

## **Principal's Message : Assembly : Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016**

I am sure you are all enjoying the spectacle of the Summer Olympic Games being held in Rio, Brazil. The Olympic Games originate from the ancient Olympic Games which were held in Olympia Greece from the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The first Olympic Games held under the auspices of the IOC was hosted in Athens in 1896. The current Olympics in Rio involve 42 sport disciplines with competitors from 208 countries involving 11 548 athletes.

There are some very important symbols involved in the Olympic Games, the Olympic rings are symbolic of the 5 continents (Africa, America, Asia, Oceania and Europe).

The Olympic motto is Citius, Altius, Fortius a Latin expression meaning Faster, Higher and Stronger. We continue to marvel every year at the seemingly impossible records that are broken.

The Olympic creed reads as follows:

*The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.*

I am sure we have all been inspired by the amazing performance of South Africa's Wayde van Niekerk in the 400m. This was probably one of the greatest performances in the Olympics this year. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIRrMaOEOB4>.

South Africa have thus far won 9 medals in the Olympics; Wayde van Niekerk's gold medal in the 400m, Chad le Clos silver in 100m Butterfly and 200m freestyle, Cameron van der Burgh silver in the 100m Breaststroke, Shaun Keeling and Lawrence Brittain silver in the Men's Pair Rowing, Luvo Manyonga silver in the long jump, Sunette Viljoen silver in the javelin, Henri Schoeman bronze in the Triathlon and the SA 7s Rugby team won a bronze medal.

While we have all celebrated and been inspired by the performance of Wayde van Niekerk, there are two other stories involving our athletes which I want to focus on.

Just two years ago Luvo Manyonga was a TIC addict and not sure whether he would even live. In an interview he said that he was preparing for a "date with the devil"! With SASCO's intervention he was relocated to the High Performance Centre in Pretoria where

his accommodation and training needs were catered for. He started the journey to what must be one of the greatest comebacks in sport to win the Silver medal in the long jump at Rio.

Chad Le Clos showed amazing tactical nerve to achieve a silver medal in the 200m freestyle – a race in which he was not expected to be a medal contender; in fact he was racing in the outside lane. Then everything came crashing down when he bombed out of the 200m Butterfly final, a race in which he was the defending champion from the London Olympics and joint favourite with Michael Phelps. Chad showed amazing character and determination to come back and achieve Silver in the 100m Butterfly in an incredible dead heat with Michael Phelps and László Cseh. (That in itself was a remarkable occurrence).

What caught my interest though was the reaction of Chad's father, Bert Le Clos, after the disappointment in the 200m butterfly. As we know Bert Le Clos is a larger than life character and he had this to say, "The Le Clos's only cry when we win. We don't cry when we lose and that's the bottom line. There are no excuses." Bert told Sport24 after the race at the Olympic Aquatics Stadium. What a wonderful attitude and certainly a good message for all of us.

So, as we look forward to the end of the Olympics, we hold thumbs for our last medal hope, Caster Semenya in the 800 meters tonight.