

THE GREEN MACHINE

VOLUME 2 • JUNE 2025



From the Principal's desk

Dear Members of the GHS Family

What a joy it is to be writing to you as the newly-appointed Principal of Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School, a school whose proud legacy, vibrant culture and extraordinary spirit I have long admired from afar, and now feel deeply honoured to experience from within.

Although I joined the school during the latter part of this busy term – mid-winter and in the rush of assessments – it became immediately clear to me that GHS is not just a school. It is a force. A community. A living legacy. I have been welcomed with not just warmth but a palpable sense of pride from every corner of this vibrant campus.

I would like to pay special tribute to Mrs Esmé Weigelt, who led the school with calm authority and deep care during her time as Acting Principal. Her steady hand and unwavering commitment have ensured that the Green Machine has continued to run smoothly, and I am immensely grateful to her for her professionalism, grace and support during the transition. We are all in her debt.

This term has been packed with moments that capture the essence of GHS. From the grit of the Cycle and Trail Run, to the joyful creativity of the Prefects' Fashion Show, the thunder of Interhouse Sports Day, and the sparkle of the SABC 3 visit – it has been a season of celebration, connection and excellence. Events like Book Week and the All Girls' Festival have reminded us of the power of stories, sisterhood, and school spirit. Even our trusty bus got a revamp, proof that at GHS we're always moving forward, in more ways than one.



As I step into this role, I do so with humility, excitement and a fierce commitment to the young women of this school. I want every learner to feel seen, supported and inspired. I want GHS to remain a place where excellence is not only expected but nurtured – in the classroom, on the sports field, in the arts, and in character.

To the young ladies of GHS: bring your energy, ideas, laughter, and your courage to your life within and beyond the school. To the parents: we need your support, involvement and belief in what this school stands for. A school is strongest when its entire community is pulling together – when we collectively celebrate its triumphs, defend its values, and invest in its future.

The Green Machine is on the move, powered by purpose, fuelled by pride, and driven by people who care deeply. I am proud to be among you, and I look forward to the journey ahead.

With warm regards
Mr Matthew Marwick
Principal



GHS Welcomes New Principal, Mr Matthew Marwick



It is with great joy and pride that we welcome Mr Matthew Marcellus Marwick as the thirteenth Principal of Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School.

As we approach our 105th anniversary, this new chapter marks a special moment in our school's rich history. Mr Marwick's arrival brings hope, energy, and a renewed sense of purpose to our ranks. Well-known within our Pietermaritzburg schooling community, Mr Marwick spent over twenty years at Maritzburg College, our brother school, with his connection to GHS already well-rooted in the shared traditions, collaborations, and mutual respect enjoyed between our two schools.

During his time at College, Mr Marwick served as Senior Deputy Headmaster, where he was respected for his leadership, integrity, and clear vision. An academic of note, he holds degrees in Commerce, Law, and History, along with a teaching qualification achieved with distinction. He is also a published author and respected historian. Mr Marwick is admired for his calm, organised leadership and commitment to lifelong learning. His clear thinking and inclusive approach have earned the trust of many.

Speaking on his appointment, he shared: "It is such a privilege to have been appointed as the next Principal of Girls' High, a proud and vibrant school with such a rich heritage. I am so excited to be able to play my own role in shaping its future, and I can assure the great GHS community, especially its young ladies, that I will do my very best."

Mr Marwick's appointment has been met with great support across our school community. As we look to the future, we do so with confidence, unity, and pride in our shared journey.

A new chapter has begun at GHS and the future is bright.



Sport

Term 2 was a vibrant and action-packed season for sport, marked by spirited competition, commendable teamwork, and remarkable achievements. Our learners displayed commitment and school pride across all sporting codes. Here is a formal reflection on the term's key highlights:

Netball

The netball teams competed in an intense schedule of fixtures, demonstrating marked improvement in skill and coordination. The standout fixture of the term was against St John's, where GHS won 6 out of 7 matches, including a thrilling one-point victory by the First Team. The performance reflected the depth of talent and the dedicated coaching within the netball programme.

Hockey

It was a successful season on the hockey turf, with regular league matches and friendly encounters. A major highlight was the All Girls Festival hosted by Wynberg, where our hockey team represented GHS with both skill and sportsmanship, finishing 10th overall. Additionally, Derby Day against Westville Girls' High yielded five convincing victories, showcasing the strength of our hockey squads.



Squash

Squash continues to grow in participation and excellence. Learners competed with enthusiasm and discipline in numerous fixtures, with a particularly memorable win against The Wykeham Collegiate (28–16). The dedication shown during training sessions and matches is a strong indicator of the sport's bright future at GHS.

Cross Country

This term's cross-country calendar was both demanding and rewarding. Learners tackled challenging courses with remarkable perseverance, often braving harsh weather conditions. Those consistently finishing in the leading groups set an inspiring tone for the athletics programme.

Table Tennis

The table tennis group flourished this term, with notable growth in both player numbers and performance. Friendly fixtures and internal tournaments helped sharpen competitive skills. The increased enthusiasm has laid a strong foundation for further development in the coming term.

All Girls' Festival – Wynberg

This year's All Girls' Festival brought together 21 government schools from across South Africa. GHS was proudly represented in hockey, squash, tennis, netball, chess, cross-country, and Master Chef. The festival provided a unique blend of sport, culture, and camaraderie, with learners forging bonds and achieving personal milestones in a competitive yet uplifting environment. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the learners and parents whose fundraising efforts made this enriching tour possible.

Final placements in the All Girls' Festival

Hockey – 10th

Squash – 12th

Tennis – 12th

Netball – 15th

Chess – 14th

Cross Country – Individual achievements

Master Chef – Top three only were announced

Inter-House Sports Event

The annual Inter-House Sports Day united the school in a celebration of athleticism and house spirit. Learners participated with energy and enthusiasm, reaffirming the importance of sport in nurturing school culture and community pride.



Provincial Selections

We are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the exceptional achievements of our learners who earned provincial selection in netball and hockey. Their dedication, discipline, and talent have set them apart, and we commend them for representing GHS at this elevated level of competition.

Netball

The following learners have been selected to represent KwaZulu-Natal provincial netball teams at the upcoming All Ages Tournament. Their selection reflects their unwavering commitment to the sport and their consistent performance throughout the season.

U15: Luhle Mlotshwa, Nosipho Sizathu

U16: Sthandiwe Madikizela

U17: Nkazimulo Thenjwayo

Hockey

The following learners will represent KZN Inland during the July holidays at various national and regional events. These learners have displayed exceptional skill and perseverance, and their selection is a reflection of both personal dedication and the strength of our hockey programme.

U18A: Mika (Siyamethemba) Khumalo, Nyaniso Khoza, Sbongakonke Ngubane

U18B: Amahle Nzimande, Paetyn Swart, Sasasa Zondi

U18C: Taliyah Easthorpe

Manager: Miss P Sikhosana

U16A: Jade Gobey, Tashlyn van Wyk

U16B: Akhona Hlophe, Amile Nxumalo, Athi Radebe, Jasmine Andreou

U16C: Leola Rajah

Reserves: Abusiswa Mnguni, Grace Shwala, Nandile Shangase

U14A: Sibusisiwe Mchunu

U14B: Melokuhle Ntshalintshali, Minenhle Ndlovu, Sisipho Ndlovu

Coach: Mr C Killeen

We extend our sincere gratitude to the coaches, staff, parents, and supporters whose continuous encouragement and guidance make it possible for our learners to thrive in school sport. We look forward to building on this success in the third term as we continue to foster excellence, character, and team spirit within GHS sport.



Subject Fair

The school hosted its annual Grade 9 Subject Fair, a key event on the academic calendar that helps guide learners in making informed subject choices. The occasion welcomed both parents and learners to explore the various subject choices available in the upcoming academic year. The event proved to be both informative and engaging, equipping learners with the knowledge required to make thoughtful and well-informed decisions regarding their educational journeys.

This initiative served as an excellent opportunity for the school to showcase the full range of subjects on offer. By involving parents in the process, the school ensures that learners are supported in making academic choices that align with their individual strengths, interests, and long-term aspirations. The importance of selecting subjects with careful consideration was a central theme throughout the event, with staff underscoring the impact these decisions may have on future studies and career paths.

The school's management team was present and fully engaged, providing guidance and support to facilitate a seamless and meaningful subject selection process. Educators from each subject department, along with current learners who are already pursuing these academic disciplines, offered first-hand insights into the nature and expectations of each subject. Their contributions added depth and authenticity to the lively discussions, allowing prospective learners to gain a realistic understanding of what lies ahead.

This meaningful event reaffirms our school's commitment to academic excellence and learner empowerment. It is anticipated that the exposure and guidance provided during the Subject Fair will enable Grade 9 learners to move forward with confidence, making academic choices that are both informed and inspiring.



Book Week

To commemorate World Book Day, we at GHS were privileged to welcome esteemed author Bridget Krone to our library. Ms Krone engaged our learners in an insightful discussion about the writing process, offering a candid glimpse into the challenges faced by authors, particularly the hurdles involved in getting published. She highlighted the importance of listening, observing, and reading as essential tools for gathering inspiration and crafting compelling stories.

She also encouraged us to set realistic goals and pursue them with discipline and passion, reminding us that every great writer begins as a dedicated reader. In support of our creative growth, she recommended a selection of books to help improve our writing skills, resources we will no doubt return to time and time again.

One of the most generous moments of the visit came when Ms Krone offered to read our work and provide kind, constructive feedback. This opportunity was gratefully received by our aspiring writers, who were eager to benefit from her professional insight and encouragement.

As Book Week came to an end, our school was transformed into a lively celebration of literature and imagination. Learners and staff alike arrived dressed as their favourite book characters, bringing beloved stories to life in the most delightful way. Our corridors became chapters, our classrooms pages, and every outfit a vibrant expression of literary joy.

The energy was electric, the creativity boundless, and the spirit undeniable. It was a day that captured the very essence of what it means to celebrate books, not only as sources of knowledge but as doorways to imagination.



SABC 3 Visit to GHS

Bringing a vibrant close to our Book Week celebrations, we had the pleasure of hosting the SABC 3 Afternoon Express crew on campus. This exciting visit was made all the more special by the return of our very own Old Girl, Ayanda Thabethe, from the Class of 2017, who now serves as a presenter on the show.

Ayanda spent the afternoon reconnecting with her roots, revisiting some of her favourite places around the school and reflecting on the memories that shaped her time here. Her presence brought immense pride to our community, and it was inspiring for our learners to see one of our alumna thriving in her professional journey.

The filming captured not only the beauty of our campus but also the vibrant energy of Book Week, as learners and staff continued to celebrate their love for literature and storytelling. It was a joyous occasion that highlighted the strength of our school spirit and the creativity that defines us.

We were proud to have shared this moment with Ayanda and were honoured to see GHS come to life on screen during the Afternoon Express segment, which aired on SABC 3 on 6 May. The broadcast beautifully captured the essence of our Book Week celebrations and the warmth of Ayanda's return to her alma mater.



Mom and Me

To celebrate Mother's Day this year, the Consumer Studies department thoughtfully arranged a beautiful space where our learners and their mothers could come together to share warm muffins, laughter, and meaningful conversation.

The event offered a special chance for families to bond through the simple joys of baking and the refinement of a shared "Afternoon Tea". The day was filled with sweet moments and created some treasured memories for the moms and their daughters, reminding us all of the importance of love and togetherness within our school community. It was a heartwarming occasion for those who attended, bringing joy to both learners and their mothers alike.

2025 Prefects' Fashion Show

Our 2025 prefects worked together with our brother school, Maritzburg College, to turn a fashion runway into a fun and exciting platform full of good cheer and creativity. The show featured fantastic outfits and unexpected dance moves that made the crowd come alive with enthusiastic support.

This event showcased how well our schools work together, and highlighted our shared sense of style. The fashion show was a lovely way to give the girls a chance to enjoy themselves before the start of exams.



Cycle and Trail Run

We proudly hosted our very first GHS Cycle and Trail Run, which took place in the Bisley Valley Nature Reserve, and what a spectacular day it proved to be. Blessed with splendid good weather, the morning unfolded under ideal conditions, with nature providing a magnificent backdrop to the event. Many attendees were treated to delightful sightings of giraffes, zebras, and impalas, adding charm to the occasion.

The GHS community gathered in impressive numbers, creating an atmosphere of warmth and camaraderie. Participants and supporters alike appreciated the variety of stalls, relishing the much-loved pancakes, freshly brewed coffee, and range of refreshments available, all of which were thoroughly enjoyed throughout the morning.

The social aspect of the event was equally successful, and the staging area buzzed with friendly conversation and laughter as familiar faces reconnected and new friendships were forged. The sense of community spirit was unmistakable.

More than a sporting occasion, the GHS Cycle and Trail Run was a celebration of unity, wellness, and school pride, bringing together diverse members of our community. It offered the perfect opportunity to enjoy the fresh air, share good cheer, and celebrate the splendour of the outdoors. Together, we made it a day to remember.



A New Look for our GHS Fleet

It was with great pride that we unveiled the refreshed appearance of our school transport. The updated style of our newly rebranded fleet reflects the strength, pride, and purpose with which our girls continue to move forward.

The refined design presents a professional and contemporary image, while still remaining true to the traditions and values that define GHS. Each vehicle now proudly carries the school's identity, upgrading our fleet of vehicles into a visual symbol of our enduring excellence and unity.

The rebranding was received with enthusiasm by both the school community and the public. The buses have already been spotted transporting learners to academic events, sporting fixtures, and cultural engagements, turning heads and drawing admiration along the way.

This initiative formed part of our ongoing commitment to present ourselves with dignity and distinction in all that we do. With the newly rebranded modes of transport now in service, we remain proud to represent GHS wherever the road may lead.



Societies' News



Envirocare

The Envirocare Society looked forward to the cooler months as an opportunity to revive the vegetable garden. The committee engaged with its members in discussions about various planting techniques and considered the potential offered by windowsill gardening.

As in previous terms, members participated enthusiastically in weekly quizzes, which provided ongoing education about environmental issues and ways to make a positive impact in their daily lives. The society continued to explore partnerships with local environmental organisations with the aim of contributing meaningfully to the community.

Plans were also made for some members to visit nearby nature reserves. These educational excursions were scheduled for the second and third terms.

Recycling

The Recycling Society experienced notable growth this term, reflecting an increasing awareness and commitment to environmental responsibility among learners. A significant development was the inclusion of Tetrapak items in the list of materials accepted for recycling on campus, an important step in broadening the scope of sustainable practices within the school.

In response to this addition, the Recycling Village was thoughtfully reorganised to enhance efficiency and ease of use. More white bags were introduced to assist learners in sorting recyclable materials accurately into designated categories, supporting both clarity and participation.

To promote active involvement across the school, a class party on 22 May 2025 was offered as reward to the class that contributed the most recyclable goods. This initiative not only encouraged friendly competition but also reinforced the collective goal of environmental stewardship. The society's continued efforts play a vital role in fostering a culture of sustainability at GHS and demonstrate the value of learner-led initiatives in driving meaningful change.

MSA

The traditional Bonding Session conducted at the start of the first term was a great success for both the committee and the society members, fostering a sense of sisterhood among the girls.

The final weeks of Term 1 were marked by the observance of Ramadaan. The Holy Quran was recited in full, followed by a special prayer and motivational talk delivered by a guest speaker.

In Term 2, MSA learners hosted an assembly on 4 May, which had been in planning since November of the previous year. The presentation offered the GHS community meaningful insights into Islam and was warmly received.

A new MSA committee was elected during the second term, with members eager to build on the work of their predecessors. Currently, the society is running a fundraising initiative to support an underprivileged school, reflecting their ongoing commitment to service.

HSS

The Grade 8 Bonding Session marked the Hindu Students' Society's (HSS) first activity of 2025, welcoming new members through a fun afternoon of coconut ice-making and team-building games.

At the end of the first term, Grade 11 learners performed a vibrant dance item at the Maritzburg College Hindu Cultural Show, with Kiara Reddy delivering a captivating solo instrumental performance.

On 13 April 2025, learners attended a mass prayer hosted by the Ved Dharam Sabha. Later, senior members volunteered at the Shri Vishnu Temple, serving food to the community, an experience that reflected the society's spirit of service.

The society is currently preparing for its 26 June 2025 excursion to Durban, which will include visits to the historic Umgeni Road Temple and the Vrindavan Eco Village.



Quantum Computing

The quantum computing programme aims to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy in learners. In the first semester, the learners engaged in a programming and coding project as part of their final assessment. These projects form a key component in determining each learner's overall success in the course. The learners demonstrated great perseverance and creativity and look forward to seeing the results of their hard work.

Robotics and Coding

Although this term was shorter than usual, the Robotics and Coding Society remained focused and enthusiastic. Despite limited time for major projects, the learners made meaningful progress on their learning journey.

The group began exploring the possibility of entering the IEEE Solid State Arduino Competition. They engaged with online tutorials, which offered valuable insights into the use of Arduino and the fundamentals of writing code for the platform. These tutorials enhanced their technical knowledge and sparked further interest in practical applications.

After careful consideration, the society opted not to participate in the competition this term, choosing instead to prioritise their academic commitments and upcoming examinations. Nevertheless, their involvement proved beneficial, equipping members with new coding and robotics skills they hope to apply in the future, potentially through an internal project or fun competition next term.

Despite the constraints of a shorter term, the society remained curious and committed. It was encouraging to witness the continued growth of their passion for robotics and coding.

Gospel Choir

The Gospel Choir collaborated with the Girls for God society during the Easter assembly on 14 April, delivering a powerful message of hope and renewal to the entire school community.

On 10 May, the choir performed alongside the Salvation Army Band and the TYCC Choir at the Kindle Music Festival, providing a vibrant and inspiring musical experience.

On 21 May, the Gospel Choir led the praise and worship session during an exam preparation prayer meeting, a collaborative event between GFG and the choir that offered spiritual support to learners during an important and stressful time in their academic journey.

Additionally, the Gospel Choir participated in a choir concert held at GHS, performing alongside the school choir and the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Choir. This event showcased the exceptional talent and dedication of all involved and enriched the school's cultural life.

Interact Society

This term has been busy for the Interact Society. The Easter egg drive was a highlight, with many generous donations from GHS girls and staff despite the cost of these chocolate treats. The Easter eggs were delivered to Ekujabuleni Children's Home, spreading much joy.

The ongoing stationery drive is ready for delivery, with books, pens, pencils, and highlighters collected for the benefit Siphakeme pre-school. The girls have also crafted toys from recycled materials to donate to the same centre. Additionally, the society assisted a young mother and her four children who had lost their possessions in a house fire, by providing boxes of old clothing.

Several members also volunteered at the Marian Villa Home fete, serving tea, coffee, and cupcakes on a chilly Saturday morning, helping to create a warm atmosphere. Through these efforts, the Interact Society continues to demonstrate its commitment to compassion and community service.

Entrepreneurship Society

The members of the Entrepreneurship Society engaged actively in daily sales throughout the term. On 25 April, the society hosted a successful Book Character Market Day, during which a variety of products were sold .

The society also hosted a market day on 9 May, themed around Mother's Day. This event was particularly enjoyable as the girls were able to purchase thoughtful and beautiful gifts for their mothers.

On 14 May, the society organised a cupcake icing demonstration after school. The enjoyable session aimed to develop the girls' creative skills and offered innovative techniques for decorating cakes. Emphasis at the workshop was on precision and technique.

The society remains deeply proud of the commitment and compassion shown by its members in serving the wider community.



Debating

This term has been exceptional for the Debating Society. Our senior teams remained undefeated, showcasing excellent critical thinking, structured argument and confident delivery. Junior teams also impressed, steadily improving and gaining valuable experience during each fixture.

A highlight was the selection of 16 learners as provincial debating trialists, a testament to the talent and commitment within the society. They will participate in the upcoming trials, with details to be confirmed.

Regular fixtures against schools like St Anne's, Maritzburg College, and Riverwood College helped sharpen the girls' skills, with training held from Monday to Wednesday and league matches on Thursdays. As the season wraps up, attention turns to the upcoming quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals in the third term.

Choir

The choir participated in the ATKV-Applous Choir Competition on 6 May, held at Grace College, where they were awarded a gold certificate in recognition of their outstanding performance.

In addition to this achievement, the choir took part in the Music Evening held in collaboration with St Charles, showcasing their talents in a shared celebration of music. They also performed in a delightful concert alongside the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands Youth Choir, further enriching their musical experience and fostering community engagement.



Marketing Society

This term, the Marketing Society made a notable contribution to the life of the school through its active engagement in several key events and initiatives.

The society was responsible for documenting the Grade 10 and Grade 11 Music Concerts, capturing each performance with care and professionalism. These efforts ensured that the musical achievements of our learners were shared with the wider school community. During the Prefects' Fashion Show, society members provided comprehensive coverage that highlighted the creativity, leadership, and flair of the Class of 2025 Prefect Body.

At the GHS and St Charles College Evening of Music, the society again demonstrated its dedication to excellence, producing a variety of media that celebrated both the collaboration between schools and the musical accomplishments of the participants.

Derby Day also saw the society in action, as members captured the energy, excitement, and school pride that defined the occasion. Through photography and videography, they brought the day's spirited atmosphere vividly to life.

During the GHS Cycle and Trail Run, the society played a dual role. Not only did they document the event, but they also assisted with registration and served as marshals, contributing directly to the event's success and showcasing their commitment to the school beyond media coverage.

Throughout the term, the Marketing Society remained steadfast in its mission to promote and preserve the identity of GHS, celebrating the school's vibrancy, achievements, and strong sense of community.



Staff News

Welcome to New Staff



Mr Matthew Marwick
Principal



Mrs Giovanna Coccianti
English Educator



Mr Njabulo Sibisi
Accounting Educator

Farewell



Ms Thaiyeerah Sheik
English Educator
1 Year Service

