



# National Newsletter

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## Newsletter for Parents of SAMA Member Schools

During the Month of September we celebrated Heritage Day. This was a time to reflect on our past and to celebrate our future as an united nation. For an *Afrikaanse Boertjie* like me celebrating my heritage this means that we need to light a fire and have a traditional braai with friends and family, preferably while watching the rugby.

It was during one of these traditional braais that I realised the influence we have on children: A little boy of three came into the lounge to watch the rugby with his father. He sat down next to his dad and folded his arms exactly like his dad. Each and every time when dad took a sip of his beer, the little boy would take a sip of his ginger beer, a spitting image of his dad!

Everybody who has a child knows that from a very young age the child shows their developing will. Dr. Montessori believed that the child as an infant and toddler is driven by the *Horme* (life force, driving energy within) and as the child matures the *will* (conscious control and self-regulation of this life force) eventually replaces the *Horme*.

At this time the child begins to grow an awareness of others and the wider community. He/she wants to help others while also being inspired by others.

This begs the question; Why not use this driving energy of the child positively? The child is desperate to learn about his environment. Involve

him in many of life's little tasks and work together. Good characters are built in childhood. As Mark Twain said: "Children are not very good at listening, but they are masters of imitation." Instead of taking the car to the carwash to be washed, wash it with your child's help. Provide a suitable step so he/she can help you to wash the dishes. These tasks help your child to develop a good work ethic, task completion and responsibility. All very valuable characteristics in the working world. While it is spring, go outside and plant a few veggies with your child, the reward of growing their own food or "fruit of their labour" so to speak is immeasurable.



My dad was 46 when I was born. He did not have the energy to play rugby with me, or to take me on fishing trips when I was a teenager. In fact, if you ask me what we did together, I can't think of any activities that are usually associated between father and son: no hunting; camping; sport events or any adrenalin rush activities. But, from a young age my dad gave me a heritage that I can share with my children. We worked in his veggie garden together late afternoons and early mornings. When I think back fondly, I can still smell the grass cuttings of the freshly mowed lawn that we had mowed together on Saturdays and the dusty, oily smell of wood while we worked together to put up extra shelves for my mom.

I was also encouraged to help my mom when she arranged flowers for dinner, or with the mixing of ingredients when she baked. She showed me which glass to use for which wine while my dad taught me the tricks of wine appreciation. She taught me which knife and fork to use during a five course meal while my dad showed me how to eat *braaivleis* with a pocket knife. My mother would hardly ever use foul language while my dad would tell me a naughty little joke while were alone. My mother's motto was always: "Do as I do!" while my father's was: "Do as I say!"

Which one was right? I don't know. Both had an influence on my life and gave me a proudly South African Heritage. In the end, my mom and dad helped me to develop into who I am today. In their outlook on life they were polar opposites to eachother. We did a lot together and they involved me in the daily tasks from a young age making me a balanced individual who can not only drill holes in the wall, but, also arrange flowers for the table.

The moral of the story is that your child will grow up, heavily influenced by you, not just in personality, but in character as wellll. You need to decide today what heritage you want to give to your child. Is it going to be one of constant battles of "do as I say", or are you willing to set the example so that they can "do as I do?"

Regards

Charl du Toit

