



The Villager

August • 2026

**THE IRENE FARM VILLAGES
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION AGM**
14 September 2026

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Peter Varrie | 082 457 7416

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Building Our Community

August is often a month of anticipation as we look forward to spring. It also reminds us that a thriving community is built through the small contributions each of us makes every day.

In this edition, you'll find estate news, community initiatives and important reminders, all aimed at keeping Irene Farm Villages a place we are proud to call home.

Thank you for being part of our community.



Anna-Mart Steyn

Save the Date: Annual General

Meeting 2026

The Irene Farm Villages Homeowners Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Monday, 14 September 2026. If there are insufficient members present to form a quorum, the meeting will be reconvened on Monday, 21 September 2026.

Time: 18:00

Venue: Pierre van Ryneveld Community Church, Baltimore Street

The AGM is an important opportunity for homeowners to receive updates on the affairs of the estate, review the past year's activities and financial performance and participate



Garden of the Month: Stand 1170, Elderberry Drive – July

This month's Garden of the Month proves that less can definitely be more. Although it features only a few plant species, its simplicity creates a beautiful and distinctive landscape.

Bright spring colour is added by Primula malacoides, whose name comes from the Latin primus, meaning "first", as it is one of the earliest flowers to bloom in late winter. Primulas thrive in cool conditions, rich, well-drained soil, partial shade and regular watering.

Two magnificent pompon trees (Dais cotinifolia) create striking focal points. Regarded as one of South Africa's most beautiful indigenous garden trees, the pompon tree steals the show when it bursts into bloom, making it the highlight of this charming garden.

Garden of the Month: Stand 1151, Honeybush – July

Our Garden of the Month for July is a beautifully maintained shade garden, where a charming statue water feature forms the central focal point.

In spring, the vibrant blooms of Clivia miniata add a wonderful splash of colour beneath the trees. These beautiful indigenous plants thrive in shady spots, prefer acidic soil and do not like being disturbed, so they should be divided only when necessary.

The garden's cool shade is provided by majestic wild olive trees (Olea europaea subsp. africana). Besides creating the



Stand 1151, Honeybush



Stand 1170, Elderberry Drive



perfect environment for the clivias, these indigenous trees are an important food source for livestock and game, while their dense foliage offers birds a safe place to rest, nest and raise their young. Together, these elements create a peaceful, colourful garden that is a delight to visit throughout the year.

Responsible Pet Ownership: Let's Keep Our Estate Clean and Enjoyable for Everyone



Our pets are an important part of our families, and one of the many joys of living in Irene Farm Villages is seeing residents enjoying walks with their four-legged companions. Responsible pet ownership, however, goes hand in hand with maintaining the beauty, cleanliness and safety of our estate.

The HOA has recently received complaints about dog waste being left on pavements, streets and in parks and open spaces. Besides being unpleasant for other residents, it creates an unnecessary health hazard and detracts from the appearance of our shared environment.

We want to remind all pet owners of the estate rules:

- Rule 4.2.5 requires owners to remove immediately any excrement left by their pets on streets, pavements, parks and open spaces.
- Rule 4.2.4 states that dogs may not leave members' stands unless they are on a lead. They must remain under control and may not interfere with birds, wildlife, other pets or pedestrians.

Taking a bag along when walking your dog is a small gesture



that makes a significant difference. By picking up after your pet and disposing of the waste responsibly, you help keep our estate clean and pleasant for everyone.

Responsible pet ownership means complying with the rules, showing consideration for your neighbours, protecting our environment and setting a positive example.

We thank the many residents who already do the right thing every day. Your consideration helps make Irene Farm Villages a wonderful place to live. We ask everyone to continue working together to keep our estate clean, safe and enjoyable for all, both two-legged and four-legged residents.

"Your dog won't mind if you carry the bag ... but your neighbours certainly will if you don't!"

Who Owns the Pavement?

Residents may sometimes be concerned when contractors excavate pavements or verges in front of properties for fibre installations or other utility services. It is important to understand that these areas typically form part of the municipal road reserve and are not owned by the adjacent homeowner, even though residents are encouraged to keep them neat and well maintained.

Before excavation or installation work may take place within the road reserve, contractors must obtain the necessary wayleave approval from the City of Tshwane. This regulates work within public road reserves and helps ensure compliance with municipal standards and safety requirements.

Where a valid wayleave has been issued, neither the homeowner nor the HOA may unreasonably prevent the approved work from proceeding. Residents and the HOA are, however, entitled to request proof of authorisation and to expect contractors to follow estate access procedures, work safely and properly reinstate disturbed areas once the work is complete.



If you are unsure whether contractors are authorised to work in your area, please get in touch with the HOA office. We will gladly assist in verifying the relevant approvals.

Do We Have Your Approved Building Plans?

Every homeowner is responsible for ensuring that the estate office has a copy of the City of Tshwane-approved building plans for their property on record.

The Estate Rules and Regulations state:

Rule 4.6.3.11

"All building plans have to be approved by the HOA Board and the Local Authority as required from time to time, before the commencement of any construction or alterations. A copy of the plans, which the Local Authority has approved, must be handed in at the Estate Office before the commencement of any construction or building works."

Over the years, it has come to our attention that the Estate Office does not have City of Tshwane-approved plans on file for every property. These records are important for several reasons:

- Ensuring that all building work complies with estate rules and municipal requirements.
- Assisting with future alterations or additions to your property.
- Providing accurate records for the estate.
- Avoiding unnecessary delays when building-related enquiries arise.

We ask all homeowners to verify that the estate office has a copy of their approved City of Tshwane building plans. If you are unsure whether your plans are on file, please get in touch with the estate office. If we do not have a copy, please provide the approved plans at your earliest convenience.

Keeping our records complete benefits homeowners and the estate as a whole. Thank you for helping us maintain accurate and up-to-date property records.

Electric Fence Upgrade Project Progressing Well

The replacement of Irene Farm Villages' electric fence is progressing smoothly, with our appointed service provider, RT Installation, currently working along the estate perimeter. The project remains on schedule and is expected to be completed within the planned timeframe.

Residents can be assured that the safety and security of our community remain the highest priority throughout the upgrade. RT Installation is completing the replacement in carefully managed phases, ensuring that the electric fence is fully operational at the end of each working day. At no stage will the estate's perimeter security be compromised.

We thank residents for their patience and understanding while the work is underway and will continue to provide updates as the project progresses.

Exciting Events

Ahead at Irene Farm Villages!

As winter makes way for the warmer days of spring, our community calendar is filling up with opportunities for residents to connect, explore and celebrate together. Diarise the following dates and join us for an exciting few weeks.



Plant and Tree Walk

Date: Saturday, 15 August 2026

Nature lovers are invited to join us for a guided Plant and Tree Walk through the estate. An experienced guide will lead residents on an informative stroll, sharing insights into the trees, plants and natural beauty that make Irene Farm Villages such a special place to call home. Whether you are an avid gardener or enjoy spending time outdoors, this is an event not to be missed.

Bookings are compulsory. Keep an eye on the HOA's communication channels for booking details and further information.

Spring Day

Date: Tuesday, 1 September 2026

Spring Day is a welcome reminder that new beginnings, growth and brighter days are ahead. From all of us at the HOA, we wish every resident a happy, healthy and colourful Spring Day.

Doggy Walk and Pop-Up Movie Night

Date: Friday, 18 September 2026

Peter Varrie from Pam Golding Properties will once again host the popular Doggy Walk, allowing residents and their four-legged family members to enjoy a relaxed walk through the estate. Later that evening, residents can gather under the stars for a fun-filled Pop-Up Movie Night with family and friends.

BIG Family Fun Day

Date: Saturday, 19 September 2026

The highlight of the month will be our BIG Family Fun Day. Residents can look forward to entertainment, activities, food and plenty of opportunities to spend quality time with neighbours, family and friends. More information about the programme will be shared soon.



Community Car Boot Sale Brings Residents Together

Our Community Car Boot Sale, held on Saturday, 25 July at Primrose Park, allowed residents to enjoy a relaxed morning together while browsing a variety of stalls, catching up with neighbours and supporting fellow residents.

Although the number of stalls was smaller than anticipated, those who participated enjoyed a pleasant community atmosphere. Visitors could browse clothing, household items, camping equipment, homemade treats and children's stalls, as well as support a

young resident's home-based business. A coffee station, food and cold drinks added to the experience, while the jumping castle kept younger residents entertained.

It was particularly encouraging to see our young entrepreneurs in action. One children's stall selling sweet treats was so popular that it sold out before the end of the event, a wonderful achievement and an excellent example of youthful initiative. A playlist of well-loved golden oldies created a lively atmosphere, with many residents reminiscing and singing along as

they browsed the stalls.

Feedback from residents and vendors was mixed. One vendor said it was wonderful to see the community coming together and suggested that the estate should host more community events in future, particularly sporting events. Other feedback expressed disappointment about the number of stalls and the level of resident attendance.

As this is only the second year that the HOA has hosted the event, it remains a learning process. Feedback from last year's vendors was carefully considered and implemented where possible. To improve future events further, the HOA has requested feedback from vendors who participated this year. A communication survey is also being planned to identify areas where communication and event planning can be improved.

Suggestions included starting the event a little later during winter, introducing a fun run and even hosting a Doggie & Cat Walk as part of next year's programme. These ideas will be considered as we continue to develop events that bring our community together.

The lucky draw brought smiles to our prize winners. Laurence Shee was the lucky winner, while Anastasia and Louka won the children's voucher.



Thank you to everyone who booked stalls, attended, supported our young entrepreneurs and helped behind the scenes. We look forward to building on this year's experience and making next year's Community Car Boot Sale even bigger and better.

Mandela Day 2026: Together We Made a Difference

Nelson Mandela once said, "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."

Inspired by these words, the HOA staff hosted a Mandela Day Donation Drive, inviting residents to support two deserving organisations in our

community: Dove's Nest – Place of Safety for Children and Irene Primary School.

The response from residents was heart-warming. Baby formula, cereals, nappies, toiletries, first-aid kits, sanitary products and many other essential items were donated to the HOA office over the course of the campaign. Every contribution reflected the caring spirit of Irene Farm Villages.



Dove's Nest – Place of Safety for Children

The first handover took place at Dove's Nest, where the donations were received with heartfelt gratitude. Although the organisation had also received support from other businesses, every contribution added to the resources available to care for the children.

"I love what I do. It's so fulfilling, especially for those who can't say thank you. Their love is enough." – Isilda Felix.

Her words are a reminder of the compassion, dedication and selfless service shown to vulnerable members of our community.

Irene Primary School

Our second handover took us to Irene Primary School, where the principal, deputy principal and staff warmly welcomed us. They expressed their appreciation for the generosity of our residents and shared that the donation handover and photographs from the visit would be featured in

the school's newsletter.

During our visit, we also learnt about the school's commitment to helping the wider community. The school leaders shared that they support disadvantaged groups, including Irene Homes. They are keen to remain in touch with Irene Farm Villages, and we hope this will lead to a strong and lasting relationship between



IRENE FARM VILLAGES HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Summary Operational Income Statement – YTD June 2026

June 2026 Year to Date YTD Variance

Actual Budget Actual Budget Value %

Operational Income						
Levy Income	1 571 997	1 571 997	6 220 294	6 220 294	0	0,0%
Other Income	89 775	40 500	246 380	162 000	84 380	52,1%
	1 661 772	1 612 497	6 466 674	6 382 294	84 380	1,3%
Operational Expenditure						
Professional /Administration	138 295	124 333	355 709	524 832	169 123	32,2%
Accounting and Auditing	52 685	57 892	213 784	219 068	5 284	2,4%
Insurance, Legal and Admin	85 610	66 441	141 925	305 764	163 839	53,6%
General Office	48 651	39 870	152 189	159 480	7 291	4,6%
Office Administration	48 651	39 870	152 189	159 480	7 291	4,6%
Operational Expenses	290 875	341 787	1 278 577	1 367 148	88 571	6,5%
Municipal Charges	49 077	76 869	285 412	307 476	22 064	7,2%
General Operations	19 973	47 253	103 020	189 012	85 992	45,5%
Staff Expenses	221 825	217 665	890 145	870 660	(19 485)	-2,2%
Security	622 247	656 096	2 540 214	2 624 384	84 170	3,2%
Security Operations	99 540	124 619	454 255	498 476	44 222	8,9%
Guarding Services	522 706	531 477	2 085 959	2 125 908	39 949	1,9%
Repairs & Maintenance	214 027	327 650	871 436	1 310 600	439 164	33,5%
Repairs & Maintenance	31 838	145 462	142 683	581 848	439 165	75,5%
Park Maintenance Contract	182 188	182 188	728 753	728 752	(1)	0,0%
Subsidence Management	0	0	0	14 260	14 260	100,0%
	1 314 094	1 489 736	5 198 125	6 000 704	802 579	13,4%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	347 678	122 761	1 268 549	381 590		
Non-Recurring Income	35 562	0	297 904	0	297 904	100,0%
Estate Penalties	6 125	0	13 700	0	13 700	100,0%
Speed Infringements (Net)	23 461	0	67 662	0	67 662	100,0%
Other Revenue	5 976	0	216 542	0	216 542	100,0%
Non-Recurring Expenses	53 191	64 800	1 162 855	239 800	(923 055)	-384,9%
Net Positive/ (Negative)	(17 629)	(64 800)	(864 950)	(239 800)	1 220 959	
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	330 050	57 961	403 599	141 790		

Summary Income Statement by Account Ability
Office Address: Sovereign Drive, Route 21 Corporate Park
Accounting Office Hours: 8:00 to 13:00 Monday to Friday

Office Tel: 082 780 0059
Accounts Email: accounts@aams.co.za
IFV Accounts: Winny Boshoff

our organisations.

"Our visit to Irene Primary School, whose remarkable journey began in May 1901, was truly inspiring. Walking through the school, I witnessed a community built on togetherness, dedication, a genuine passion for education and an unwavering commitment to its learners. It was clear that every learner, teacher and staff member contributes to its culture of excellence. I saw 125 years of commitment, tradition and outstanding achievement, a legacy that continues to shape and inspire future generations." – HOA team member.

Thank You

The HOA extends its heartfelt thanks to every resident who supported this year's Mandela Day Donation Drive. Your generosity has made a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families in our community.

Mandela believed that each of us has the power to change the world through simple acts of kindness. Thanks to the compassion of our residents, his legacy continues in Irene Farm Villages.

Together, we made a difference and honoured Madiba's legacy.

Safety First: Firearms and Ammunition Do Not Belong in Household Waste

Mpact Recycling, our recycling service provider, recently raised a serious safety concern after spent ammunition, live ammunition, shotgun shells, firearm casings and a damaged firearm were discovered during the manual sorting of recyclable materials collected from various residential estates.

While the issue is not specific to Irene Farm Villages, it is an important reminder that firearms, ammunition and firearm-related components should never be placed in household refuse or recycling bags.

These items pose a significant risk to waste-collection teams, recycling staff and others who handle and sort waste. Even damaged ammunition can present a safety hazard if it is not handled correctly.

According to Mpact, the recovered firearm and ammunition were handed to SAPS for investigation and ballistic testing where applicable.

Please remember

- Do not place firearms, ammunition, spent cartridges, firearm parts or related

items in household waste or recycling bags.

- Contact SAPS or a licensed firearms dealer for guidance on the safe and lawful disposal of unwanted firearms, ammunition or firearm-related items.
- If you discover an unfamiliar or potentially dangerous item, do not handle it. Notify SAPS or estate security for guidance.

By following the correct disposal procedures, residents can help prevent injuries and ensure that potentially hazardous items are handled responsibly.

Thank you for helping to maintain a safe and responsible community.

"Think before you bin it. If it's firearm-related, it doesn't belong in the bin."

Closing

As we prepare to welcome spring in the weeks ahead, let us continue working together to keep Irene Farm Villages the exceptional community we are proud to call home. May the final weeks of winter be filled with warmth, and may the new season bring fresh opportunities, beautiful gardens and many reasons to enjoy life in our estate.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police Emergency	10111
Lyttelton Police Station	012 644 8600
Pierre van Ryneveld Community Policing Forum	079 528 1630
Fire Emergency	10177
Medical Emergency	082 911

Main Gate Guardroom	012 662 3505
Security Duty Manager	082 937 8391
Controller	012 662 3505 Ext 3

Irene Farm Villages:

Estate Office	012 662 3505
Estate Manager	066 008 8523

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R2 295 000
Includes a 5 year/150,000 km Service Plan



2025 – 911 Carrera PDK
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R2 895 000
Includes a 5 year/150,000 km Service Plan



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R945 000
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Black Leather & Sport-Tex, R1 655 000
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2023 – Cayenne Tiptronic
43,000 km, White, Black Leather,
R1 395 000
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2021 – Cayenne GTS Tiptronic
45,000 km, Dolomite Silver Metallic,
Black & Mojave Beige Leather, R1 895 000
Includes a 5 year/150,000 km Service Plan



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R3 125 000
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THE DISTANCE BETWEEN POTENTIAL AND PERFORMANCE



A late understanding of ADHD can change the way a woman reads her entire life. For The Bridge School's occupational therapist Maggie Wong, it began with a pressure cooker, a kitchen covered in pasta sauce and the sudden realisation that perhaps other people's brains did not work quite like hers.

Maggie Wong calls it the pressure cooker incident.

After a game of squash, she invited her fiancé, cousin and his girlfriend home for dinner. The pasta was ready and only needed reheating, but the pressure cooker was set for 25 minutes, and everyone was hungry.

Maggie released the visible steam. When the lid still would not open, she persuaded her fiancé to help her force it.

Seconds later, pasta sauce covered

the walls, the sink, her fiancé and Maggie's arm. Some reached the plug socket, and the electricity went out.

Standing in the kitchen, she remembers thinking: "Surely this isn't how most people's brains work."

Maggie is an occupational therapist at The Bridge School in Lonehill. Through her work with neurodivergent children and through hearing other people describe their experiences of ADHD, she began to understand her own life differently.

As a child, she did not fit the familiar picture of ADHD. She was not failing, disruptive or bouncing around the classroom. Her marks sat consistently in the 70s.

What followed her instead were the comments many capable girls hear: she had potential, made careless mistakes

and could do better.

Her parents responded by finding more support. Maggie attended extra English, maths and Afrikaans lessons, Kumon and Chinese school.

None of it addressed the difficulty underneath.

"I always felt I had the potential, but I could never show for it," she says. "I spent my childhood feeling like there was a gap between what I knew I could do and what I actually produced."

In an earlier Dainfern Precinct article, Dr Moray Shirley explored why ADHD in women is so often missed until adulthood or midlife. Public understanding has long been shaped by the more visible presentation commonly associated with boys. A girl who is not disruptive, achieves reasonable marks and works hard to compensate can pass through

school without anyone questioning what it takes for her to keep up.

For Dr Shirley, outward achievement is a poor measure of whether a child is struggling.

A bright girl may rely on intelligence, anxiety, adult prompting or last-minute pressure to produce acceptable results. The mark shows what she handed in. It does not show how much support held the process together, or what it cost her emotionally.

For Maggie, attention was never simply absent.

"I can't always control what I pay attention to," she says.

She could delay studying until the final possible moment, but wake at 3 am as a Grade 4 child and teach herself to make sushi because her father had mentioned that he felt like eating it.

As an adult, she could lose belongings throughout the day, then develop a business idea, build an investor pitch and present it within a week.

This inconsistency is one of the aspects of ADHD that other people often find hardest to understand. If someone can focus intensely on one task, why can she not begin another that she knows is important?

Dr Shirley explains that ADHD affects the regulation and direction of attention. Interest, novelty, urgency and immediate consequence may engage the brain more effectively than importance alone.

That is why a looming deadline can produce hours of intense work after weeks of being unable to start.

"Give me six months to do something, and I might struggle to get started," Maggie says. "Give me six hours, and suddenly I become remarkably efficient."

From the outside, this may look like working well under pressure. From the inside, it can mean relying on panic to create focus, often at the cost of sleep, confidence and calm.

Over time, inconsistency begins to feel like a character flaw. Women describe themselves as lazy, careless or undisciplined because they cannot

understand why they can perform brilliantly one day and struggle to begin the next.

Dr Shirley sees this self-judgement as one of the less visible consequences of late recognition. By adulthood, many women are carrying more than the practical effects of ADHD. They are also carrying years of explanations about who they are.

A later understanding can bring relief, but it can also reopen old questions.

"Perhaps I would have understood myself better," Maggie says. "Perhaps I would have been kinder to myself. Perhaps I would have spent less time wondering why I couldn't get my potential to match my performance."

Her story also asks parents and teachers to look beyond the final result.

A child may understand the work but struggle to begin it. She may explain a complex idea beautifully, then lose marks because she missed one instruction. She may complete an excellent project in a frantic final night and appear to have proved that she could have done it sooner.

The more useful question is often not simply whether the child can do the work, but how she is managing to do it.

Dr Shirley believes the wider picture matters: sleep, fatigue, anxiety, emotional regulation, confidence, family conflict and the amount of prompting required. A child can be succeeding on paper while the system supporting that success is becoming unsustainable.

Maggie has also begun to see the qualities connected to the way she thinks.

As an occupational therapist, she understands creativity as practical problem-solving: noticing connections, finding another route and asking what else might work. Her curiosity can carry her deeply into a subject, while her own experience of being misunderstood has shaped the way she sees struggling children.

"You notice the child who is trying but not succeeding," she says. "You notice the person who feels overlooked."

This does not make ADHD a simple strengths story. The same quick,

possibility-driven thinking that supports creativity can also lead to distraction, unfinished work or an unsafe decision involving a pressure cooker.

Dr Shirley cautions against reducing ADHD to either a deficit or a gift. The difficulties are real, but so are the abilities. Understanding needs to make room for both. For parents and teachers, that may mean recognising that more tutoring or more pressure is not always the answer. A child who knows the content may need help starting, sequencing, estimating time or managing several instructions at once.

Recognition does not remove responsibility or expectations. It makes support more accurate.

Maggie no longer sees ADHD as something that needs to be fixed. She sees it as something that needs to be understood.

"If there is one thing I wish someone had told younger me," she says, "it is that there was never anything wrong with me. My brain was working differently."

That understanding now follows her into her work with children.

"The goal isn't to create a different child. The goal is to help that child become the best version of who they already are."



This article draws on Maggie Wong's personal account. Her full story is available [here](#)

Personal stories like Maggie's help us understand how ADHD presents beyond the textbook. No two people experience it in exactly the same way, but recognising these patterns can help more women and girls seek appropriate assessment and support." — Dr Moray Shirley

THE REAL REASON YOU'RE TIRED ALL THE TIME

(And it's probably not your job...)

"I'm just exhausted."

If that sounds familiar, you're not alone. Between early mornings, school runs, long workdays and trying to squeeze in some kind of social life – it's easy to blame your schedule.

Deadlines. Emails. Meetings. Life.

But here's the surprising part:

Your desk job might not be the real problem. Your body runs on movement (Not coffee).

Most people think energy comes from food... or caffeine. But your body creates energy through movement.

Your muscles are like little power stations. When you move, they release special messengers called myokines that talk to your brain, boost your mood, reduce inflammation and help your body function better.

When you sit all day? That whole system goes quiet. Less movement = less energy.

Why everyday life feels so hard

Ever feel out of breath walking up the

stairs? Or oddly tired after carrying groceries?

That's not "just being busy." That's fitness.

Think of your body like a car:

- Fit body = cruising in 5th gear

- Unfit body = stuck in 1st gear

If your fitness is low, even simple tasks use a huge amount of your energy.

So, by the time you get home... you're finished.

Stress isn't the problem – Being stuck in it is

Stress isn't bad. You need it.

Cortisol (your stress hormone) helps you wake up, focus and perform.

The issue?

You never switch it off.

Long days + little movement + poor sleep = your body stays in "go mode" all the time.

That leads to:

- Poor sleep
- Low energy
- Feeling wired but tired

The fix isn't less stress – it's better

recovery, and movement plays a big role in that.

Sleep: Your secret energy weapon

Sleep isn't just rest – it's when your body:

- Repairs muscles
- Resets hormones
- Clears brain fog
- Recharges your system

Even one bad night can leave you feeling flat, unmotivated and drained.

Here's the good news:

Regular exercise improves sleep quality and how energised you feel during the day.

The biggest myth (That's keeping you stuck)

"I'll start exercising when I have more energy." It sounds logical... but it's backwards.

Movement is what creates energy. Not the other way around.

You don't need:

- Two-hour gym sessions
- Marathon training
- A complete life overhaul

You just need to start small:

- A 20-minute walk around the estate
- A short strength session
- Standing up and moving every hour

Final thought

If you're reaching for your third coffee by mid-morning... It might not be caffeine your body needs.

It might be movement, because your body wasn't designed to sit all day.

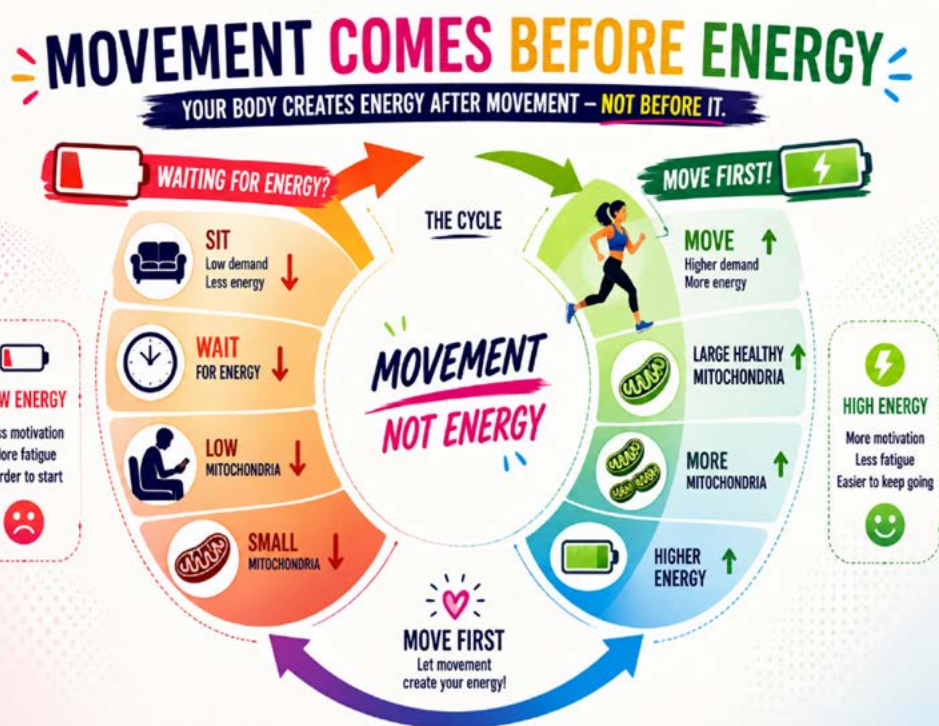
It was designed to move and when it does energy follows.

Leigh-Mari Niemand

078 781 1598 /

leighmariniemand@gmail.com

Biokineticist & Nutritionist



FINISHING TOUCHES FOR YOUR HOME

Elevating homes across Johannesburg and Pretoria's finest estates

A well-finished home is never an accident. It's the sum of small decisions: how a curtain falls, the angle of a shutter louvre, the quiet click of a blind drawn just so. Homeowners across Johannesburg and Pretoria's leading estates have stopped treating these details as afterthoughts because this is where the real value sits. Finishing Touches has spent years getting this kind of detail right, and its latest offering puts shutters and blinds at the centre of that conversation.



Designer Shutters: Built to last, made to add value

Few additions do more for a home's character, or its resale value, than a well-specified set of shutters. Finishing Touches offers three materials, each suited to a different kind of home. Aluminium security shutters bring real peace of mind: a vertical locking mechanism and a build that holds up against moisture, heat and steam. They are available in both security and non-security options. For a warmer, more traditional finish, the wooden range is made from Phoenix Wood, a solid, lightweight timber that naturally resists wood borer and copes well with changing temperatures. Where a lower-maintenance, weather-resistant option is called for, the vinyl range delivers the same clean lines without the upkeep, indoors or out.

Each material comes in hinged, bi-fold or bi-pass configurations, allowing the shutter to be matched precisely to the window, door or opening it's fitted to. That matters as much in a Pretoria East family home as it does in a Sandton apartment with limited wall space.

Blinds, considered

Finishing Touches' blind range has always been extensive. What sets it apart is the level of finish available at

every price point. The aluminium and PVC Venetian ranges remain timeless, practical choices, while the blackout and sheer roller collections give homeowners greater control over light and privacy without compromising on style. For those who want precision without the wait, the trim-to-fit service tailors a blind to the exact window measurements. For a fully bespoke result, the made-to-measure service includes professional installation from start to finish. Two additions to the range are worth watching. A new wave curtain system is in development, bringing the soft, continuous folds of high-end interiors to a wider range of homes. It's a more contemporary alternative to traditional pleats for homeowners who want their curtains to feel as finish.

What's coming next

Two additions to the range are worth watching. A new wave curtain system is in development, bringing the soft, continuous folds of high-end interiors to a wider range of homes. It's a more contemporary alternative to traditional pleats for homeowners who want their curtains to feel as tailored as their blinds.

Alongside it, a nailless, tension-mounted roller blind launches in August, delivering full blackout performance

without a single screw, nail or drill mark. That's a welcome option for heritage-sensitive homes, rental properties, and anyone who'd rather their window frames stayed exactly as they found them.

The complete room

Shutters and blinds rarely work alone. Finishing Touches' broader range, from curated rugs to decorative wall panels and wallpaper, is there to complete a room once the windows are sorted.

An investment, not an impulse

This isn't about a once-off saving. It's about choosing finishes that hold their value, suit the home they're in, and come with a team that knows the difference between a quick fix and a considered one. For homeowners ready to think beyond the obvious, Finishing Touches' design team can guide the process from first measurement to the final install.

Finishing Touches makes your home feel like a luxury hotel suite. THE GOOD NEWS: YOU NEVER HAVE TO CHECK OUT!



Visit www.finishingtouchessa.co.za to explore the full range or arrange a consultation.

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Maliro is looking for garden work on a Friday. He has been working for us for numerous years and is extremely proud of his work, precise, neat, hardworking and can take his own initiative. He can be contacted on 071 752 7860.

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PLAY, LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER

THE WEIGHT WE GIVE TO MATRIC

BY NICOLA KILLOPS



Photo by Devin Avery on Unsplash

When a child reaches Matric, the whole household can begin living by one school calendar. Holidays are shortened or cancelled, weekends become study time and family plans are arranged year to mean more than that. A school-leaving qualification becomes around prelims, applications and final examinations. Even ordinary conversations seem to make their way back to marks, deadlines or what comes next.

Parents are trying to help, while teenagers are trying to hold it together, and by the middle of the year neither side is particularly convincing.

Matric deserves to be taken seriously. It requires commitment, consistent work and a willingness to keep going through a long and demanding year.

Results can influence university admission and some of the options available immediately after school, but the problem begins when we ask the year to mean more than that.

A school leaving qualification becomes a measure of intelligence, potential and future success. A percentage starts to feel like a judgement on seventeen or eighteen years of growing, learning and becoming. Young people begin to believe that one examination period will confirm whether they are capable, whether their parents are proud of them and whether their lives are moving in the right direction. That is an enormous load to place on somebody who is still working out who they are.

The pressure seldom arrives through one dramatic conversation, but tends to gather through ordinary questions. What did you get? Where are you applying? How much have you studied? Did you hear what someone else achieved? These questions may come from interest, concern or genuine

excitement, but teenagers hear more than the words themselves. They notice the anxiety underneath them and recognise when their parents are comparing, worrying or silently calculating what each mark may mean. As the year progresses, many Matrics are carrying their own ambitions alongside the hopes and fears of everyone around them.

Pertunia Nkomo-Mofokeng, Deputy Dean of Teaching and Learning at Rosebank International, argues that academic commitment and wellbeing cannot be separated. Chronic stress affects concentration, memory and problem solving, while exhausted learners often spend longer at their desks and retain less of what they study. This is where families can lose perspective. Sleep is cut to make room for revision, movement disappears from the day, meals become hurried and time away from schoolwork begins to look irresponsible. Every hour must apparently prove that the learner is trying hard enough, even though a



tired and frightened brain does not learn better simply because it has been denied a break.

Sleep, food, movement, laughter and conversations unrelated to school are part of the conditions that make sustained learning possible. They also remind a teenager that they still belong to a family and a life beyond the examination timetable.

Parents often ask what else they should be doing during the final stretch, but in many homes the most useful change is to reduce the constant monitoring. A teenager should not have to provide a progress report every time they enter the kitchen, and encouragement does not always need to sound like another reminder to study. Silence should not automatically be treated as evidence that everything is under control, either.

Ask how they are coping and give them enough time to answer properly. Notice changes in sleep, appetite, mood or behaviour, listen before trying to solve the problem and keep some ordinary family routines intact. They should be able to take a break without having to defend it. When worry, panic, withdrawal or low mood persists, early support from a teacher, school counsellor or mental-health professional is far more useful than waiting for the pressure to become unmanageable.

Young people also need honesty. Telling them that marks do not matter at all will not feel credible when applications

and entry requirements are very real. The healthier message is that their results have consequences, but those consequences are not the same as a final judgement on their ability or future.

A disappointing result may change the next step. It may require a new application, another route into study, a different qualification or more time to work out what comes next. Those changes can be difficult and deeply disappointing, but they are still changes of route rather than proof that a life has failed.

Most adults cannot remember the exact marks they received for every Matric subject, but many can remember exactly how the year felt. They remember whether home was tense,

whether every conversation became an interrogation, whether they felt trusted and whether they believed the adults around them would still see the same person when the results arrived.

Our responsibility is to help young people prepare properly without making them carry our fear of the future. They need to know that effort is expected that their wellbeing will be taken as seriously as their marks and that support will remain available when the year does not go according to plan.

Matric can influence what happens next, but it cannot measure the whole person taking it.



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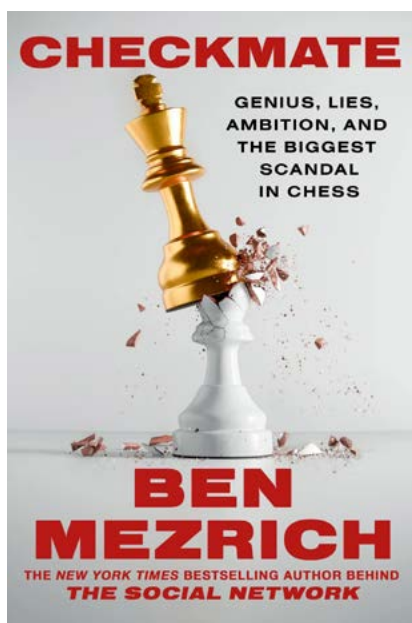
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Checkmate

BY BEN MEZRICH

In September 2022, the chess world watched in disbelief as Magnus Carlsen, widely considered the greatest player in history, faced an unthinkable defeat against the nineteen-year-old American upstart, Hans Niemann. When Carlsen withdrew from the prestigious Sinquefeld Cup and subtly accused Niemann of cheating, shockwaves hit the chess community, igniting the biggest scandal in the sport's history.

Checkmate dives deep into this modern-day drama, tracing the parallel rises of Carlsen, the stoic virtuoso, and Niemann, the fiery disruptor. Niemann denied the accusations, even as past online cheating incidents surfaced, while powerful entities like Chess.com, a billion-dollar online arena, became entangled in the escalating controversy. As the scandal went viral, it became clear that more was at stake than a single game.

Checkmate is a story of ambition, genius and greed set against the backdrop of a once-niche game exploding into a global, multi-billion-dollar phenomenon. It's a compelling exploration of a world where tradition collides with innovation, and a new generation, forged in the digital age, threatens to upend everything.



Summer at the French Bakery

BY JO THOMAS

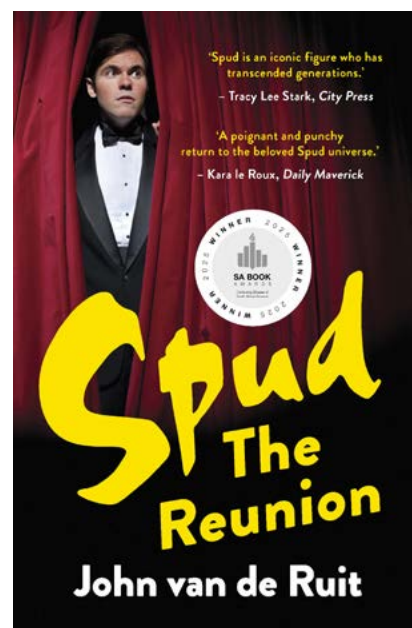
A new adventure is on the menu...

Juliet has learnt that life is too short not to chase your dreams. But when she buys an old watermill in France, her tranquil new start is quickly kneaded into something far more ambitious when the local mayor offers her a deal she can't refuse: reopen the village's derelict boulangerie.

With a formidable rival – the owner of the local bread vending machine – determined to crush her, Juliet faces disgruntled villagers, her own lack of baking skills, and hidden secrets within the mill itself.

But with help from her outspoken neighbour and the charming Tabac owner, Juliet battles to bring back the aroma of freshly baked bread – and with it, the heart of the community.

Can she prove that even the biggest dreams start with just a little pinch of courage?



Spud: Two for the Road

BY JOHN VAN DE RUIT

It is 2004 and it's make or break for Spud Milton and his acting career. Having survived his ten-year school reunion and avoided becoming a shareholder in a dubious wellness start-up company, he believes he is free and clear of the Crazy Eight.

Spud and his creative sidekick Fox have their sights set on the National Arts Festival to showcase their satirical sketch show, Viper. Despite needing to dodge a few potholes – including the up-ending of the Milton family dynamics, the unanticipated revival of a romance, and an encounter with an officious car guard – Spud is all set to take his chances on the road less travelled.

He has not factored in Rambo's manipulative powers. The casual idea floated at the reunion weekend about a year-end backpacking trip somewhere in Southeast Asia has been elevated to an odyssey. What's more, Spud has been designated regional manager. If Rambo has a secret agenda, he's not about to share it with the Crazy Eight. In what Spud has dubbed the Year of the Icarus, the possibility of someone getting their wings scorched is not to be dismissed, but the lure of an all-expenses-paid exotic holiday is hard to resist...

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WHY ARE OUR CHILDREN SO ANXIOUS?

BY LAUREN FISCHER, HARMONY AT HOME

Lately, I seem to be having versions of the same conversation with parents over and over again.

Often at the end of a long day.

A parent will eventually sigh and say something like:

"I don't know what's going on lately. My child just seems anxious all the time."

And honestly, many children do.

Not necessarily in the dramatic ways people expect, either.

Sometimes it is a child crying over homework after holding it together all day at school. A teenager who suddenly cannot face going to a social event they were excited about earlier in the week. A child who cannot sleep because they are worrying about a class test or a friendship issue that feels enormous to them, even if it seems small to the adults around them.

Sometimes it is the child who looks completely fine all day and then falls apart emotionally at bedtime.

I remember sitting with a Grade 3 child not long ago who asked me very seriously:

"If I keep getting answers wrong in class tests... does that mean I'm stupid?"

The child was eight.

And what stayed with me afterwards was not only the question itself, but how young the child still was to already be carrying that kind of fear about themselves.

More and more children seem frightened of getting things wrong.

Not being chosen.

Not fitting in.

Falling behind.

Disappointing people.

And many of them carry those fears very deeply.

That is part of what makes anxiety in children difficult sometimes. It does not always look obvious. Some anxious children become perfectionists. Some become angry or emotionally reactive. Some constantly complain of headaches or stomachaches. Some seem exhausted by the end of the school day. Others become unusually quiet.

Children are also growing up in a world that moves incredibly quickly.

Many families are trying to keep up with long school days, traffic, extracurriculars, homework, screens, notifications, work pressure and schedules that rarely leave much space for anybody to properly switch off. Children absorb that pace too.

They absorb us too.

They notice stress inside a home even when nobody is openly talking about it. They notice rushing. They notice tension. They notice when everybody is emotionally stretched thin.

That does not mean parents are doing something wrong. Most families are simply trying to get through modern life while doing the best they can.

But anxious children usually do not need perfect parents.

They need emotionally safe ones.

Children calm down much faster when they feel understood.

Sometimes changing: "Stop overreacting" to: "That feels really big for you right now" changes the entire emotional direction of a moment.

And often, the things that help are not particularly complicated.

Predictable routines. Slower evenings. Downtime after school. Reading together at night. Talking in the car. Sitting on the edge of the bed for a few extra minutes instead of rushing straight into the next task.

Children do not always need solutions immediately.

Sometimes they just need somewhere safe to land.

One of the hardest parts of parenting is resisting the instinct to rescue children from every uncomfortable feeling. We hate watching our children struggle.

But resilience grows quietly when children realise they can feel anxious and still move through something difficult with support nearby.

Of course, there are times when anxiety becomes bigger than ordinary worry. Persistent school refusal, panic attacks, ongoing sleep

difficulties, withdrawal from friends or anxiety that starts interfering with daily life should never be ignored.

And most parents usually sense when something has shifted beyond normal stress.

There is absolutely no shame in asking for support early.

But I also think many children are desperately needing something else from us at the moment.

A little more breathing room.

A little less pressure.

A little more softness around the edges of life.

Because long after children forget the lifts to school and the lunches packed in a hurry, they will remember something much less visible.

How home felt.

Whether it felt calm.

Whether it felt safe.

Whether they felt alone with hard feelings or supported through them.

ABOUT LAUREN FISCHER AND HARMONY AT HOME

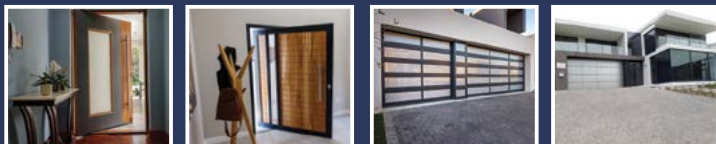
Lauren Fischer is the founder of Harmony at Home, a family-centred counselling and support practice focused on emotional wellbeing, parenting support and helping families navigate the realities of modern life with greater connection and understanding. Working closely with children, teenagers and parents, Lauren supports families through challenges including anxiety, emotional regulation, behavioural difficulties, family transitions and the increasing pressures many children are carrying today.

Harmony at Home takes a warm, practical and deeply human approach to emotional wellbeing, creating supportive spaces where children and parents feel seen, understood and emotionally safe.

For more information, visit <https://harmonyathome.co.za>



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When studying for exams, you need hearty, brain-boosting meals that require minimal prep and cleanup. Use these easy recipes to keep your student fuelled, warm, and focused.



Peanut Butter and Banana Overnight Oats (No-Cook Brain Fuel)

A perfect make-ahead breakfast. Grab it straight from the fridge on the morning of an exam for sustained morning energy.

Ingredients:

- cup rolled oats
- cup milk (dairy or plant-based)
- tbsp peanut butter
- banana, sliced
- tbsp honey or maple syrup

Instructions:

1. In a jar or bowl, mix the oats, milk, peanut butter, and honey.
2. Top with the sliced bananas.
3. Cover and refrigerate overnight (or for at least 4 hours).
4. Eat cold or microwave for 45 seconds if you prefer a warm winter breakfast!

Variation: add cinnamon, chia seeds or vanilla!



Hearty Split Pea and Ham Soup

Perfect for chilly days, this comforting soup is easy to make and packed with flavour.

Ingredients

- 500g dried split peas
- 1 ham hock or meaty ham bone
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 litres water
- Fresh parsley to serve
- Crusty bread for serving

Method

1. Place the split peas and ham hock into a slow cooker. Add the onion, carrot, celery, garlic, bay leaves, seasoning and water.
2. Cook on LOW for 8–10 hours or HIGH for 6 hours until the peas are soft and the meat is tender.
3. Remove the ham bone, shred the meat and discard the bone and excess fat.
4. Blend the soup slightly with a stick blender if you prefer a thicker texture.
5. Stir the shredded ham back into the soup and adjust seasoning if needed.
6. Serve hot with parsley and fresh crusty bread.

Handy Tips

- No slow cooker? Simmer on the stove for about 2½ hours.
- The soup freezes very well!
- If your ham bone has little meat, add extra chopped ham for more flavour.

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