior Debating Team since she matriculated. Whilst at school, she was very involved in the Debating Society and Forum Discussion groups. In 2015 she was a member of the South African A Team who won the World Schools Debating Championships in Romania, as well as being voted Best Speaker in the SACEE Forum Discussion Competition.

Tamsin graduated from UCT with a BSocSci in 2018, majoring in Politics and Philosophy. This year she has been taking courses in teaching English as a foreign language, with her sights set on travelling to China or Hong Kong to teach English next year.

In the sporting field, there are a number of past pupils currently involved in coaching our sports teams:

- Kim Cranfield (E'11) – Netball and Touch Rugby
- Alex Heiberg (E'16) – Netball
- Tamarah Pike (E'16) – Hockey and Water Polo
- Alina Schoenberger (E'16) – Hockey
- Caroline Schreiber (E'18) - Hockey
- Razaan Phillips (E'17) – Touch Rugby

Tessa Brown (E'09) (Staff 2015 – 2018) came in to school to mentor the new Maths Literacy educators during the early part of this year.



Tamsin, seated second from right, with the debating team

Aaliyah Vayez shares life lessons with learners

During the 2019 prize giving ceremony at RGHS, alumna Aaliyah Vayez (E'15) delivered a speech to the current learners. We are proud to share her introduction and speech from the RGHS blog below:

Aaliyah Vayez matriculated from Rustenburg in 2015 with an exceptional academic record and a history of involvement in a variety of spheres. She attended UCT and completed her Bachelor of Social Sciences degree with Distinction and is currently completing her Honours degree in International Relations.

The year after she left school Aaliyah completed an 8-week Global Citizenship Programme at UCT around social justice and, in 2018, she was a core debator at the Amnesty International Youth Summit, a panelist at the #MyBodyMyRights Summit and she attended a Young African Leadership Initiative sponsored by Usaid, Mastercard Foundation and Unisa. Earlier this year Aaliyah was granted a full scholarship to attend a four week intensive course on BRICS Diplomacy and Global Governance at the Fudan University in Shanghai, China.

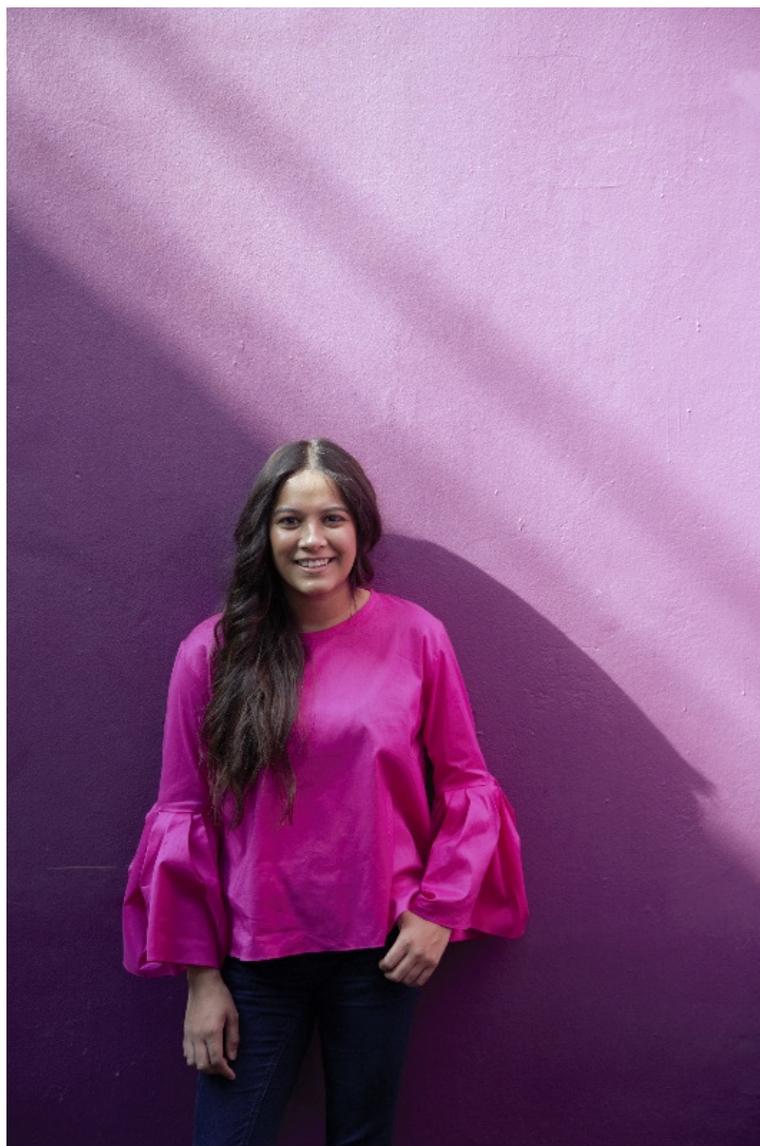
Aaliyah has shown the attributes necessary to make a meaningful impact in the betterment of the lives of others and we are proud to boast her as one of our Rustenburg alumnae.

My name is Aaliyah Vayez, I am 22-year-old women of colour. I am the last product of love between an Indian entrepreneur and Cape Malay superwomen, both of whom put their faith in the institution that is Rustenburg from my first day of grade one to my final valedictory four years ago in this very hall. I am a budding activist and humanitarian. With a passion for empowering others, high functioning anxiety and being a general chatterbox – I am constantly moving into new spaces, meeting new people and opening myself up to the unfamiliar in order to authentically pursue my own ambitions. The titles, achievements and even self-identification previously mentioned do not however mean that I have entered the adult world, as so many of you are about to do, as someone who has it all figured out. I am here because I am one of you, I am a young woman trying to make something bigger and better of myself in the world we share. I am often unsure of who I am in certain spaces, unsure of what I'm saying, if my actions are correct and if how I present myself is in fact presentable. All of these uncertainties exist as I navigate my way through a world that continues to reel backwards asking women to put their bodies on the line for the right to life and causes far bigger than themselves. It is in this same overwhelming world that I, as so many of you do, witness the unspoken poetry of how women walk through the world, not only as students, friends and daughters, but as revolutions and revolutionaries with poise, presence and power. These women show and teach young girls like us how to embrace a fuller existence, that celebrates not what we are told to be but who we choose to become. And so, from one to another, here are my lessons on the three Fs – feelings, failure and finding happiness.

FEELINGS

I start with feelings because I believe that feelings are real forces. They pre-empt every decision and action we make so it is immensely important that we talk about our feelings instead of ignoring them, silencing the feelings of others or even discouraging ourselves from having feelings. Like an internal Google Maps, feelings are going to guide the way you navigate the challenges, successes and setbacks to come so it is important to let them. As our generation has

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made the world take a serious look at the state of mental health all over the world, more people are beginning to identify with things like depression and anxiety, seeing features of these in their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. Because of this, I encourage you to talk about your feelings, no matter what they are, trust your feelings enough to let them intervene when your thoughts become too much.

But what does trusting your feelings really mean? In my case, the night before my final matric exam saw me break down in front of my parents, unable to explain my tears or anxiety regardless of how well I'd prepared. Trusting my feelings meant talking through why I was feeling anxious, understanding that my feelings couldn't be explained by my studying. I had to accept that feeling nervous was part of the process and it was okay to call out to my support systems for help. This is just one experience that has taught me to stop when I'm not feeling okay, to listen to what I'm feeling and welcome the feeling with both arms in order to understand it. But understanding your feelings isn't only for when you're feeling down. Look around, grasp the sense of collective love and investment you have in one another and in the futures you are about to create. I can just about touch the funny mixture of nervousness and excitedness that is radiating off all of you – open your heart to these feelings because they are yours before they are anyone or anything else's. By doing this, you are acknowledging a very true part of yourself that will be able to blossom in everything you do.

FAILURE

Failure is no easy topic to discuss, emotion to experience or situation to overcome. The word itself invites a spiral of negative connotations which often exaggerate the situation at hand – be mindful of this. Often we think we've failed because we aren't going fast enough, aren't achieving enough, or even living enough. This feeling of 'enough' comes with a sense of competition, like we are competing against others, as if our success must come at the expense of something or someone else. My advice is forget the fast lane, and redefine what your 'enough' really is because therein lies all the limits you've placed on yourself which often define what 'failure' is. This definition can include being open to life redirecting your path and trusting that where you are going is where you are supposed to be. Contrary to endless timelines of perfect lives on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter, nobody's journey to success is easy. We all stumble, make mistakes, face obstacles or experience 'failure'. It is important to understand that these moments actually make us more in tuned to where we are supposed to be. They remind us of our capabilities, our aspirations and redirect our paths to what we are meant for. Having high functioning anxiety often leads me to be over prepared for just about any and every situation, so when I hit face an obstacle it takes a very conscious effort and reminder from my mother here today, that I need to ask not why this is happening but what it is here to teach me so that I can choose to be in the right place to receive the lesson I need. If you ask these questions, you take control over the impact this lesson will have on me. So ask every failure, difficult time or crisis – what are you here to teach me? The lesson and its purpose will come, you've got to believe that it will come and when it does you've got to be ready for to it and appreciate where you are now.

HAPPINESS

I chose finding happiness as a topic to discuss today with the intention of emphasizing how important it is for every one of you to pursue your own happiness going forward. There is a misconception that happiness is simply the absence of sadness, or that happiness only comes in one consistent or immediately recognizable form – this is, as I've said a misconception. Happiness is achieved much more than the amount of times we weigh up what we're feeling now to when we were supposedly happy. Gwendolyn Brooks wrote that "we should live not for battles won, or for the end of the song, but live in the along". I believe she meant that we should live and derive our happiness from the power of the present going forward. I'd like to think she hinted at life means living for more than simply yourself, your happiness or desires but being part of something big enough to give your everything to. Life will, if its hasn't already, show itself to be a reciprocal exchange between what you put in and what you get out. In this case, to move forward in happiness you have to give back – to the world, to your community, to your friends or family. Sitting in this hall today means that you have been enriched in countless ways , there is no better way to make your mark on the world and forge your own happiness and the happiness of others than to share your riches in abundance. When you do this good, I hope you strive for more than simply the warm and fuzzy feeling that service provides but because doing good actually makes you better, happier. In doing so, I believe you will become a member of the sorority of compassion and the fraternity of service, where happiness and fulfilment come naturally.

CLOSING

In closing, I hope that some of the lessons I've shared today give you something meaningful to think about around where you are, who you want to be and how you're going to get there. I have so often learnt that the role of the girl child is, to disrupt, to remold and to create. To disrupt systems which suppress our feelings, to remold this country into a place where we are all given equal opportunity regardless of our so-called failures and to create a space in which our humanity is recognized, and our happiness may be pursued.

May you enter into this new phase of your life, adorned with the accolades received today, doing just this. Thank you.

Instagram stories

After a poll of our alumnae followers on social media indicated that most people were interested in seeing what other alumnae were up to after leaving school, we asked our alumnae to share their stories with us. Here is a taste of our Instagram account over the past few months. Please keep sending your stories to sakeenah.kerbelker@gmail.com or DM us on Instagram [@rustenburgalumnae](https://www.instagram.com/rustenburgalumnae).



Ashton Sims (E'15)

As a child with hearing loss and cerebral palsy, I had the incredible opportunity of being part of mainstream schooling, which is unfortunately not the same for all learners who experience a barrier to learning... This is why I have decided to become a teacher, as I would like to encourage schools to become more inclusive as well as ensure that every learner does not only have an enriching schooling experience but also receives the required educational support.



Nuraan Manuels (E'10)

I'm currently the general manager at Daily Dish and with that I test cook, style and shoot all the dishes you see on the website. My love for food started at home trying new things and my family just encouraging me to keep cooking; not everything worked out in the beginning, but they tasted ALL of it and from there I took Consumer Studies and loved every moment of it... The Daily Dish service was designed especially for busy people and working moms - <http://bit.ly/2Z2u2X7>



Hannah-Rose Smith (E'12)

I am a Fashion Designer, creating bespoke garments for my client's special occasions such as matric dances and weddings. I am also an international blogger for Bernina... In 2014 I won an award for a sustainable clothing range I created. This award gave me the opportunity to design two reusable shopping bags for Pick 'n Pay!
blog.bernina.com/en/author/hannahrose/
www.hannah-rose.co.za/



Natalie Pinto (E'12)

As a cake designer/kitchen manager at LionHeart I get the opportunity to not only create cakes but to customize a client's vision into an artwork. We do occasion cakes as well as wedding cakes, dessert tables and anything pastry related items within the LionHeart brand. We also teach workshops to enthusiastic bakers who hope to start their own business one day too.
www.sweetlionheart.com



Emily O'Ryan (E'15)

I am humbled to have been sent, along with a colleague from Stellenbosch University, to Represent South Africa at the International Diplomacy Forum. The three days taught me the importance of humanitarian work and human dignity not only at community and national level, but also on an international scale. Serving others is a passion which was supported from an early stage at Rustenburg while leading in choir, hockey teams, Representative Council and Prefectship.



Summer Thompson (E'14)

I was a tall, awkward grade 9 student who didn't think much of modeling but always felt like she would be in the industry somehow. Fast forward eight years later, I have been blessed to have been featured in magazines like ID, Grazia, Marie-Claire, Glamor and Elle; have had the privilege of shooting for brands like Kim Kardashian West, Smash Box, H&M, Nike, ASOS, Adidas and Anastasia Beverly Hills and walked for designers like Ashish and Vivienne Westwood. I have since lived in Germany, London, New York and now Los Angeles. I've realized the importance of support and encouragement amongst each other and particularly amongst women.

Matric Valedictory 2019: The next generation

There were several alumnae amongst the parents at Valedictory who had the satisfaction of seeing their own daughters finish their final year at Rustenburg.



Proud parents, Heinrich and Nikki Langner with Khayla, who shared the EMV Smit Trophy with another learner.



Teagan Salmon with mother Saranne (Waterworth, E'87)



Teagan Salmon with Ms Brigid Ryan (E'77, Staff)



L to R: Lara Cattermole, Khayla Langner, Amanda Cattermole (Jacobs, E'92), Nikki Langner (Grant, E'92)

Class of 2019 joins the alumnae community

The RA committee welcomed the matric class of 2019 into the Rustenburg Alumnae family with a note and a treat on the day of the last exam which the entire class wrote together (English). The class also took the opportunity after the exam to donate their school shoes to charity and to bury a time capsule to be opened at their ten-year reunion.

We are so proud of you, ladies, and can't wait to see what your futures outside of school will bring.



Hockey: Alumnae vs RGHS

In a friendly match played under lights, the RA team won 3 – 1 against the current 1st team. Well done RA!

Unfortunately we couldn't find enough players for netball, so the match was cancelled. Hopefully we'll be able to field a team next year.



Back row, L-R: Tamarah Pike (E'16), Caroline Schreiber (E'18), Georgia Dugmore (E18), Stephanie Scriba (E'16), Haidee Davis (E'15), Casey Wheeler (E'17), Kelly van Vlaanderen (E'17), Lauren Abbott (E'15), Kiera Maher (E'16)

Front row, L-R: Gabi Morgan (E'16), Brittany Gouws (E17), Emily Hill (E'16), Courtney Wheeler (E'18), Kristen Naidoo (E'16)

BotSoc recognizes Rustybug

Congratulations to Merrilee Berrisford (E'56, left in photo), and husband Peter (right), who were awarded joint Honorary Life Membership of the Botanical Society for their years of dedicated service, in particular at the Kogelberg branch of the BotSoc.



Golf Day 2019

Our annual Golf Day took place in glorious weather at the King David Mowbray Golf Course on Friday 6 September 2019. Proceeds from the Golf Day will be donated to the RGHS Bursary Fund.

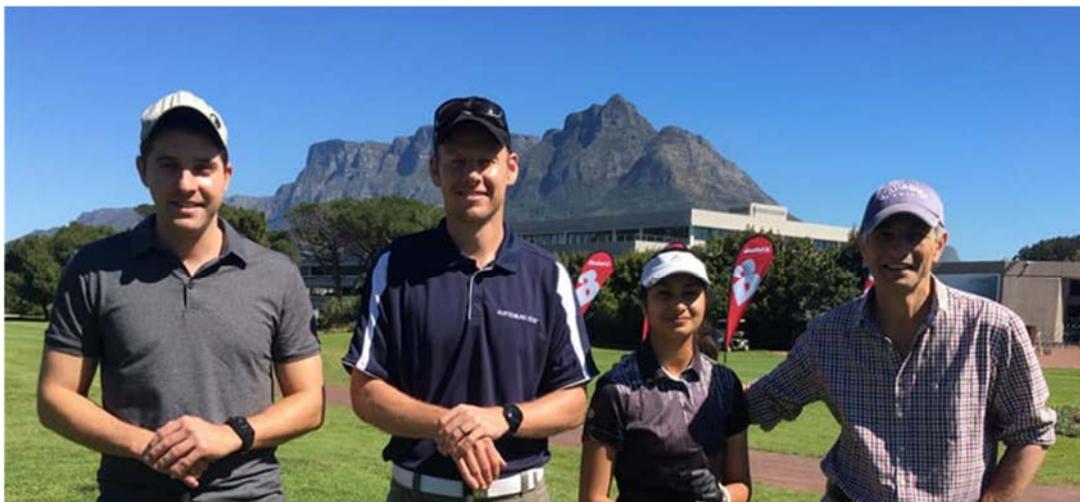
A good day's golf was enjoyed by all, and next year we hope that more parents and Alumnae will be available to participate.



Erica Lefson (RA) with Brett Adams



Margaret Goodson, right, past parent, with her golfing partner



Member of Staff Wihan Neethling (second from left) and La'eeqa Aziz (Grade 10) who were part of Team Netto, sponsored by Debbie Netto Jonker (E'79)

Alumna designs winning app

Cynthia Augustine (E'17) was placed third in the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements's Youth Competition for her design of components for their service app. Cynthia is currently a second year Digital Media and Informatics student at UCT.



Cynthia receiving her prize

Encounters with alumnae

Mary Rose Berrisford, (Trainor, E'56), writes:

It must have started with Founders' Day in March. The class of '99 had gathered. There was Janet Edwards, now Steenekamp, mother of sons, living in Pretoria. For ten years she had worked with wild dogs using her M.Sc. in genetics and wildlife management (I hope I have that right). "I went on with biology because of your biology classes" she said. There can be no greater joy for a teacher to meet pupils now grown up and flourishing.

Jade Orgill came by, "You won't remember me," but "Jade, of course I do, and I've just seen the poster about your amazing work," that was part of a display in the foyer to the hall. Current history learners had researched Rustenburg Old Girls, now called Rustenburg Alumnae, who had done something special in their careers. Jade (also from 1999) had been in my form class in 1997, lively, very friendly, not particularly committed to lessons. Now she designs practical vertical vegetable gardens which she installs mainly in preschools in poor areas. What an inspiration.

Someone who I enjoyed meeting again was Anneli Visser, who had come from California for her '99 E reunion. Anneli is an architect and when in SA had had a part in designing the Cape Town Stadium. I hadn't taught her, but she was the outstanding academic of 1999 and well known to all the staff. What I particularly remember was Anneli's amazing talent at drawing caricatures. She did a series of all the staff members for sale at Autumn Fair. Some were just too true and had to be ditched. I have a good idea that Anneli was the top student in the Western Cape in 1999 - in fact I have now checked in the "Letter from the Headmistress" in the school magazine of 2000 and this is what Dr Elizabeth Fullard wrote:

"It is the first time that anyone can remember that a Rustenburg girl has been the top student in the province. The excitement and pride with which Anneli's classmates hailed her success was truly gratifying, while her teachers experienced the exhilaration which comes from seeing the awesome combination of brilliance and commitment rewarded."

I met Susan Wynne (E'94) right beside the poster about her work as an electrical engineer who has specialised in the very important field of safety at nuclear power stations. She is Manager of the Reliability Engineering group in the Plant Engineering Department at Koeberg Nuclear Power Station. Susan had followed her initial degree at UCT with an MSc in Biomedical Engineering and then at Wits, a diploma in 'Safety, Physics and Engineering of Nuclear Power Reactors'. Her career is noteworthy and was well-described on the poster. Susan is Mrs van Wyk and has children. With her was Paula Johns, also '94, now Coutts Trotter.

What I think is an innovation at Founders' Day or perhaps only for the 125th birthday, was that RA's daughters who are at the school were allowed to join their mothers for lunch. Dr Nicola Freeman (E'88), a paediatric ophthalmologist at Red Cross Children's Hospital, had daughter Nina, and sitting with them were Professor Brenda Morrow (Stupart E'91) and her daughter Tia. Brenda is a very highly qualified physiotherapist and Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at UCT.

I have a feeling that Guinevere Kauffmann was top in the Province in 1985. Certainly, Guinevere went on to a stellar career. Google her and you'll learn that she graduated Ph.D. at Cambridge in 1993, twenty years later she was appointed scientific director at the Max Planck Institut fuer Astrophysik. Wikipedia says she's American, but I was sitting on the platform in the Kemp Hall in 1985 (as a member of the School Committee) when she collected prize after prize. Guinevere's area of study is focused on the formation of galaxies and their central super-massive black holes. She has won many awards and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2009 and the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina the next year.

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Rondebosch Boys' Prep School's Foundation Phase "Tribute to Grandparents" had me being served tea by parent Jacqui Hall (E'97) with her usual cheery greeting. I was there because of our daughter Alison's two sons, Scott and Adam Mears. Candice Johnson greeted me with a lovely smile; I'd seen her earlier in the year at Micklefield where she has two daughters. She was in my very first form class, A2, 1990. Then another Candice, Candice Jones from my form class E2, '92, with a son in Grade 3. Her daughter is at Rustenburg Junior, grade 6 I think, an accomplished violinist. Candice was in the C class which I taught in my very first term, July 1989. There I was, a novice biology teacher at the age of 50. Headmistress Jo McIntyre had phoned me, "I've heard from Gillian Hass that you are a biology teacher." "Only on paper" I replied, "I've not thought of it for nearly 30 years". "Well, my dear" said Jo, "It is very good to jump in at the deep end." Just six weeks before she died, I phoned her, we had a long chat, I said how grateful I was to have taken her advice and jumped. So many huge benefits from those years at a very special school - so many wonderful people. In the winter holidays Peter and I had very happy lunch with Bidy Ryan, Simone de Clerc (Hammer) and Jane Moodie (Jeffery) and her husband, Ian. We have met regularly over the years also with Hanneke de Bruijn and the late Dirkje Mouton. Last November Peter and I stayed with Kathy Johnson nee Fish (E'85) and her husband in Pietermaritzburg.

I visit Marian Lennox who, sadly, is in the frail care of The Manor, Pinelands where she lives a very restricted life. Judith Gordon (Stuart Watson, E'94) visits Marian every week.

Late on a recent chilly August afternoon I walked down our Betty's Bay greenbelt, would I go on the beach? Yes, I might see an otter. No otter, instead a greater joy, Julie Mathew (E'96) on holiday from her home in Malawi. Julie was someone who kept the ROGU Newsletter abreast of her news, so I knew she'd been in Malawi some years ago and that she had daughters. Still there, she now has four, aged from five to thirteen and all at Hillview International School, Blantyre, where Julie teaches phys ed; this after seven or eight years of being the Reception teacher "and I taught high school English." Julie will be remembered as a gymnast and champion diver and she hopes to bring a team of gymnasts from her school on a tour to Cape Town. Julie's connection with Betty's Bay is that her gran, Jess Mathew, was one of the Mills sisters who each inherited a house there. The summer before last I met Jess swimming in the middle of Bass Lake. I said something about "head girl of Rustenburg 1943" and she replied, "And Lill was also head girl of Rustenburg". Lill swimming with her is a daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Stephen (E'75). So, two head girls in the lake and then swimming towards us was a third, cousin Betsey Joubert (Cullis, head girl 'E63). Jess lives at Evergreen in Rondebosch as does her older sister, Stella Hofmeyr. Sadly, the two younger Mills sisters, Hazel Krige and Carr Wood have passed away.

My life continues to be much enriched by my connections with Rustenburg. Today we lunched with Debby Brooke Sumner (Toy E'56) and Keith; tomorrow is a planning meeting for our 65-year reunion with Charmian Plummer (Marais), Joan Parker and Peggy Wynne (Duffett). Last week I breakfasted with Hazel Campbell (White). I've recently spoken on the phone with Ann Nicolson (McMorland) hearing about her holiday on a birding cruise in the Hebrides. Ann lives in Hexham, Northumberland. I regularly chat to Jean Torrance (Leslie) living in a Pinetown, KZN retirement home. Also, in KZN from E '56 is Mary Swanepoel (Allday) who was down earlier this year and arranged a lunch party for her classmates who would be turning 80 this year.

Janet Dickman (Wolpe E'56) was out from Sydney to celebrate her mother's 110th birthday (a Springfield alumna, and amazingly with it). She works as a volunteer in the Sydney Holocaust Museum and wanted to see the one in Cape Town. We were each given a copy of the history of the first ten years of the museum. In it is a quotation by our Marian Lennox saying how valuable the displays were to her History students. The Rustenburg History department regularly visits the museum, so the school library seemed the logical home for my copy. Remembering my first visit to the Jewish Museum with a Rustenburg group led by the late June Sacks, superb English teacher in the early nineties, I asked that the book be inscribed "In memory of June Sacks".

And that is all – a happy journey reminiscent of my days as editor of the newsletter.

History project

Mr Cedric van Dyk wishes to thank all the past staff and past pupils who have donated books to our Media Centre as part of the Grade 12 History classes' project for our 125th Anniversary.

Artist and writer Ann Gadd (E'74), popped in last week with another generous donation of her books.



Mr Cedric van Dyk with Ann Gadd

Who's on the committee anyway?

Ruth Romburgh (E'74) is the current president of the Rustenburg Alumnae Committee and Sakeenah Kerbelker (E'12) heads the alumnae mentorship programme and manages our Instagram account. We asked them a few questions about themselves to get to know them a bit better.



Ruth with her grandsons

Tell us a memory you have of your time at Rustenburg.

I will never forget our gym teacher Miss Chamberlain (nickname PO) who used to drive down to the

swimming pool and sit in her car with her dog and smoke while we swam.

What motivated you to be a part of the Alumnae Committee?

In 2010 myself and my good friend Karin Evans (E'74) who is Head of Hostel, were approached by a fellow alumna, who had been on the committee for many years, who asked us to join as they were wanting some younger committee members. :)

What do you think makes the alumnae of Rustenburg special?

There is a great camaraderie between old girls. It does not matter what year one matriculated, the school and memories of school days always bring us together.

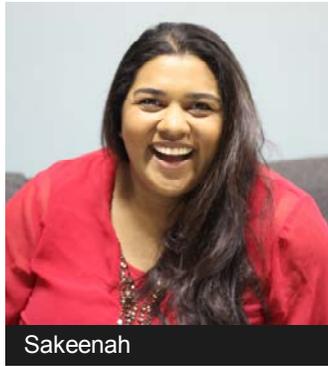
How do you spend your time when not working for the RA committee?

I was never a career girl, tried my hand at nursing, that didn't last long, and so went on to secretarial college as did many girls of my era. I married young and had my two children and was a stay-at-home mom. Went back to work when my daughter (who matriculated at RGHS in 2000) started school. I am now semi-retired and pursue my hobbies of baking, sewing and most importantly spending time with grandsons.

What advice would you give your younger self at school?

Enjoy seeing friends daily – good solid friendships can be made at school. Take the opportunity afforded to study hard, attend a tertiary institute and to pursue your dream. To make sure you pick the correct subjects to enable you to study in the field that interests you.

My two closest friends at school from 1967 were my bridesmaids and we are still in very close contact.



Sakeenah

Tell us a memory you have of your time at Rustenburg.

The best memory, honestly, is the connections made. I am still in touch with most people from my year, or from my time at high school. A good memory that I'm still hyped about is seeing posters for the Cyclathon. I remember it being the biggest event of the year. I also think about the annual inter-school swimming gala at Newlands pool. That was the biggest social highlight for many people (haha). And finally, I loved the City Hall choir performances and Carol service every year.

What motivated you to be a part of the alumnae committee?

This is going to sound like I'm digging at the Committee, but I am not. When I thought of the Alumnae committee, previously known as ROGU, all I remember is old white ladies sitting on the stage during Founders' day. I had no idea what the point was or how they contributed to my schooling experience. I joined so that I could contribute and build that bridge between the past and present learners of RGHS. I also knew I might be the only person of colour, Muslim and the youngest person on the committee and I thought it needed that dimension too.

What do you think makes the alumnae of Rustenburg special?

Rustenburg Girls are something different- I might be biased. What has been drilled at schools, excellence, can be witnessed once we enter the real world. We're very protected at school and we live in a bubble to a certain extent. Once we have matriculated and work amongst many others, we realize how RGHS has influenced, shaped and prepared us to be the best versions of ourselves. Keeping up with Rustenburg Girls on social media, I am always in awe of what we are doing - from social media influencers to attending conferences halfway across the world.

How do you spend your time when not working for the RA committee?

I am currently a final year Education student at Stellenbosch, I am an active volunteer at Operation Smile <https://southafrica.operationssmile.org/>, I train communities on how to make reusable pads, I am part of the Alumnae choir and I am on the National team for Charity Week <https://charityweek.com/>.

What advice would you give your younger self at school?

It gets better.

It doesn't matter what titles people have. You aren't defined by that. Think about lateral leadership.

Stop trying to "fit" the mould of what you think a "rustybug" should be. You don't fit it but it doesn't mean you're bad at anything. Be true to who you are and don't shrink for anyone.

Follow us on social media

Have you joined Alumnet yet? <https://rustenburg.alumnet.co.za/>

Find us on Facebook and Instagram by searching for @rustenburgalumnae or by scanning the Instagram nametag and Facebook QR code below with your smartphone.

Our Facebook page can also be found at <https://www.facebook.com/rustenburgalumnae/>

Any pictures or news of interest for Instagram should be shared with Sakeenah (see contact details in column on the right).



Contact Us

Please feel free to contact any of the Committee members for information or suggestions.

Please also send news of alumnae and interesting stories to hangerp@rghs.org.za or Lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com for inclusion in future newsletters.

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