Covid-19 Update -
A message from “Mother Sharron”

Covid-19 made 2020 an extremely difficult year for Kwasa College, one in which we have faced many challenges, most of them fearfully, as the unknown has formed a large part of everything we had to confront. Yet, as I look back and reflect I am filled with deep gratitude.

I thank God for protecting us all. As far as I am aware just two staff members contracted the virus, and they both thankfully recovered quickly. The general health of staff and children was good, even during winter. Possibly mask-wearing, sanitizing, hand-washing and keeping social distance also protected us from winter ills, chills and flu as well as from contracting the Coronavirus!

I am grateful to the members of the Kwasa Board for their unfailing support and the assistance and advice they gave so willingly when needed. All at Kwasa are deeply indebted to the Covid Management Team for planning, implementing and managing our Covid Policy, and thankfully staff and learners can be complimented on their commitment to adhering to the Covid regulations and restrictions.

I am grateful for the staff we have at Kwasa College: the Heads of the two schools, Owen Thomas and Sonja van Loggerenberg for their management and oversight; the teachers who made the necessary adaptations to the whole daily programme and curriculum so graciously; the support staff who willingly helped out doing chores and added responsibilities not in their job descriptions.

I thank God for the children at Kwasa College. Their acceptance of all the strange changes at school was admirable.

Covid-19 affected many of the families of our students at Kwasa harshly. Many who had work lost their jobs during lockdown, and while some have now found work, a very large number are still unemployed. This has, of course, had an adverse effect on our collection of fees. I am grateful to the parents, many of whom are single parents or grandparents, for trying so hard to contribute what they could manage.

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Our objective is to build confidence, instill curiosity, develop a greater awareness of the wider world, and to prepare our students for its opportunities.

We believe that every child has an innate, God–given potential just waiting to be realised. We are dedicated to being a conduit to achieve that potential. Our Pre-Primary Programme focuses on the development of our students through exploration and discovery using the Reggio Emilia curriculum. Visual and tactile stimulation motivates a student’s deep engagement with their surroundings. Stimulated brains evolve into inspired learners. Much of Reggio Emilia style learning is done outdoors in nature.

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West Green Charitable Trust, UK, funded, built and then resourced an outdoor teaching area where students learn and play. Outdoor spaces are nature-based environments that inspire students to explore, investigate and collaborate.

Primary Programme

The Primary Programme is designed to ready our students for life after Kwasa College and to break the cycle of poverty through a quality education. We empower and inspire students to discover their strengths, improve their self-esteem and to achieve their potential.

2020 proved to be very challenging for our Primary Grades. During the four months of combined lockdown, Kwasa staff prepared and distributed work packs to students in the settlement. Absence of internet and technology meant remote teaching was not possible. Student attendance since the return has been at 95%!

Principal of the Pre-Primary School announced

Kwasa College is pleased to announce the appointment of Sonja van Loggerenberg as the Principal of the Pre-Primary school. Sonja received her Bachelor’s Degree in Theology from St. Augustine College of South Africa and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from the University of South Africa.

Sonja is hugely enthusiastic about developing the Reggio Emilia approach to child led learning, and despite Covid has made significant progress with its development into the curriculum in 2020.

Sustainability initiative provides healthy food

The Kwasa College campus is approximately 50 acres (20 hectares) of land, much of it awaiting future development to increase the capacity of grades and students served. In one area of campus, Atlas Copco, a global leader of sustainable productivity solutions, sponsored the installation of three vegetable tunnels to provide healthy produce for the students. A vegetable tunnel is a steel structure enclosed by netting. The interior heats up as incoming solar radiation warms plants and soil faster than heat can escape. This process extends the growing season from early spring to mid-winter. Another advantage is a tunnel provides protection against problems associated with pests and diseases. Two boreholes were drilled to access high quality, underground water - a precious resource. The tunnels are filled with organic, pesticide free tomatoes, beets and spinach. As part of the program, Atlas Copco funded and trained two workers from the settlement.
At Kwasa College, well-rounded instruction is complemented by an ever expanding variety of programs in music, sports and art.

At Kwasa College, local businesses and community partners help the residents of Daggafontein Settlement and the Springs community cope with food insecurity during the pandemic.

During the initial school closure, Sharron’s first concern was for the students, their families and the community living in and around the Daggafontein Settlement. Conditions were dire. It was unclear whether, without help, many residents would be able to survive under lockdown and curfew, with little or no paid work.

In the weeks following the first lockdown, Sharron established a food bank on the school site. With food donated by local businesses, local shops, suppliers and the local community, she provided food bags for 250 hungry families in the community each week.

Thanks are due to the many individuals and organizations such as Soul Provider and Soft Landings who provided food so generously, enabling Kwasa College to distribute substantial food parcels.

A little progress each day adds up to big results

7TH GRADE GRADUATION
The original pre-Primary class who joined Kwasa in 2011 ended their Primary School Phase and graduated in Dec. 2020. A Valedictory service and Eucharist was held on Dec. 11th in the Chapel-of-the-Cross at Kwasa. A number of these graduates had been students at Kwasa for 9 years, and we entrust them to God as they leave and continue to build on the foundation which we were privileged to provide over the years. The students will attend secondary education institutions in the area. When necessary, Kwasa College will provide for all fees charged by these schools through the Bursary Programme.

WHITE BUILDING PROGRESS
Hall Opening Ceremonies were held on Oct. 13th to mark the building completion of an administration complex with a school reception space, administration and meeting offices, main Hall facility, medical clinic space, and an IT/Media room. Ironically, progress was aided by the Covid lockdown, with the building team moving in to live in the complex and enabling them to continue to work. The opening of the hall was a wonderful occasion, attended by as many guests who were “Covidly allowed”, and a tribute to all those who, over the four years it took to complete the project, contributed towards it, and never stopped believing that it could be done. We will provide an in depth look at the history of this massive project in our next issue.

ART BUILDING COMPLETED
In March, just as Covid hit, a new Art Room (with funding raised by the students of St Peters College, Johannesburg) was completed. Because of social distancing mandates, the room was converted to a necessary teaching space.
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On the subject of finance – we could not have survived the year without our amazing donors! One is very aware that world-over, people have suffered as a result of the pandemic, and yet our donors have been steadfast in their support of Kwasa College!! I salute you all, and express my gratitude for all that has been donated/given this year in terms of money and in kind! We could not have survived the year without you!!! It has been so sad hearing of a number of Independent Schools who have had to close their doors this year. Thankfully Kwasa College is not one of them! I cannot name you all by name, but whoever and wherever you are in the world, please know that your support of us in educating children and making a difference in their lives is noted and is deeply appreciated.

Due to the surge caused by the variant, school openings have been delayed throughout the region. Kwasa College returns to school on 8 February 2021. We are thankful that all our classes will be filled, and our staff complement complete, prepared for what we expect will be yet another challenging year, but one in which we will continue to trust and depend upon God’s Protection, Provision and Grace, and upon your friendship and support.

With Gratitude, Love and Prayers, Sharron

Scholarships/Bursaries are urgently needed to bridge the financial gap.
The cost to sponsor one student is $420 per year/$35 monthly (£300/£ 25) which includes all of the student's educational needs plus transportation, books/uniforms and two healthy meals.
A gift of any amount is greatly appreciated by the students and staff at Kwasa College.
Giving monthly is the most powerful way to donate.

Please visit www.kwasacollege.org/donate-today to sponsor a student.

Challenges Ahead for Kwasa College and its Students
The Kwasa Board anticipates that the current challenges due to the pandemic will continue well into 2021 as its students from the Daggafontein Informal Settlement remain in a structurally disadvantaged position to cope with the Covid-19 crisis. Joblessness is a reality many of our parents face. In addition to food insecurity, many families are in precarious housing conditions with insufficient access to basic services and hygiene infrastructure such as sewerage, electricity and running water. General unrest and protests have escalated with theft a recurring problem. In fact, a 50m section of the Kwasa College water. General unrest and protests have escalated with theft a recurring problem. In fact, a 50m section of the Kwasa College

1. Pediatric Clinic - As a part of the White Building Rehabilitation, the new complex includes a small clinic with a waiting area, consulting room and washroom. Currently, a retired Senior District Nurse is working part time, pro-bono from the Clinic, treating minor wounds, issuing Antiretroviral therapy to our children suffering from HIV, and performing vaccinations for pupils and staff. Future plans for the clinic are in the preliminary stages and include potential rotations by nursing students from the United States and other countries.

2. Kitchen Expansion - For many of the Kwasa College students, the two meals they receive at school may be the only food they have for the day. It is hard to believe that 700 meals are cooked and served from a kitchen the size of a small bedroom. A kitchen expansion will enable the dedicated staff to feed all the students today and into the future as Kwasa expands to include additional students and grades.