

# THE GREEN MACHINE

VOLUME 4 • DECEMBER 2025



# Message from the Principal, Mr Marwick

Term 4 at Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School is always brief, busy, and bursting with significance and 2025 was no exception. From the moment we returned on 13 October, there was a strong sense of purpose in the corridors and classrooms of this noble school. This was a term defined by celebration, achievement, remembrance and resolve and as I look back, I do so with both pride and deep gratitude.

We opened with the glamour and elegance of the Matric Farewell Tea, a fitting tribute to the young ladies who have led our school with dignity and spirit. In the same week, we bade farewell to Mrs Jessy Maistry, whose warmth and dedication enriched GHS in countless ways. Her move to Northwood School marks a new chapter for her and leaves behind a legacy of loyalty and excellence.

The campus quickly filled with the traditions that bind us as a community. The "VC", executed by Maritzburg College sixth-form boarders, brought laughter and camaraderie to Morningside, our own boarding establishment. The GHS girls' triumph was of a different kind, however, when the First Netball Team swept to victory at the Fast Fives Tournament, where they defeated St John's DSG 14–8 with precision, grit and joy.

Academic and cultural excellence stood proudly centre stage at our Senior Speech Day, where we honoured the very best of GHS academia. Diya Gounder, our dux for 2025, earned first place in grade 12 through consistent excellence, while our guest of honour, Mrs Nompilo Gumede, inspired us all with her message of ambition and courage. The spirit of service and creativity shone again at the Service and Culture Awards Ceremony on 21 October, celebrating girls who provide so generously of themselves.



The NSC examinations began on 22 October, bringing with them unprecedented three-hour invigilation sessions, a quiet marathon of endurance for both staff and candidates. I am immensely grateful to every educator who served so faithfully and to every matric girl who approached these exams with maturity and grit. The Bell-Ringing Ceremony on 13 November reminded us of the poignancy and promise inherent in every GHS farewell.

Our connection with our broader community continued to deepen: the GHS Old Girls' function at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg was wonderfully attended; the on-campus book launch by Nozipho Mbanjwa-Tshabalala was a highlight; and our festive Christmas Market and Christmas Music Concert on 22 November drew thousands of visitors to the GHS grounds. Meanwhile, our solemn flag-raising ceremony on Remembrance Day became one of the most moving moments of the year.

Throughout this term, our girls have not only celebrated, they have also stood for justice. On 21 November, GHS supported the nationwide shutdown against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), standing in solidarity with women across the nation. From 25 November, we enter the 16 Days of Activism with clear eyes and determined hearts. At GHS, we will always nurture strong, courageous women who know both their worth and their power.

And, finally, we received the stirring news that Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School has been ranked first in the 2025 Best of Pmb. and Midlands Readers' Choice Awards in the Best Public High School category, an affirmation of who we are!

As the year drew to a close, we said goodbye to several valued staff members:

- Mr Conor Killeen (Sport)
- Mr Scholem Pillay (Physics)
- Ms Jana Zorger (Life Sciences)
- Miss Monique du Toit (BE House Mother)
- Miss Elodia Komen, retiring after an extraordinary 31 years
- Mrs Amita Ranjan, retiring after 20 years of dedicated service

We thank them for their commitment to this school and for the lives they have shaped along the way.



Looking forward, GHS is on the cusp of an exciting evolution. In early 2026, we will be rolling out several important initiatives, including:

- the introduction of a Head of Discipline
- a refreshed Executive Committee structure
- continued examination of the school cellphone policy
- modified bell times to restore a meaningful 13h00 lunch break
- an expanded extra-mural programme, aimed at ALL girls at the school
- the official naming of our proud boarding establishment as 'Morningside'

These important changes are part of a broader vision for renewal, belonging and excellence, all aligned with our theme for 2026: MyGHS. Words such as 'identity', 'inclusion', 'commitment', 'service' and 'reinvigoration' will, I hope, shape the story we write together next year.

As the only established state-run, all-girls' boarding high school situated between Westville and the Drakensberg, GHS continues to occupy a powerful and unique place in South Africa's educational landscape. It has been one of the greatest honours of my life to serve as your principal for the past six months. I thank our staff, our learners, our parents and our alumnae for their trust, energy and support.

To our girls currently in Grades 8-11: enjoy your long summer holiday. Rest deeply. Read widely. Please come back refreshed, energised, and excited about what lies ahead. I look forward to welcoming you all back on Wednesday, 14 January 2026, ready to step boldly into a new year of possibility.

GHS stands tall, proud and united and the future is bright.

Mr MM Marwick, Principal





# Sport

With the Community Centre being used as an examination venue and much of the time dedicated to exams, Term 4 was an extremely short one for sports. Despite these challenges, our learners remained committed and represented the school with pride across a range of sporting codes.

## Indoor Hockey

Our teams competed in multiple indoor hockey festivals this term. Although attendance became challenging and a number of teams withdrew from fixtures, our players made the most of every opportunity. The fast-paced indoor format tested their adaptability and skills, and they secured some impressive wins along the way. More importantly, they showed outstanding resilience and teamwork, learning valuable lessons from both their victories and defeats.

We are especially proud of the seven learners who were selected to represent KZN Inland at the upcoming Indoor Hockey Inter-Provincial Tournament (IPT) during the holidays. We wish them all the best as they take on this exciting challenge!

## Fast 5 Netball

On 18 October, we had the privilege of hosting the SPAR Fast 5 Netball Challenge. The day brought its fair share of excitement and weather challenges. A sudden storm forced the semi-finals and finals to be moved indoors to the CC, but that didn't dampen the spirit of the tournament.

Our GHS girls displayed exceptional teamwork and determination, narrowly defeating Edendale in the semi-final and going on to claim the gold medal against St John's in the final. This marks the second year that GHS has won the tournament, a fantastic achievement for our team and coaching staff!

## Water Polo

Our senior water polo teams faced several strong first-team opponents this term. While not every match ended in victory, the experience gained was invaluable. It was truly refreshing to see our players back in the pool after such a long break. Their positive attitude and willingness to learn have set a solid foundation for next season and we're confident the team will bounce back even stronger in the new year.

## Looking Ahead

As we wrap up 2025, we wish all our learners a safe and joyful festive season. Take time to rest and recover, but remember not to laze around too much! Maintaining an active lifestyle, a healthy diet and a basic level of conditioning will significantly enhance your ability to excel in January. Team trials for the new season will take place during the first week back next term and we look forward to another exciting year of sport at GHS!

## Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to each staff member and sport coach who made an impact in our athletes' lives this year. Your guidance, time and dedication have played a vital role in every success achieved. We truly appreciate your contribution and look forward to what 2026 holds. We anticipate a year filled with even more growth, teamwork and success.





# Matric Tea

A delightful celebration unfolded as our grade twelves gathered for the Matric Tea, marking a moment filled with joy, reflection, and elegance. The girls entered looking stylish and beautiful, each outfit displaying unique personality. As they spoke of their time together, the room became full of warm conversation, heartfelt laughter and moments of excitement.

Beautifully prepared treats and refreshments added to the charm of the morning, creating the perfect setting for meaningful exchanges between friends, teachers and mentors. Photographs were taken, hugs were shared and stories from throughout their years at GHS were fondly retold, all contributing to an atmosphere that was both celebratory and sentimental.

As they prepare to step into the next chapter of their lives, we extended our warmest wishes to the Class of 2025. Their futures promise to be filled with opportunity. We remain incredibly proud of each one of them and confident that the values, resilience and determination they developed during their time at GHS will guide them towards remarkable accomplishments.





# Senior Speech Day Celebration

The Senior Speech Day was a deeply memorable occasion, marking an important achievement for our 2025 grade 12 class as they prepared to embark on their next chapter. The atmosphere was filled with pride, excitement and a sense of accomplishment.

As we gathered to celebrate our graduating learners, we recognised numerous outstanding achievements, including:

- Academic Honours, Colours and Merit Awards
- Special prizes across various categories
- Tokens of appreciation for the exceptional leadership of our Top Nine learner leaders

We extend our warmest congratulations to our top academic achievers in 2025:

- Yumnah Essack – Third in grade 12
- Aleeza Mahomed – Second in grade 12
- Diya Gounder – First in grade 12

Inspiring words from our esteemed guest speaker, Mrs Nompilo Gumede, CEO of Women in Business and an accountant, entrepreneur, leader and speaker, reminded us of the importance of self-leadership, resilience and balance. She encouraged our learners to understand themselves, manage their emotions, stay motivated and continue growing, while also making time for rest and family. Her address was both uplifting and grounding, leaving a lasting impression on learners, staff and parents alike.

To the Class of 2025, we could not be prouder. Your laughter, tears and memories will remain with us and we eagerly anticipate the incredible impact you will make in the world.





# Standing Together Against Gender Based Violence

On Friday, 21 November, Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School came together in a powerful demonstration of solidarity and remembrance in response to the growing crisis of gender-based violence in South Africa. The entire school community joined in a collective call for justice, safety and meaningful change.

Learners and staff dressed in black, complemented by purple accessories, symbolising both mourning and strength. This unified act formed part of a country-wide movement acknowledging the devastating reality that fifteen women lose their lives to gender-based violence every day.

To honour these lives, the school held a special assembly, which provided an opportunity for reflection on the day's significance and renewed its commitment to advocating for a world where women and girls are safe, valued and heard. The assembly also highlighted the importance of community awareness, empathy and shared responsibility when confronting gender-based violence. The school then observed a fifteen-minute standstill, offering silent reflection and recognition of the ongoing national tragedy.

The day held particular emotional significance as the school paused to remember one of its alumna, Minenhle Hlongwane, Class of 2020, who recently lost her life to gender-based violence. Minenhle was remembered as warm, mature and dedicated and was highly regarded within the school community. Her passing highlights the personal and painful impact of gender-based violence, which affects families, schools and communities across the country.

The moment of silence we offered served as a solemn reminder of the urgency of the issue and the responsibility shared by all to work towards change, with principal Mr Marwick declaring, "Today, we stand for justice. We stand for safety. We stand for Minenhle. We stand for all girls who are victims." Through this act of collective remembrance and solidarity, Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School reaffirmed its role as a firm advocate for justice and safety, committed to building a future in which no woman or girl lives in fear of violence.





# GHS Christmas Market

On 22 November, the GHS campus community was full of energy as vendors, families, and visitors filled the campus with seasonal excitement. The grounds were busy throughout the day with a range of activities for everyone to enjoy. We held a basketball tournament for junior schools, a lively fashion show, a karate demonstration and various singing performances from local schools. These events created a cheerful and energetic atmosphere across the campus.

To end the day, our end-of-year music concert provided a fitting finale. The performances brought November to a calm and uplifting close, finishing the day on a memorable note. All money raised by the day's events goes to support our learners' trip to the All Girls' Festival next year, where we anticipate bringing glory to the school with our sporting success.



# Societies' News

## **The President's Award**

By the end of Term 3, the participants were still working towards completing their various tasks. Tests and exams considerably slowed down the process, as our learners shifted their focus to academics. Other challenges included technical glitches with the Online Record Book that made it difficult to record and log information. The President's Award organisation also underwent some internal changes following the resignation of the previous regional leader. Nonetheless, we wait in eager anticipation as some of the participants are close to completing their Silver Award levels. Stay tuned for further updates!

## **Coding and Robotics**

During Term 4, the learners continued their work on the remote-controlled car project. A car race competition had been planned as the culminating activity; however, it could not take place due to time constraints and the early commencement of examinations. The competition has therefore been rescheduled to the first term of 2026.

## **Choir**

At the end of the third term, we were sad to say goodbye to our conductor, Mrs Cecile Jansen, who has left to focus on her work in Hilton. We were very pleased to welcome Mr Thabang Tshale as our new conductor. Mr Tshale comes with a lot of experience and enthusiasm. He is also the choir conductor at Maritzburg College and we look forward to working together.

On 22 November, we presented a lively and successful End-of-Year Music Concert after the school's Christmas Market. We are planning many more wonderful concerts for next year and we look forward to the ongoing enthusiastic support of parents, staff and learners.



## Girls for God

GFG resumed activities during the fourth term, with the girls participating in several exciting events. Activities began with the handover of supplies collected during the third term's charity drive, a project promoted by the society throughout the school, in partnership with God's Family Life Church. The sanitary pads collected were donated to Forest Hill Primary School.

The society was privileged to host special guests from CFCIPMB (Covenant Fellowship Church International, Pietermaritzburg), who shared an inspirational message that positively impacted the ladies. The term concluded with the society party and a farewell for the matric committee, who worked hard throughout the year. The girls shared laughs, cake and cold drinks to mark the end of a successful year.

## First Aid

Even during the final stretch of the year, while preparing for their end-of-year examinations, our first aiders demonstrated remarkable commitment by providing first aid services at various sports department events. The girls actively assisted our athletes in everything from indoor hockey tournaments to the Spar KZN Schoolgirls' Fast Five Netball Tournament.

Our dedicated first aiders do not only extend their services to GHS games but they also served at the Junior Schools' Basketball Championship, which GHS is proud to host annually. Many of our girls received their service awards as recognition of the hard work and many hours they put into the society. Their dedication does not go unnoticed and we would like to extend our sincere appreciation for the commitment they have shown this year.



## Marketing Society

Term 4 has been an exceptionally productive period for the marketing society, with members actively involved in documenting and promoting a wide range of school events. Their work ensured that each occasion was professionally recorded and shared, allowing the broader school community to witness and celebrate our learners' various achievements and milestones.

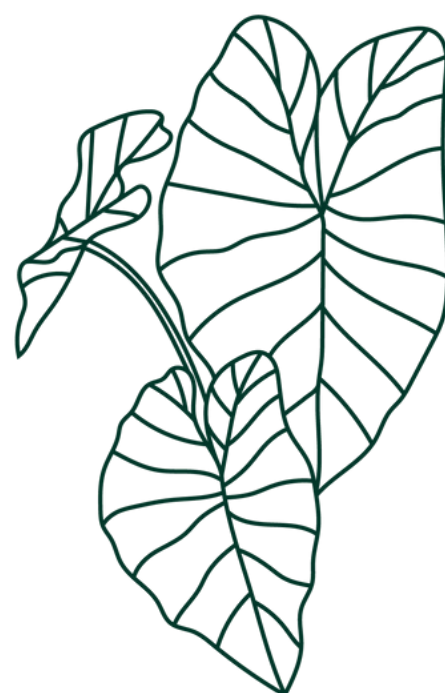
The society began the term by covering the matric tea, capturing highlights and producing content that reflected the elegance and excitement of the event. This was followed by their coverage of the Interhouse and Prefects' Assembly, where they preserved key moments. Members continued their efforts during the Senior Speech Day, documenting the formal proceedings and capturing the pride in our school community's academic achievements. The society also supported the grade 11 history tour to Johannesburg, producing content that highlighted both the educational and cultural aspects of the excursion. Marketing society members were also present at the Spar Fast Fives Netball Tournament, showcasing the sporting talents and school spirit of our learners.

Throughout the fourth term, the society demonstrated dedication, creativity, and professionalism in its commitment to recording and posting on various school functions and successes. The contributions of the marketing society enhance the public visibility of the school and provide its members with practical experience in marketing.



## GHS Awake

During the fourth term, we discussed various meaningful topics at our meetings, including illegal deportations in the USA, the death of Charlie Kirk and the topic of Cwecwe, among others. These discussions paved the way for numerous in-depth and thought-provoking exchanges. Learners were encouraged and guided to challenge their ways of thinking and to exhibit patience and understanding with their fellow Awake sisters when opinions varied over passionate topics raised. In addition, we were fortunate to be addressed by one of our founding members, Nozipho Tshabalala, who inspired and motivated us to continue having courageous conversations.



# Staff News

## Retirement



**Mrs Amita Ranjan**

Mathematics Educator  
20 year service



**Miss Elodia Komen**

Afrikaans Educator  
31 year service

## Farewell



**Mr Conor Killen**

Physical Educator &  
Sports Coordinator  
5 year service



**Miss Rina Kwela**

Senior Housemother  
7 year service



**Miss Monique du Toit**

Housemother  
2 year service



**Mr Scholem Pillay**

Physical Sciences Educator  
5 year service



**Mrs Jana Zorger**

Life/Natural Sciences  
Educator  
9 year service