

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMME HAS CHANGED LEARNERS' LIVES, SAYS PRINCIPAL

Grosvenor Primary School in Atlantis began its after-school programme (ASP) in 2016. In 2018, it's a different, more focused and happier space for learners. Most importantly, it has improved school results, says Principal Terence Adams, winner of the 2018 Leadership Excellence Award in After-School Programming.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMME HAS CHANGED LEARNERS' LIVES, SAYS PRINCIPAL

'All learners are searching for something that makes them feel unique and special, that helps them identify their abilities and potential so they can try realise them,' says Terence Adams, Principal of Atlantis institution Grosvenor Primary School and winner of the 2018 Leadership Excellence Award in After-School Programming. 'Some kids have difficulty reading and writing, and that's a fact. I see that as one of the bigger challenges that we need to turn around. Other kids are very good at school, but can be unbalanced. They also need to get out and enjoy life. For me, it's about holistic development.'

Learner development is exactly where ASPs show they're worth investing in. Grosvenor Primary has more than a few learner success stories as a result of its programme, but there are also broader benefits to a school: offering learners a safe space after classes and an opportunity to find their 'happy corner', as Mr Adams calls it; an avenue to show children how to lead; a chance to make sure they're fed at least once a day; and for the community, engaging in their and other childrens' lives.

Mr Adams is a committed Atlantis man. He grew up there. He attended Avondale Primary School and Atlantis Secondary School. He taught at Saxonsea Secondary School, then at Reygersdal Primary School. It was there, under Principal Danny Pietersen, that Mr Adams learnt his negotiation and leadership skills. He started at Grosvenor as principal in 2016. He says it's because he's so rooted

in this community that he knows its problems, but can also see its potential.

The ASP has made a big difference to school results, says Mr Adams. The school offers 19 extra-curricular activities. How does it do this without exhausting the staff? This is where Mr Adams negotiation skills have really paid off. He doesn't expect staff to do all the extra work; the after-school programme is run primarily by outsiders – for example, a police officer heads up the chess club, a lady from Witsand does the rieldans, the Western Cape Government offers tutoring for the Grade 4s. 'Parents and even ex-Grosvenor learners assist with coaching, and community and other people get involved, otherwise there's no way we'd be able to offer 19 extra-curricular activities,' says Mr Adams.

He downplays his role in making these opportunities happen, but he does have advice to give any other principal or teacher wanting to do the same: 'You need to have a good relationship with people. It's important to make it clear for those who want to be part of the programme that there are no funds available and we do it with what we have. It's important to network a lot and go abroad and find people who will buy into your school's vision. Through good networking there are always partners that can create possibilities.'



This is exactly why the programme has been successful, and Principal Terence Adams of Grosvenor Primary School was chosen for last year's Leadership Excellence Award in After-School Programming.

Importantly, how has the ASP helped the school? 'The children are happier, more energetic, and our results are better. We have up to 150 learners per day in after-school activities, which also comes with an apple and sandwich. Also, the teachers plan better and their self-esteem is also very high, which is also transferred to the learners.'

With some of the prize money, Mr Adams bought a set of drums and a keyboard with an amp, as well as an acoustic electric guitar and bass guitar, with amps for each. Now on Saturdays the school has music classes (**watch this video to see how this has benefited learners**). 'Then we've got roughly R4 000 left for what else needs doing in the year,' he adds.

The other shortlisted nominees were Mrs Anna Dames of Elizabethfontein Mor Primêre Skool in Clanwilliam (who won the silver prize) and Mr Gregory Kannemeyer of Beacon Hill Sekondêr in Mitchells Plain (who won the bronze prize place).

For more information, please contact Bridget Hannah at afterschool@westerncape.gov.za or on 021-483-9844.

Mrs Anna Dames of Elizabethfontein Mor Primêre Skool in Clanwilliam and Mr Gregory Kannemeyer of Beacon Hill Sekondêr in Mitchells Plain



HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL ASP FOR YOUR SCHOOL

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY

Find out the needs of the community your school services. Understanding the needs of the community and learners will allow you to shape your ASP to give learners relevant skills, or show you what social skills it would benefit them to develop. This will also help you seek out the appropriate partners.

2. FIND OUT WHAT YOUR TEACHERS CAN DO (without extra stress)

Most staff are already over-burdened and extra-curricular activities can exhaust them further. Also, it's best to play to their strengths: find out what skills they already have that they can pass on to learners as after-school activities. Don't overburden your staff as it will affect their energy levels and ability to plan their classes. This will then affect the learners.

3. FIND OTHER PARTNERS

Grosvenor Primary's ASP is run primarily by outsiders. We found people from the Atlantis community, as well as outside of it. For example, a local police officer runs our chess club, a lady from Witsand teaches rieldans, CapeNature offers arts and crafts classes, the Western Cape division of Ringball SA teaches ringball. It's all about networking. It's important to go abroad and find people who buy into your school's vision and will contribute to that.

4. BE CLEAR ABOUT BOUNDARIES

It's important to make it clear there are no funds available and people have to make do with what they have. Whatever a partner offers to do, they must understand that it's all about the learners. Be passionate. It's also important to be humble and be contributing for the right reasons.

5. PLAN SMARTLY

500 children take part in Grosvenor Primary's ASP. However, the feeding programme offers only 150 food parcels a day, so that limits how many children can take part in the programme daily. This requires a lot of planning, so we take time and care to cater for maximum 150 participants per day. You can't please everyone, but we try to draft a timetable that allows learners to participate in as many as activities as possible.

HOW TO GET LEARNERS INVOLVED

• FOCUS ON THEIR INTERESTS

Find out what excites the learners. We started by creating activities that learners wanted and not what teachers wanted the learners to do. Besides the usual sports of netball, rugby, cricket, soccer, Grosvenor Primary's extra-mural programmes also include rieldans, ringball, chess, hip hop, gardening, Volksdance, choir, cross-country running, drama, Project F.U.N (an arts and crafts programme run by Cape Nature), music and Christian fellowship (the school is open to other religions also running fellowships). We're also embarking on Wordworks, a programme whereby teachers in the Foundation Phase are trained to teach parents how to assist their learners with reading and writing.'

• ORGANISE A FEEDING PROGRAMME

In our community, many of the children go hungry. Our ASP offers one apple and a sandwich for every child in a programme, which is a good way to motivate them to participate in after-school activities.

TWO LEARNER SUCCESS STORIES

• THE PROBLEM CHILD TURNED RINGBALL CHAMP

'There's one child, who was a difficult learner. He didn't want to attend school, he stole things, he swore. He was a menace. His parents sent him to Grosvenor Primary, and his siblings to another school. Through playing ringball, this boy achieved his Western Cape Province colours. It had a huge ripple effect on other learners who had a low-self-esteem and lack of confidence to start believing in themselves. He's still struggling with numeracy, but he's enjoying life and loving school. His family never used to show interest in him, and then one night his grandparents pitched up to our karaoke night with 20 people (and these are people who never want to participate in anything) and it's because of this positive thing in his life. I think this is beautiful.'

• REHABILITATING A BULLY

'There's another child who was a bully. His father is a gangster. I told him you're a leader, but you lead the wrong people. I told him, "Find something you love doing, find your happy corner, and lead there." The ASP changed him from leading rascals to leading the chess team at the school.'

There are other kids, also bullies, and we are going to give them a patch of ground in the school's vegetable garden that they can garden, and teach them about plumbing and irrigation and how to garden and so they can be proud of what they produce.'

**THE CHILDREN ARE HAPPIER,
MORE ENERGETIC, AND OUR
RESULTS ARE BETTER.**

