

The uBAMBISWANO BULLETIN

December 2023

Holding hands for our future
uBambiswano

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A GLIMPSE INTO THE PROGRAMME

- uBambiswano is a **Saturday School programme** run by St Andrew's School for Girls in Gauteng
- The programme is attended by students from **schools in Daveyton and Etwatwa**
- We have a **33-year track record** of contributing to the lives of over 1000 students
- On average, **100 students from grades 5 to 9** attend the Saturday School over a five-year period
- While **literacy, numeracy, educational and life skills** are our priority, additional **enrichment activities** such as music, swimming and debating are included in the programme
- Our students call uBambiswano, a **place of 'hope'** as they believe the programme provides them with the hope of a better future.



**St Andrew's School
for Girls**
SKILLED FOR LIFE

Holding hands for our future
uBambiswano



A LETTER FROM THE HEAD - A chapter comes to an end...

Dear uBambiswano family

Four years ago, I was inducted as Head of School. I spoke of entering this new decade with energy and drive. We were gearing up to celebrate uBambiswano's 30th birthday.

I think we can all remember what happened next...

In March 2020, President Ramaphosa addressed the nation with a sobering message – both literally and figuratively. Even then, when it seemed the world had turned upside down, I doubt that any of us understood just how impactful the next few years would be and how long-lasting the effects.

That year, uBambiswano sought to keep our community close – even as we kept distant physically.

Since then, the world seems to have righted itself somewhat. But, still, there have been further challenges to be faced – both globally and locally. Throughout all of this, uBambiswano has stood firm and acted as a beacon for our community.

I have been immensely proud to be part of an organisation that nurtures connection when things seem hopeless. An organisation that never forgets its values, including those of service, education, hope and community.

As I prepare to embark on another adventure, I want to extend my gratitude to all of you who received me warmly and offered your support over the past four years. It has been challenging, but I am grateful for every lesson and every opportunity. I am more certain than ever of the value of uBambiswano as a programme and I am proud to be a part of it.

A Saturday School programme seems like such a simple idea... But, as you all know, the work that uBambiswano does is so much bigger than that.

This community truly enriches lives and allows young people to dare to hope for the bright futures they deserve.

It is easy to feel despondent when we read the news. War, messy politics, the effects of climate change, skyrocketing cost of living, desperate economic inequality... What the world needs now are creative and influential young people to set us on a new path – to teach us older folk what it means to care for our fellow humans; to live, shop, eat, and behave ethically and to achieve things that we have not yet even dreamed about.

As you know, uBambiswano's philosophy is that it is important for development to be complete and whole. It is not enough to be academically excellent. The happiest and most successful people are also resilient, kind, empathetic, active, and constantly learning.

I have been so encouraged to see the staff and students embrace this approach wholeheartedly. Every week, I am amazed at the intelligence and respect that our young students display. I have great faith in their abilities to lead us one day.

This year, we have invested time in growing relationships. Our relationship with our partner schools is getting stronger. We launched our teacher development programme, offering workshops to nominated teachers from our partner schools. These workshops have been engaging, enjoyable, and a wonderful way for us to widen the net of uBambiswano's impact.

We also launched the Principal and Deputy Principal Leadership Forum to connect school leaders in the area, fostering community and resource-sharing. Our hope is that these relationships will continue to grow and flourish, leading to better quality education overall in our catchment area.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and admiration to the teachers and principals who teach, lead, encourage, and put forth the names of their brightest students every year. I am excited for the new students who will be starting their uBambiswano journeys in 2024. I know and trust that they will be in excellent hands.

A LETTER FROM THE HEAD continued..

Even though we are technically a Saturday school, I know that the work is never over for the teaching and administrative team. They care deeply for the students' well-being and are fully invested in helping them to achieve their goals. Thank you for everything you do for uBambiswano.

Our sponsors also make it possible for us to offer the activities we do, and to do our work. We are so grateful for, and humbled by, their belief in us and what we are doing here. In fact, we have had such strong and fervent support that we now have a healthy reserve, allowing us breathing room and confidence that we can continue to do what we do for a long while yet.

If not for the sponsors, we would likely be a purely academic programme (if we existed at all), and so we thank you for giving us the opportunity to offer the additional enrichment activities that support our philosophy of whole-student development.

This year, we have also seen an increase in parent involvement. This has been one of my favourite observations, because there is no relationship more influential in a child's life than the relationship with their primary caregivers. Your dedication to your children will directly impact their confidence, their drive, and their determination to succeed. Keep showing up for them – they appreciate it more than you know.

The students themselves have also given their all this year.

An increased number of students received scholarships to top-quality schools in the past four years, including boarding. This is so rewarding. Congratulations to you for putting in such an effort. And, to those of you that may not have made it through, your effort is not wasted. You have shown yourself that you are dedicated, driven, and worthy. Carry this spirit through with you as you complete your schooling. I have no doubts about you or your future success.

A huge congratulations, also, to our youngest uBambiswano family members – the first Grade 5 class, which started this year. Thank you for always trying your best. You have done yourself proud, and we have thoroughly enjoyed your brightness and energy on Saturday mornings.

When children are young, they rely on us grown-ups to be stable and to hold them safely so that they may stretch, try, test, experiment, fail, succeed. Brilliant teachers, a supportive school, grown ups who believe in them – these are all essential for growth. That is our aim for this programme. To be a beacon of hope. Something that past and present students can look to for guidance, light, and support.

I have been humbled to play even a small role in equipping the students of uBambiswano with the skills they need to change the world. And I truly believe that our students can. I will miss you all.

I would like to end off by thanking the people that have given me the tools I needed to get here today, and who continue to support and encourage me: my family, my friends, and colleagues – past and present – I thank you.

A special thank you to our Executive Head, Mrs Ivanka Acquisto, who retires at the end of this year, for her incredible support and superb leadership. Ivanka and her husband, Sergio, opened up their home to me and provided me with many delicious meals over the past four years. I wish them all the best for their retirement.

My time in uBambiswano has been some of the most fulfilling of my life and it has been a privilege to be part of a leadership team that has transformed the school into an example for others, of rigour and community partnership. The future is bright for the school and the Daveyton and Etwatwa communities, and I will be keeping an eye on their development with interest.

uBambiswano will always remain close to my heart. Leaving will not be easy. However, it is my firm intention to close out strongly, and there have been many opportunities to celebrate what has been a wonderful learning experience for me

Thank you from the bottom of my heart



A LETTER FROM THE HEAD continued..

To the Heads Team, the uBambiswano Team, the Board and the Trust, thank you for your ongoing support. Special thanks to Dave Morris, Yolisa Pasipanodya, and Thina Mabuza for their presence, support and guidance. Thanks also to my PA, Gillian Pule, for stepping into her role so professionally and ably.

Even though education is my work, it is also my deep passion. I read about it all the time, and I never tire of discussing approaches to education and listening to other people's views on it. Thank you to all of my colleagues, who share this passion and desire to share and learn.

Wishing you strength during the last few days of this term, and a heartfelt congratulations for your successes and triumphs in 2023!

With my best wishes



Sipiwe Vilakazi
uBambiswano Head



Sipiwe Vilakazi (uBambiswano Head)

STAFF NEWS - FAREWELL

Sipiwe's Farewell..A special tribute by our Executive Head Ivanka Acquisto

Sipiwe, fondly known as Mr V, leaves a lasting legacy for uBambiswano and St Andrew's. **Legacy** is not necessarily found in the number of years of service but in the positive impact of those years.

Sipiwe has served as Head of uBambiswano for the last 4 years with distinction.

He started at St Andrews in January 2020 where he made deep **connections** with the students, families, and staff of uBambiswano, until March 2020 when COVID descended on the world.

This was the year that learning and teaching became an online phenomenon. Mr V would not let his children from Daveyton and Etwatwa be disadvantaged. He made a plan. He and his team of staff organised for work to be dropped off and collected for marking. Moreover, the WhatsApp communication was **awesome**. Vouchers were arranged for families in need. The uBambiswano School felt nurtured and cared for. When uBambiswano returned to school all COVID protocols were carefully adhered to: masks, sanitising and social distancing.

As the new Head of uBambiswano, Sipiwe was **passionate** about the vision of whole child development. uBambiswano students experienced assemblies, yoga, public speaking, drama, and chapel services beyond the classes receiving curriculum enhancement. uBambiswano students also experienced an annual hike and sleepover as part of the President's Award and a Round Square initiative.

Mr V ensured that uBambiswano remained sustainable by getting sponsorship through his **impressive network**. He believes in relationships, and he won over many families at St Andrew's for the children and the programme.

Sipiwe also networked with the principals and staff of schools in the Daveyton and Etwatwa area. As the uBambiswano programme ends at grade 9 level and then heads onto the Tomorrow Trust from grades 10 to 12. Sipiwe improved further the relationship in this partnership.

STAFF NEWS - FAREWELL

Siphiwe was so **successful** in bringing the uBambiswano parents onto our campus. They felt part of their children's progress.

He actively sourced scholarships for the uBambiswano girls and boys in the surrounding schools over and above St Andrew's – school like the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy, and St Dunstan's. More and more scholarships were given to uBambiswano students with the calibre of preparation they received.

To better prepare the students, Mr V, expanded uBambiswano. It now runs from grade 5 to grade 9.

Mr V **encouraged**, St Andrew's staff, interns, and students of St Andrew's to teach in a programme which contributed to uBambiswano being integrated into St Andrew's as the 4th school. uBambiswano became a contributor to all the St Andrew's high days like Founders Day, Open Days, the Spring Expo, 120th birthday Celebrations, etc.

Mr V also resurrected the teacher/principal development programme which has received great interest and buy in.

Siphiwe has been a **blessing** to our school in our time of need. When the socio-political upheaval of "Black Lives Matter" and its effect on our school, we asked Siphiwe to help us and lead our transformation process. Siphiwe was wise and effective as a leader. He helped us navigate the turbulent waters we found ourselves in as a school, until he eventually handed over this enormous portfolio to someone else.

Siphiwe, you will be sorely missed. Today we celebrate your incredible contribution and legacy. **We thank you.** You have left huge shoes to fill. Hamba Kahle! Mphethe, Binda!



Mr Vilakazi
Head of uBambiswano

Thank you for your contribution & legacy

STAFF NEWS - WELCOME

A very warm welcome to **Nicolus Moitoi** and **Sibusiso Mbokazi**, who are our new Drama Teachers from Confident Kids. Dramatic Arts provides a foundation for students who are seeking a creative outlet for their talent and ability. It is also an excellent discipline for students who want to develop their confidence and ability to communicate. Moreover, it offers the students a rounded and multi-skilled education that links to all areas of life, allowing them to express their feelings and opinions in a controlled and nurturing environment. We are pleased about our continued partnership with Confident Kids, who drive our **Dramatic Arts Programme**. We wish Nicolus and Sibusiso a happy stay at uBambiswano.

Welcome!



Nicolus Moitoi
Drama teacher



Sibusiso Mbokazi
Drama teacher



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our Debating and Public Speaking Coach, **Itumeleng Mohanoe**, who has made it to the Top 10 of Mr South Africa 2023. We are so proud of his well-deserved achievement. We wish Itumeleng all the best for the rest of the competition!



Itumeleng Mohanoe
Mr SA 2023 Top 10 Finalist



All the best Itumeleng!

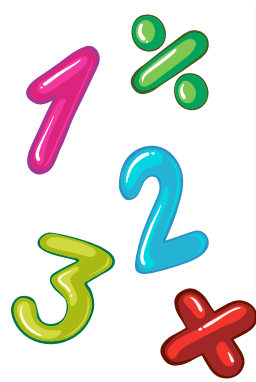
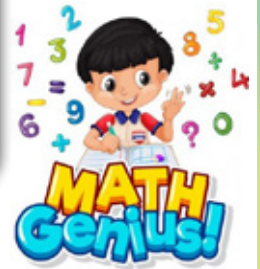
MR V'S FAREWELL LUNCH

It was a beautiful afternoon at the St Andrew's Campus as we paid tribute to the Head of School for uBambiswano, **Siphiwe Vilakazi**, in a community farewell lunch. How special to have past and present uBambiswano students and families there to join in the celebration and enjoy a relaxed and fun afternoon socialising together. Thank you to all for sharing this memorable occasion for uBambiswano!



TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

uBambiswano hosted a Maths workshop for teachers from our partner schools in Daveyton and Etwatwa. The workshop's theme was 'Phambili ngeZibalo'. The delegates included both Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase teachers. We would like to thank our educational partners for their input at this **excellent** workshop. Thank you to our partner schools for their participation and cooperation. We value your kindness and continued support, and we **thank you** for your contribution to education in our country.



GRADE 9 ACADEMIC AWARDS ASSEMBLY

On Saturday 25 November 2023, we hosted the Grade 9 Prize-Giving Ceremony to celebrate the **achievements** of our Grade 9's. The day began with a lovely and encouraging message from Rev Lea Marumo. Our Head of School, Mr Siphwe Vilakazi, delivered his speech to honour the Grade 9 students and those who are involved with the Saturday School programme. Our Guest of Honour was Mrs Ivanka Acquisto, who is the Executive Head at St Andrew's. Mrs Acquisto will be retiring at the end of the year. Her address was **inspiring** and **heartwarming**.

We also thanked Mr Siphwe Vilakazi for his superb contribution to uBambiswano.

The Grade 9's staged two **beautiful** performances, which were well received by the audience. This ceremony was truly **special**.

Well done



GRADE 5 - 8 ACADEMIC AWARDS ASSEMBLY

On Saturday 18 November 2023, we hosted an awards assembly to celebrate the achievements of our 2023 Grade 5 to 8 students. The day began with a lovely and **encouraging** message from Rev Lea Marumo, and was followed by a warm welcome from Executive Head, Mrs Ivanka Acquisto. Our Head of School, Mr Sipiwe Vilakazi, delivered his speech to honour the Grade 5 to 8 students and those who are involved with the Saturday School programme. Our Guest of Honour was Mr Hamilton Tshokwe, who is the Transport Manager at St Andrew's. Mr Tshokwe will be retiring at the end of the year after 25 years of service. His talk was **inspirational** and so well received by our students, parents, and staff. We thank Mr Tshokwe for his unwavering support for uBambiswano. As always, the awards ceremony was a feather in our cap – we are humbled by our talented students, and encouraged to continue working to inspire our students to reach for their dreams.



Talented



Inspirational



Congratulations

HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATION

uBambiswano and St Andrew's celebrated Heritage Day at an outdoor cultural event held at the School's Tea Lawns. Our uBambiswano students treated guests to two excellent performances. A warm thank you to all those who were involved.



Heritage Day



GRADE 9 EZEMVELO NATURE RESERVE HIKE



Our Grade 9 students participated in a **President's Award Bronze Level Hike** and spent a night at the Ezemvelo Nature Reserve in Bronkhorstspuit. This hike formed part of our Outdoor Education programme, linked to the Round Square movement, which St Andrew's and uBambiswano are members of. The students thoroughly enjoyed their time out in nature. For most students, this was the first time they have experienced hiking and camping.



Adventure



Nature

GRADE 5 2024 UBAMBISWANO ENTRANCE ASSESSMENTS

St Andrew's School hosted the 2024 Grade 5 uBambiswano Entrance Assessments. The prospective students, who are currently in Grade 4, came from primary schools in Daveyton and Etwatwa. We were able to give them and their parents a chance to experience the beautiful campus of St Andrew's. We are **excited** to be able to begin working with young, **promising** children from Grade 5 to begin equipping them with the skills, attitudes, and values that will stand them in good stead for high school and beyond.



AFRICA'S GIRL CHILD DIALOGUES

We are **delighted** that eight of our students have been invited to participate in the Africa's Girl Child Dialogues hosted by Anglo American in Rosebank. The focus of the conference is to explore career opportunities in the mining, ICT, and wildlife sectors. We were pleased and **proud** to see uBambiswano and St Andrew's School for Girls specially mentioned in the programme.



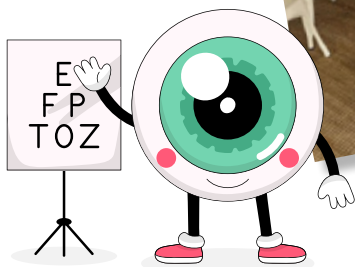
IN CHAPEL THIS TERM

Thank you to our Chaplain Rev Lea Marumo for the **beautiful sermons** she shared with us this term. These included a special candle service to remember those who lost their lives during the devastating Marshalltown fire a few months ago. We also continued to **pray** for the survivors that they may find strength to heal and rebuild their lives.



EYE TEST

A big thank you to Bongani Khumalo, who is an optometrist based in Daveyton, for volunteering his services to conduct an eye test for all our uBambiswano students. Many thanks, also, to our English and Life Skills teacher, Gugu Mabona, for assisting Bongani with the eye test process.



Good Vision



LEARN TO SWIM PROGRAMME

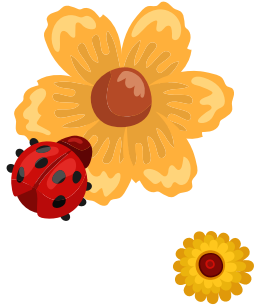
Swimming is such an important life skill and we are so fortunate to have **wonderful** resources through St Andrew's to offer our uBambiswano students swimming lessons as part of their extra-curricular programme. We use the services of certified professional swimming instructors and in addition, the Grade 10 St Andrew's students volunteer to assist with the swimming lessons as part of their Skilled for Life Programme and also interact with uBambiswano students, which is always pleasing to see.



Splish Splash!

SPRING EXPO 2023

Congratulations and many thanks to all our uBambiswano students involved in making bracelets, artwork, and treats, which were sold at our stall at the Spring Expo 2023. The stall looked **amazing**, and the students were fantastic ambassadors for uBambiswano. A big thank you to the St Andrew's Parents' Association for donating Allxs cards preloaded with R200 to each uBambiswano student so that they could shop at the Spring Expo 2023. **We appreciate** this kind and generous gesture. It certainly made our students' day more special and enjoyable.

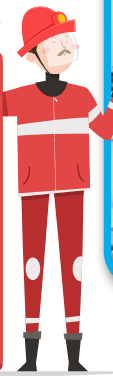
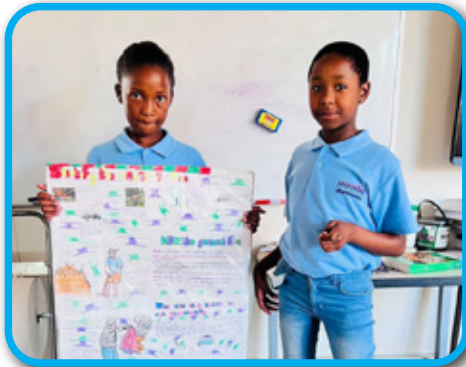


Spring Expo 2023



FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

We did fire safety training with our Grade 5 students. They learnt about what to do in an emergency, emergency numbers to call, and the 'drop and roll' technique. They also learnt important fire safety tips, like not to hide when there's a fire. After the training, we had a large number of Grade 5's tell us they want to be firefighters when they grow up!



Drop & Roll



ART LESSONS

At uBambiswano, the Art students learn about appreciating the visual world and responding to it **creatively**. Self-expression, imagination and broader social issues are explored while creating work of the highest quality.



uBambiswano alumnus, **Amukelani Manda**, was a student at uBambiswano from 2014 to 2017. She joined St Andrew’s School for Girls in Grade 10, matriculating in 2020 with outstanding results. In 2021, she enrolled for a BSc at the University of Pretoria and, after completing her first semester with superb results, she was able to convert to Medicine. Amukelani is now doing her third year of Medicine, and we are so proud of her.



Amukelani Manda
(3rd year medical student)

Proud

Congratulations to uBambiswano alumnus, **Lindokuhle Sibiya**, who was announced as the Tomorrow Trust Top Academic student in Grade 12. Well done, Lindokuhle! We are so proud of your wonderful achievement. The Tomorrow Trust offers our students an extension of the Saturday School Programme from Grades 10 to 12, including a Holiday and Post-Secondary Educational Programme. The classes take place at St Andrew’s every Saturday from 8h30 to 15h00. The students are provided with breakfast and a cooked lunch.



Lindokuhle Sibiya
(Grade 12 student)

Well Done

Congratulations to uBambiswano alumnus, **Neyma Khambule**, who was announced as the Top Academic student in Grade 11 at Unity High School in Daveyton. We are extremely proud of you, Neyma.



Neyma Khambule
(Grade 11 student)

Achievement

Congratulations to uBambiswano alumnus, **Thando Mabuza**, who was announced as the Top Academic student in Grade 11 at Dinoto Technical School in Daveyton. Well done, Thando. We are so proud of your wonderful achievement.



Thando Mabuza
(Grade 11 student)

Congratulations



ST ANDREW'S PRESCHOOL CARE PACKS DONATION

A huge thank you to the Preschool community for the **generous** care packs donation to uBambiswano. We are exceptionally grateful for the ongoing support we receive from the Preschool community. Many thanks to Mrs Lee Milner and her team for all the fundraising efforts for uBambiswano. It is **so appreciated..**

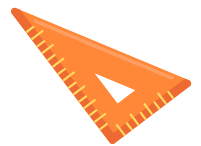


Grateful



ST ANDREW'S SENIOR SCHOOL STATIONERY DRIVE

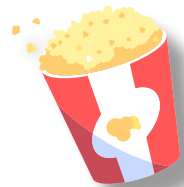
A big thank you to the Senior School community for the **generous** stationery donation to uBambiswano. We are truly grateful for the continued support we receive from the Senior School community. **Siyabonga kakhulu!**



END OF TERM CELEBRATIONS

On Saturday 2 December, we hosted a **movie day** for our students. We hired a big movie screen and the students each received popcorn, slushes, and a delicious meal whilst enjoying the movie. We also had an opportunity to thank our team for their **hard work** and **commitment** to the uBambiswano community. The day was enjoyed by all.

Fun in the Sun



#Giveback: WAYS OF GIVING

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

The programme relies on external funding, mainly in the form of fundraising by St Andrew's School for Girls and external donations. The funds are used to pay for the teaching of the students, rather than the running of the environment, and includes learning and teaching resources, teachers' salaries and stipends for volunteers, outings and camps, transport, catering and student uniforms. Donations can be given in the following forms:

- A lump sum to support the overall programme
- Sponsorship of a child to attend the Saturday School annually
- Sponsorship of an uBambiswano fundraising event
- Contribution of in-kind products, services and networking opportunities
- Opportunities for post matric skills, training and internships.

Funding is also required in the form of bursaries and scholarships for our students to attend top-quality high schools.

uBAMBISWANO CONTACT DETAILS

We would love to introduce you to this worthy programme.

Our contact details are as follows:

Tel: 011 453 9408

Email: holdinghands@standrews.co.za

