



# Stanford Lake College

Valediction 2009

In November 2006, at valediction, I outlined the direction Stanford would be taking in the drawing up of an all-encompassing Charter that will guide us into the future. The Stanford Charter was adopted by the Trust and this outlined an ambitious 9-point plan, which the Trust felt would take us from good to great.

This exercise has taken an inordinate amount of dedication, determination and patience from trustees and staff alike over the last three years. My sincerest thanks go to all who have been an integral part of the process. These initiatives have borne fruit and it is only through reflection that we can plot our progress. I would like to summarise the points today and share them with you again.

**Firstly**, we planned to enhance the unique brand of Stanford Lake College through a refined business plan. Mr Ueckermann and his team have achieved this from the basis of the Stanford Charter and it incorporates all the aspects of good planning, budgeting and management within the system.

**Secondly**, we planned to concentrate on academic rigour. Our teachers have all undergone training and will continue to do so. They have formed networks with other schools to further our good academic standing. Three hundred and nineteen Matrics have passed through Stanford Lake College and we have not had a single failure. And for a bit of bragging, my daughter, Hannah started at Oxford University last week, reading for her Masters in Water Science, a first for Stanford and a great achievement for our little school. Thato told me the other day that he is going to be the president.

**Thirdly**, we have created better visibility in the marketplace with a beautiful new website, a redefinition of our brand with the new signage, letterheads and marketing material. I love the new emphasis on our 7 trees. This expensive exercise was made possible through fundraising initiatives from my fellow trustees. I thank you. We have also employed a part time marketer, which has been a huge advantage and our school is full for next year.

**Fourthly**, we have been fastidious about good corporate governance and we will continue to focus on this. Our auditor's report of 2008 commended the Trust on the high level of good corporate governance practised at the school. The governance within the school structure has also received attention and has allowed for smoother running of the school.

**Fifthly**, and one that has given the most headaches on reaching consensus, has been the improvement of the campus through disciplined planning. The days of Stanford looking like a home knitted jersey are over, the master plan has been finalised and we have a structured and sequential list of priorities to follow.

**The sixth** aspect was to refine our competitive edge in the fields of academics, adventure and sport. All will agree that we are near the top of our game within the gambit of our pupil numbers.

GROWING TOGETHER FOR LIFE

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**The seventh** objective was to create effective networking within our community and abroad. Being members of the Round Square family has certainly achieved this. The Stanford delegation has just returned from a fantastically successful International conference in India last week and we truly do have friends all over the world. There were 75 schools represented. Our exchange students have made a wonderful impression and are still remembered some 6 years later because of the impact they made on the schools they visited. One of the highlights for me was to see how the pupils from the Hotchkiss School in America had made a movie on democracy using pupils from Round Square schools all over the world. I was very proud to see Stanford pupils view on democracy on the big screen. I have also been in contact since my return with a school in South Korea, who want to run Internet-based conferences and academic research and teacher exchanges – exciting stuff. Locally, Stanford hosted a phenomenally successful regional Round Square conference in May and has set new standards within our region; again we wowed the Africa region. We continue to interact with schools on the mountain and have established new networks locally in the arenas of sport, drama and culture.

**Point number eight** is continuous innovations in services, processes and channels of communication. The Snapshot, Daily Notices, the sms system and newsletters have certainly kept everyone in touch. One of the greatest achievements in services is that we are one of the few schools nationwide that had no bad debts last year after the introduction of a debit order system. My thanks go to the parents for keeping the ship afloat.

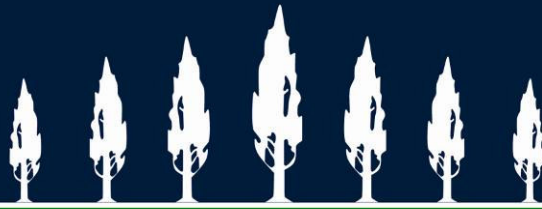
**Our ninth** and final objective was to nurture the spiritual heart of Stanford Lake College. The appointment of a pastoral leader and the development of the mentoring and pupil executive systems have had a holistic and positive impact on the campus.

Apart from the obvious need for medium and long term planning, the formulation of a structured plan has allowed us to focus our fundraising efforts. Most of the 9-point plan did not require masses of money but some aspects, specifically the campus development and the master plan, need a large capital injection. With the help of my fellow trustees we have drawn up a partnership document to present to corporates and funders alike. We have now been able to approach select groups and had a very fruitful preliminary meeting with the gentleman who represents Anglo America yesterday. We have submitted a proposal to the National Lotteries Board and have had a lot of contact with them lately.

The Trust is confident that we have a winning and sustainable formula and will be sourcing funding from all avenues that also believe in the type of holistic education we offer at Stanford.

Fortunately, because of judicious budgeting, a full school and the capex fund, we have been able to build a new boarding house this year. This is going to be a huge boon, as it will free up Shower House and the Annexe for other activities.

Valediction is always a time of farewells and this year we bid farewell to Karin Baragwanath, Cecilia Landman, Jon Hyde and Freda Chigumadzi who all retire from the Trust at the end of the year. We have all come a long way together and I think that this group specifically can attest to the fact that we have made huge inroads into the development, professionalism and ethos which makes up Stanford Lake College. The time commitment and integrity shown by these retiring trustees has been beyond the call of duty. *“Labor et Integritas”* - you have shown us how. Stanford will be indebted to you forever for all your input. I thank you.



We also recently bade farewell to two other Stanford stalwarts: Mr Noné, who retired as our bursar and Mr Hillary, who has been involved since the inception of Stanford Lake College. I salute two exceptional men and wish you health and happiness in your retirement. You have both been the foundation, the rock, upon which Stanford was built. Thank you.

I offer a warm Stanford welcome to our new bursar and trustee, Mr Richard Coetzer and his family, who have joined the Stanford family. I know that you are going to be an important part of taking Stanford from good to great.

To the rest of the Board, we are a dynamic group and thank you to the people who have put forward their nominations for next year; it is never dull at Stanford. A warm word of welcome to Mr Grant Daly, who has succeeded Ed Hillary as a board-appointed trustee. We have exciting times ahead.

2009 has been a particularly hectic year. Mr Ueckermann has driven his team hard but the results and successes speak for themselves. The past 18 months with Mr Ueckermann at the helm have been focussed, with direction and with enormous passion for the good of Stanford Lake College. It has been a pleasure working with you and sharing the challenges we face together. To the staff as usual, wow, education is much, much more than a day job. Namasté, I celebrate the fire in you and thank you for your continued commitment to your vocation: guiding, moulding and motivating today's youth.

Matrics, just do it, your foundations are sturdy. Believe in yourselves and be proud of your roots. To the whole school, remember the hardest arithmetic to master, is to count your blessings. And let's also all remember that not a shred of evidence exists in favour of the idea that life is serious.

Thank you and God Bless.

Maggie Baleta [Mrs]  
Chairman of the Letaba Educational Trust