

## TYRES AND TAKKIES

### Capsulation of Oakhill's Spirit

The atmosphere at Sassenheim Estate was buzzing and the vibe electric. The much anticipated and widely advertised Tyres and Takkies had arrived on a clear day. I was whisked straight to the kiddies play area, where several classmates had also congregated to keep a watchful eye on the children, while parents and older siblings participated in cycling, running or even walking races.

Sassenheim Estate is a large flower farm between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay. A trickle of eager Oakhillians twisted through arum lilies and mud to complete the 5km walk, the first of many races of various lengths. We were competing for a promised prize which would be awarded to the House (Bendigo, Millwood or Jubilee) with the most entries. However, the day meant so much more than that. We entered for fun, for competition, for dares, or, in the case of several Grade 9's, to train for the 2013 Odyssey. Most of all, it was a chance to bond with the wider Knysna community.

No race was complete without a dash to the beckoning food tent. It contained scrumptious dishes, including pita breads filled with falafel or chickpea curry and pickled cucumber. Also available were Belgium waffles and pecan and ginger cookies. For the more conventional palate, toasted cheese and ham or steak and chips were available to accompany Coke or a healthy smoothie.

Enthusiasm waxed as the day aged. Tyres and Takkies was an annual event on the Oakhill calendar, though we have not held one for these for the past few years. Many staff members and parents attended and even more entered races. Memories will forever linger of our Headmaster beaming with a child's joy as he was placed in his race, Mrs Nuttall, hair windblown, marshaling the racers, and parents giggling as they examined their mud-streaked jeans and borrowed takkies because they really hadn't intended on entering at all. Whoever one spoke to, wherever one looked, it was just such fun! The fact that our national anthem played three times that day, signifying that South Africa had won a medal or two in the London Olympics, heightened our sense of unity.

Finally, this poignant day dissolved into a cool evening. Athletes walked off, happy and grubby, just like their children that I had been minding. There are countless people to thank for this enjoyable day. The Oakhill PTA, with Susan Kotze as the Tyres and Takkies co-ordinator for 2012; Mr Philip Stewart, the housekeepers and ground staff deserve a mention for the magical work they did before, during and after the event. A big thanks to all the marshals, cooks and helpers at the kiddies play area. Also thanks to fun-loving Mr Langman, who ran from classroom to classroom beforehand, clad in cyclists gear, promoting the Tyres and Takkies! This day certainly capsulated the spirit of Oakhill!

*Written by Iqraa Daniels*

## **How far will you go? A Tyres and Takkies review**

How far would you run for charity? Quite far, when it comes to Oakhill School! There was an amazing turn-out on Saturday, the fourth August at nine am. Hundreds of people were there - pupils, parents and teachers alike, all volunteering valuable time for the benefit of others. Everyone was ready to either take a nice, long walk, a brisk jog or an exhilarating cycle in a wonderful forested area, namely Sassenheim Estate, in the vicinity of Harkerville. There were a series of events to choose from, be it a nice stroll with children, a quick 5km jog, or (if you were feeling up to it) a four lap course of 5km a lap! It's amazing that everyone did something, even if you just sat out to cheer your team on! The course itself led through a variety of terrains, from a gorgeous country field to clambering over rocks and log-bridges in a dense, beautiful forest.

Most of the events started up pretty early in the day, to make the most of the cool weather. People lined up in their respective groups and after a short introduction from Mr Pryke, we were off! You could bring your dogs along, and simply walk if you wanted to, so there was no pressure to hurry up. It was an enjoyable walk, although many takkies were pretty soon covered in mud! After reaching the halfway-station where you were offered a much appreciated respite of water and orange quarters, two log bridges had to be crossed and a couple more muddy areas had to be traversed. Eventually, the finish line came into sight, where everyone was cheering you on! A high-five was given as you crossed the line. Now how about another lap? If you wanted to, you could, but I was tuckered out!

Many thanks to all the Oakhillians who made this wonderful event possible, for getting people out of bed and into the forest, and for making a madly fantastic splash of a day, where all could have fun, whether it were Dad having a beer after his cycle and watching the "footie", or Mom enjoying a massage and then strolling around to admire the many craft items on sale, and of course the little ones, having fun in the supervised play area. This definitely was an event for all!

*Reporter: Danielle Laure-Smith*

## A Meaningful Experience

Today I have had an unbelievable long walk in a dense jungle, enjoying the Oakhill “Tyres and Takkies” event, although my shoes are filled with mud and my white socks have lost their original colour.

My programme is a five-kilometer walk. I was left behind with three babies pushed in prams by their parents at the very beginning of the competition, because some dynamic people broke the rule and replaced walking with running. But I enjoy the special experience. Scores of people, ranging from little kids to grey-haired old persons, participate with great interest and enthusiasm. I am deeply infected by their passion and sincere smiles.

After coming to South Africa, the most marked difference I have found in schooling education, is that sports account for a large proportion here which hasn't got enough attention in China. In a sense, sports are separated from our schooling education. You can't rely on one, at most two lessons a week to master the skills of a sport. Pressure of competition forces teachers and students to concentrate on textbooks and tests.

Last week, I was often told “Lianmei, China is doing well in the Olympics.” I must admit it. But only the number of medals can't represent that we are powerful in sports. We own a quarter of the Earth's population. If sports are emphasized and popular among people, more outstanding players will spring up. Of course, competition is not the goal of physical education. Healthy and strong bodies, passion and pleasure through sports, explosion of potentials, intimate contact with nature should only be the aim of sports.

I can't deny or despise any kind of education system, because everyone is rooted in sophisticated cultural and social backgrounds. I do wish Chinese students can release from arduous book-studying and run freely on the sports fields, more and more Chinese people can pick up at least one sport as a hobby in their spare time to enrich their spirits after getting rich in physical life, like South African people have done.

Thank you, Mrs Hu.

*Report written by our Mandarin teacher, Lianmei Hu.*