



WOODRIDGE PREPARATORY

MORE THAN A SCHOOL, AN EXPERIENCE

HEAD'S EDITORIAL
ADVENTURE TRIATHLON
SOLITUDE CAMP
GRADE 7S - MOMENTS
SURVIVAL CAMP

IN THE NEWS
STAFF NEWS
90 YEARS CELEBRATIONS - SAVE THE DATE
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



December/ issue # 15

www.woodridge.co.za

As the year closes, we honour the journey that shaped our children!

Dear Families,

As the year draws to a close, it is a time for staff to reflect on the year and begin planning for the next.

Key questions guide our thinking: What is the purpose behind everything we do? and are we truly providing the platform and foundation for children to grow into their best selves?

With rapid advances in technology, and now artificial intelligence, we are asking critical questions about what children must learn and how they should learn it. In an ever-changing world, the ability to think, adapt, and remain curious is essential.

These shifts compel us to rethink the very meaning of “true learning.”

True learning is no longer about memorising facts or reproducing information on demand. Nor should it be confined to progress measured against rigid, standardised assessments. Such approaches narrow the scope of education and suppress the natural curiosity that drives deeper understanding.

Instead, true learning must foster exploration, encourage questioning, and cultivate a genuine desire to find out more. It is about developing thinkers who seek connections, embrace challenges, and remain open to discovery, because curiosity is the engine of lifelong learning.

Our focus is on cultivating inquiry: encouraging children to ask meaningful questions, experiment, explore, and reflect. These habits prepare them not only for academic success, but for life in a world that demands creativity, resilience, and thoughtful engagement.

Character education is becoming increasingly important. Guided by the Round Square IDEALS, we have embedded character education into our curriculum and planning, ensuring that values remain central to learning.

Our purpose has always been clear: we want children to think deeply, act kindly, and live with purpose.

We want them to look ahead with confidence and compassion, knowing they have something valuable to give the world. As we look toward the coming year, our challenge is to continue shaping a learning environment where every child feels seen, supported, and inspired to grow.

It is always bittersweet to say goodbye to members of staff who are moving on to new opportunities. Each of them has made a meaningful contribution to our school and leaves a legacy we are truly grateful for.

Mrs Tarryn Lombard first joined Woodridge as an intern and, after completing her studies was appointed to the academic staff as a permanent Grade 5 teacher. Beyond her classroom responsibilities, Tarryn played a key role in developing the girls' cricket programme at the Prep, helping to grow both skill and interest in the sport. Her passion, energy, and commitment will be missed.

Mrs Ursula Venter joined Woodridge in 2023 as Curriculum Coordinator and later served as Head of Academics. Drawing on her experience with the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, she designed a framework that encourages children to think creatively, solve problems innovatively, and grow as individuals. Her work has shaped a programme that blends academic rigour with character development, and her influence will be felt for years to come.

Miss Kayla Strydom, Miss Lethabe Lefenya, and Miss Erica Zhang joined us as interns this year. Each of them has brought fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and a genuine love of learning to the Prep school.

We also thank Almarie Geyer, who officially retires, marking the end of a truly special chapter for Woodridge. Almarie has been part of this family since 1987, and her warmth, unwavering care, and motherly presence have been a comforting refuge for countless children, guiding and supporting them through their school years. Her dedication and kindness will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege to know her. Wishing Almarie all the best in this new journey.



We thank all these staff members for the dedication, care, and passion they have shown during their time with us.

They have touched the lives of our children and colleagues, and we wish them every success as they take their next steps.

A school is far more than its buildings and programmes, it is the people within it who give it heart. This year, our staff have shown exceptional dedication, creativity, and care. Whether in the classroom, on the sports field, in cultural activities, or behind the scenes, they have gone above and beyond to ensure that every child feels valued, challenged, and supported. For this, we are deeply grateful.

To our leadership team, thank you for your steadfast guidance and thoughtful decision-making. Your ability to hold the big picture while nurturing the smallest details has kept us moving forward with purpose and clarity.

A special word of thanks must also go to our administrative team, Sarah Moodley and Lizaan Stamos, who work tirelessly to ensure that the school runs smoothly. Their calm efficiency and cheerful willingness to help make an enormous difference, even when much of what they do happens quietly in the background, is commendable.

Together, this remarkable group of people forms the backbone of the Prep school. Their efforts, seen and unseen, create the environment in which our children thrive. We are fortunate to have such a committed, talented team, and we thank each and every one of them for the part they play in making our school a place of joy, growth, and possibility.

As my time at Woodridge draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on what has been an extraordinary journey. I have spent twenty years at this remarkable school, fifteen of which I have had the privilege of serving as Headmaster. These years have been filled with unforgettable experiences, countless moments of joy, and memories I will carry with me always.

I have had the honour of working alongside dedicated colleagues who have shared my passion for education, and I have made lifelong friends along the way. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Dave Emslie, our Business Manager, and Luke Hartley, College Headmaster, for their support and partnership with me on the Executive Committee. To everyone who has been part of this journey—staff, colleagues, and members of the Trust—thank you. Your support, encouragement, and belief in what Woodridge stands for have meant more than I can ever say.

I must also express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to our parents. Throughout my time at Woodridge, their trust, encouragement, partnership and support have meant so much. It has been a privilege to work alongside families who believe so deeply in the value of a well-rounded education.

Of course, then there are our pupils. There is undoubtedly something special about Woodridge Prep children - their spirit, their friendliness, and their sheer joy in coming to school. They are curious, confident, and ready to take on the world, and it has been one of the greatest privileges of my career to witness this and watch them grow.

Woodridge will always hold a special place in my heart, not because of buildings or traditions, but because of the incredible people who give this school its soul. The future of Woodridge is bright, and I am excited to watch this wonderful school continue to shape young lives with purpose, joy, and possibility.

Before I close, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr Reed. The role of Deputy Head is demanding, often involving the day-to-day running of the school and the pastoral care of our pupils. He has fulfilled these responsibilities with commitment, integrity, and genuine care. It has been a privilege to work alongside him, and I am deeply grateful for his unwavering support. As he steps into the role of Headmaster, I wish him every success. He is, without question, a true Woodridgean - someone who understands the heart of this school and will continue to nurture it with wisdom and passion. As I step into my next chapter, I do so with deep gratitude and the comforting knowledge that Woodridge will continue to flourish in the hands of people who believe so deeply in its purpose.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday and a joyful festive season.

Yours sincerely

Trevor



The Grade 1 & 2 Adventure Triathlon took place as part of the Grade 1 and 2 camp programme, where pupils enjoyed mountain biking, trail running/orienteering and canoeing on the Prep Dam.

ADVENTURE TRIATHLON





SOLITUDE CAMP

As our Grade 7 pupils neared the end of their time at the Prep, they had the opportunity to take part in a unique (optional) experience: the Solitude Camp. This 24-hour retreat invited them to step back, enjoy quiet reflection, and spend time alone without any conversation or distractions.

Our teachers shared wonderful feedback, noting that the camp ran smoothly and that the pupils embraced the experience with maturity. We are incredibly proud of them as they move to Grade 8 next year!

“A MOMENT OF STILLNESS CAN
OPEN THE DOOR TO A LIFETIME OF
INSIGHT.”



GRADE 7S

moments



GRADE 7S FINAL

moments



The Grade 6s took part in a survival camp designed to push their limits in grit, resilience, and determination. They emerged from the experience smiling and energised!

SURVIVAL CAMP





Congratulations to Anda Sakube and Avile Thiso for being selected as the Eastern Province cricket coaches for the U13A boys and U13B girls teams, respectively.

Well done Anda and Avile- keep flying the Woodridge flag high!

EP HORSERIDING NEWS

Congratulations to our WEC Prep riders for winning the SANESA EP Rising Stars competition! Our pupils demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship across the various events, ultimately securing an overall victory for Woodridge Preparatory.

Well done, boys and girls!



Staff News

Goodbyes...

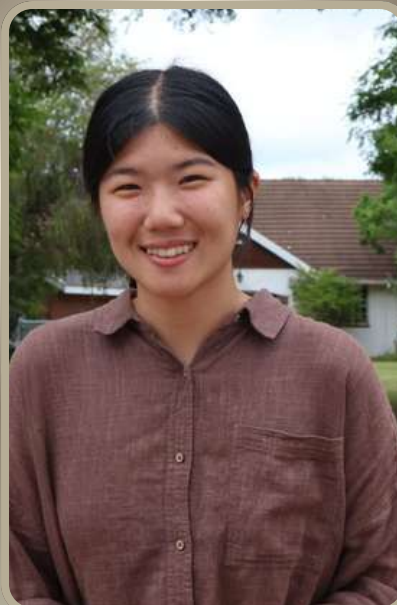
As we approach the close of another wonderful year at the Prep, it's also a time to say farewell to some of our cherished colleagues who have had a profound impact on fellow staff and the growth of our pupils. We wish them all the best as they begin the next chapter of their journey.



Almarie Geyer



Ursula Venter



Erica Zhang



Kayla Strydom



Tarryn Lombard

Goodbye



Gillian Scholtz





1936 - 2026



WOODRIDGE
PREPARATORY

celebrating 90 years

Save the dates!



 *Family Steak Evening
13 February 2026*

 *Kids Rock
27 February 2026*

 *Prep Golf and Padel Day
6 March 2026*

 *Movies Under the Stars
17 July 2026*

Invitations to follow!





Merry Christmas

AND A HAPPY NEW
YEAR

