

James Gillespie's High School



Newsletter

Message from the Head Teacher

January 2008

Happy New Year to all our readers!

The term started well despite the awful weather and our students appear to be in a very positive frame of mind

The St. Andrew's Day Fund settled at nearly £6,000 including Gift Aid which means the Student Council have a substantial amount of money to spend on resources and improvements. As indicated before this should complement and not replace monies from The City of Edinburgh Council.

Our Carol Concert was a great success. There is no doubt we missed the grandeur of the Usher Hall but both nights in the school hall were sold out and very well received. Our students performed beautifully as always and the School Council provided treats in the form of mulled wine and other refreshments, undeterred by the cold. I extend my thanks to them for their unfailing support for all school events. The money raised at the concert was donated to the Sick Kids and the Liberia disaster. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Burns Supper and Ceilidh this Friday.

The term has already been busy with a well attended Fourth Year Parents' Evening and School Council and JGHS Trust meetings are imminent. This week also sees South Africa Connection, a club event at "Ego" organized by former student Ben Kaelin which raises money for our South Africa Project.

I am aware that it must sometimes seem that we are always asking for money but I assure you it is to facilitate "good" whether locally or globally and to try to instill in our young people a sense of both responsibility and empowerment. Small actions can lead to great changes.

Mr. Cibane, a Head of Department in Zwelibanzi is here with us on a Commonwealth Fellowship for three months. He has already remarked on our excellent ethos and our commitment to his township school. We have much to learn from each other.

We have received the draft City of Edinburgh Review Document based on the work carried out in November. It is rewarding to see that the excellent work carried out by our teachers and students is being recognised. So far the Quality Indicators on Learning and Leadership are being seen as at least "Very Good" (that is 5 on a 1-6 scale) and our approach to diversity is seen as Sector Leading which is the highest commendation possible.

We are preparing our senior students for their post February prelims. Please try to help them focus and perhaps reduce their time for "partying". Short term pain is inevitable if they are to achieve long-term gain. We are also looking at our curriculum framework as we head towards our coursing meetings for S2 and S4, 5 and 6. I assure you we will strive to meet individual needs but I have to share my concerns that we are entering a period of Authority belt-tightening. That will have an impact on our ability to provide what we wish to provide. I do, however, give you my word that I will be unrelenting in my commitment to defend what is excellent about Gillespie's.

Zwelibanzi Appeal

There is an acute shortage of tools required for the teaching of metalwork or woodcraft skills in Zwelibanzi and indeed in other associated schools. Mr. Watson has agreed to coordinate the collection of hammers, chisels, screwdrivers, etc. to add to our container which is due to leave soon. Please let him know if you have any tools you can contribute. Obviously we do not wish children to bring these into school in an arbitrary fashion but we can arrange a secure handover. Please let Mr. Watson know if you can contribute.

Mr. A. Wallace

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ Join us for a celebration of our national bard, Robert Burns, by coming along to the School Council's Burns Supper and Ceilidh on Friday, 25th January. Further details on page 4.



Zwelibanzi High School

Sponsorship Programme 2008

January 2008 will see us start the third year of our sponsorship programme with Zwelibanzi High School in Umlazi Township near Durban in South Africa.

During the past two years the sponsorship programme has helped well over one hundred pupils in Zwelibanzi to progress through their high school education by alleviating some of the financial worries which would have, otherwise, affected them and their families.

Those pupils who are being sponsored benefit in a variety of ways:

- ◆ School fees are paid thus relieving financial stress on the pupil and their family.
- ◆ Every sponsored student receives a meal at school every day. Before they were sponsored some pupils went without food all day and would sleep in the class due to lack of energy.
- ◆ School uniforms can be bought so that they do not look or feel less privileged than others in the school. This is important in improving the confidence of the pupil.

Zwelibanzi staff identify the most needy pupils and incorporate them into the programme. However, there are still many pupils who would benefit from support but are, as yet, not able to be accommodated due to limited funds.

Obviously, the more sponsors we have the more young peo-

ple we can support. It would be a great boost to the sponsorship programme if you could make your family and friends aware of the sponsorship programme and its benefits to the young people at Zwelibanzi.

Sponsorship forms can be obtained from Ian Watson at James Gillespie's High School or from the school website; www.jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk

Through the James Gillespie's Trust we are now able to claim Gift Aid on your donation, increasing it by 28p in every pound, at no additional cost to you! If you are a UK tax payer and you are willing to help us reclaim this additional money, please read and sign the Gift Aid declaration on the attached sponsor form if you have not already done so.

Thank you again for your continued support in making this sponsorship programme the success it is.

We wish you a very successful New Year.

Please address all correspondence to:

Ian Watson
James Gillespie's High School
Lauderdale Street
Edinburgh EH9 1DD

Please make cheques payable to 'James Gillespie's High School Trust'.

School Council: Involving Parents

The AGM of the School Council was held at the end of November. It was well attended, and many different issues were considered. These included: communication with the school and with other families; parental involvement in the school's work as a health promoting school; home study standards; decision making and increasing participation in the school community; fundraising; events; and continuing support for pursuing adequate capital funding for refurbishment of the school. Networks of S1 and S2 parents are now established, and have been able to liaise directly with the School Management Team. The School Council welcomed the involvement of S6 students, and the continuing commitment from the Head Teacher and others in the senior management team.

A significant number of parents and carers have signed up for the School Council mailing list (electronic or hard copy) and we will assist with improving the distribution of information from the school to families, as well as planning our own initiatives.

If you would like to add your name, please contact the School Council via the School office, or email: council@jghs.org.uk

The Officers elected for the coming year include: Chair - Nigel Goddard; Vice Chairs - Alpana Mair and Vivienne Swan ;Treasurer Tom Macintyre; Communications Officer Ann Henderson, and several parents have volunteered to join a Communications Group. Sheena Purdom will link up with

the Events sub Group, which is currently planning the Burns Supper and Ceilidh. (*volunteers are still needed for this event, to be held in school on Friday 25th January. Tickets are now on sale – buy now!*)

There is a sub-group working on the buildings campaign along with other 'Wave 3' Schools, and Su Clarke and Chris McKinnell agreed to represent the School Council on the James Gillespie's High School Trust for the next two year period.

The City Council is attempting to involve parents more in its decisions, which is to be welcomed. This includes an evaluation of current school estate in the light of falling school rolls citywide. There will be more information about this on the website (<http://council.jghs.org.uk>) soon, and in the next newsletter.

Any ideas and suggestion for the coming year are welcome – and meetings are all open to parents, staff, students and others with an interest in the school community.

The next two School Council meetings are:

Tuesday 5th February 7.30pm

Tuesday 11th March 7.30pm

All welcome. Meetings held in the School Staffroom.

Sponsorship Form 2008

I would like to support the sponsorship programme at Zwelibanzi High School.

I understand my donation will be used towards the general education of the most needy children, the provision of school uniform and a regular school meal.

I enclose my donation of £.....

(Cheques payable to 'The James Gillespie's High School Trust').

Please note: Cheques are made payable to the Trust, to ensure we can claim your Gift Aid.

Please use block capitals

My Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other)

Address

.....Post code

Telephone

Email

GIFT AID IT!

Make giving less taxing!

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we can get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue from the tax you would have paid, helping your donation go further.

Gift Aid Declaration

If you would like to treat this and all subsequent donations you may make as a Gift Aid donation, tick this box:

If you would like us to reclaim Gift Aid on all your previous donations to us, back to March 2001, please tick this box:

Note: You must be a UK taxpayer and be paying an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations (currently 28p for each £1 you give). Please notify us if your circumstances change and this is no longer the case. If you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief, in your self-assessment tax return.

Signature

Date



Library News

Apology

The Scholastic Book Fair I promoted in the November newsletter turned out to be a 'damp squib'. I was off sick for two weeks during and after the set dates and so all my enthusiastic book buyers were disappointed. Unfortunately nobody else took over the running of the Fair and it was returned with barely £100 of sales, all of which went to the company.

Apologies to all of you who would have supported this venture and were relying on books as Christmas presents.

I am planning another Fair for Christmas 2008 and will try to stay healthy !

A Inglis

Reading , Reading , Reading

The updated Reading lists for all year groups have all been uploaded onto the school website at <http://www.jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk/supportforlearnig/library.html>.

As promised they include a brief synopsis which might give more of a 'flavour' of the book.

Several Reading promotion campaigns are happening over the next few weeks :

One book, One Edinburgh Featuring the great Stevenson title : "Strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde". There is a wide range of events planned from 21 Feb to 1 March and free copies of the book can be collected from public libraries from 22 Feb. while stocks last. More information from www.cityofliterature.com



World Book Day is on 6 March and all pupils will receive the usual £1 token towards a book purchase.

We hope to have some fun events in school to celebrate this event.

2008 has been deemed the **National Year of Reading**...as if every year should not be that !

James Gillespie's High School

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JGHS Diary

Monday, 21st January 2008
Friday, 25th January 2008
Thursday, 31st January 2008
Tuesday, 5th February 2008
Tuesday, 5th February 2008
Friday, 8th February 2008
Monday, 18th February 2008
Tuesday, 19th February 2008
Tuesday, 19th February 2008
Tuesday, 26th February 2008
Thursday, 28th February 2008
Friday, 29th February 2008
Tuesday, 4th March 2008
Tuesday, 11th March 2008
Wednesday, 12th March 2008
Wednesday, 12th March 2008
Thursday, 13th March 2008
Friday, 14th March 2008
Saturday, 15th March 2008

S4 Parent Consultation Evening
JGHS Events Group Burns Supper
Instrumental Parents' Evening, 16:00hr
School Council Meeting, 19:30hr
JGHS Trust Meeting
School closes at 12:00hr for mid-term holiday
Staff return
Students return
S5/S6 prelims begin
S2 Pupil Reports issued
S2/S5/S6 Coursing Parents' Evening
S5/S6 prelims end
S2 Parents' Evening (Practical Subjects)
School Council Meeting, 19:30hr
S2 Parents' Evening (Non- practical Subjects)
S4 Course choice forms due
S2 & S5 Course choice forms due
Diversecity
Diversecity

JGHS Events Group in close collaboration with staff and pupils presents:

Burns Supper & Ceilidh

*Friday 25 January 2008
JGHS School Hall
Doors open 7pm
Dress formal*

*Tickets: £15 (£10 senior students)
Further donations welcome, all funds to the School*

*Three course Burns supper
Complementary glass of wine
Speeches and dance to music by Lothian Schools Strathspey & Reel Society
Great night out for parents, staff and senior
students (S6 students only, sorry)*

*Buy tickets by contacting Carol Farrell,
tel: 620 3509 or mob. 0798 225 4975*

*If you are able to help on the evening, please send an email to:
ebomberg@staffmail.ed.ac.uk*

Pre-booked tickets only - Order now!