



BE THE CHANGE

*ISSUE 001 / APRIL 2014

DONOR DIGEST

A quarterly newsletter of the Rhodes University Development Division celebrating our corporate donors who are integral to the complete Rhodes experience.



PG 2: EDUCATING FOR CHANGE



PG 2: MAKING MATHEMATICS THE SOLUTION



PG 3: OPERATING IN DIFFERENT SPACES



PG 4: TWIZZA PLAYS BALL!



XOLELWA PHENDLANI (IN FRONT) WITH NOMSA PHENDLANA AND MPISEKHAYA YONA, HER GUARDIAN; YONELA BUKULA (IN FRONT) WITH LUNGELWA AND THAMSANGA BUKULA, HER GRANDPARENTS; JASLIN JOE (SITTING ON HIS HAUNCHES) AND HIS FAMILY. ATHI XUNDU (IN FRONT) WITH KHAYALETU AND NTOMBOMZI SODLADLA, HER FATHER AND STEP MOM.

TRANSNET FOUNDATION AND KINGSWOOD COLLEGE HELP EDUCATE VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Taking the step from Junior to High School is not easy and involves a big adjustment for all pupils. If you add to this moving from a “disadvantaged school” to a highly resourced independent school, the need to perform to the requirements of a scholarship, and the massive social adjustments that come with moving away from a familiar yet under resourced environment and into an extremely foreign and yet strangely supportive environment and you will understand how special these children are.

A partnership between Transnet Foundation, Kingswood College and Rhodes University will support four Grade 8 pupils, who started at Kingswood College in January, through a nine-year scholarship programme that will ultimately see them graduate from university with a degree.

This programme is part of a national Transnet Foundation initiative that is giving orphaned and vulnerable children an extraordinary opportunity in life by placing selected candidates in independent schools around South Africa on a supported scholarship programme. They currently have 26 other children placed at independent schools around the country. The children also meet nationally in Johannesburg so there is a level of support through a lifeskills programme and a network built up between them on that level too.

Xolelwa Phendlani says she is working towards earning the certificates in academics that she has earned at Archie Mbolekwa Primary School. “Everything is different, everything is in order (not that I am saying my old school

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Donor Digest*, a quarterly newsletter in which we will bring you stories about how integral our corporate donors are to research, teaching and learning, and community engagement. In this issue our focus lies on education and what donors are doing to help transform the educational landscape in the Eastern Cape and South Africa.



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THERESA VIVIAN MOILA, SENIOR MANGER OF THE TRANSNET EDUCATION FOUNDATION

was not in order,” she said describing how enabling the structure and support systems are at Kingswood as “there are a lot more people to help you and there is a lot more time given to study.” All four pupils said they find the afternoons given to sport a pressured if not completely new experience. “I’d prefer to put my academics first, and then sport,” said Xolelwa, echoing the sentiments of her three peers. And why not? Her immediate aim is humbling: “I want to find a job,” she said. But her dream is admirable, “I want to be a doctor”.

Boarding school has been a big change and while certain comforts and support systems have been added and make school a safe and happy space, the separation from family and primary caregivers is keenly felt. “Boarding school is fun,” said Xolelwa. “I love my House and I am so grateful for everything I have there, we even have two prep sessions.” She spoke of making new friends but “every time I am going to write a test I phone my mom”.

Yonela Bukula and Athi Xundu come from Ntamba Maria Primary School and are both serious about their focus on their academics. “I like basketball,” said Yonela, who is positive that once she gets used to the busy sporting afternoon activities that her time to focus on her studies will become more controllable. Athi says that the facilities and the style of teaching as well as the ratio of teachers to pupils makes Kingswood a very supportive environment but says that being on a scholarship causes her to place a lot more pressure on herself academically. Athi is working towards supporting women and their rights and aims to become a gynaecologist one day. Yonela is not quite decided yet but is certain that her destiny lies in a career as an accountant or a biologist, although she has a love for acting and singing too.

Jaslin Joe, a quietly spoken boy with a heartbreaking past, attended St Mary’s before starting Grade 8 at Kingswood. Abandoned and left to fend for his baby brother and sister at the tender age of seven, he and his siblings were placed in foster care in Grahamstown. He seems to take the huge changes brought into his life by Transnet Foundation and Kingswood in his stride but there is a touching fragility in the way he speaks of missing his brother and sister, for whom he still feels solely responsible. While he is making new friends and feels supported by his Kingswood family, he is finding that the pressures of afternoon sport and activities take him away from his academics and limits the time he has to visit his siblings. While it appears he will manage, Jaslin has a long road to travel. “My best experience at school so far was the hike through the Fish River valley,” he said. He is also looking forward to a longer hike on which pupils stay out overnight and carry their supplies with them. He is also keen on Drama and Art.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE NATIONAL DEBATE

“This project is not just about giving eight kids an incredible opportunity, it’s about ensuring their success and it’s also about building a body of knowledge nationally,” said Mrs Di Hornby, the Director of Community Engagement at Rhodes University and also Chairperson of the Kingswood College Council. “Schools participating in scholarship programmes like this have a lot to share in terms of how they support pupils from underprivileged backgrounds that come into their highly ordered boarding and teaching systems. The time is really important now that we do some proper research on, especially, the psychosocial challenges that the pupils face, and how they find success in their new environments. We hope to put our findings in an accessible handbook that we can share with other schools and corporates who wish to make a difference in this arena.”

Under the Transnet Foundation, Kingswood and Rhodes partnership, Transnet Foundation has allocated funding for a PhD student who will track these four pupil and help identify their challenges and success factors to start to build a knowledge base from which the schools can give additional support. The pupils each have an appointed mentor to whom they go for counselling support. “These four children have endured a lot in their short lives, and they have built up an incredible amount of resilience, so we find that they come into this completely new space and generally cope well. But the question

MASIBONISANE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS PASS RATE MATCHES NATIONAL AVERAGE

In 2013 the mathematics results at Masibonisane Senior Secondary School were on par with the national pass rate for mathematics, which was 59.1%. This was an increase of 7.7% on the school’s mathematics results of 2012, which was 51.4% and up from the mathematics pass rate of 2.5% in 2009.

Despite considerable challenges within the community, programmes initiated by the principal to help improve the Grade 12 results have born fruit. One such instance was the success of the Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project (RUMEP) mathematics intervention programme in 2012. Additional funding from the Zenex Foundation allowed RUMEP to support the programme for another year and the learners were accommodated in a communal house in a village central to the school and were given extra tutoring in all subjects by school staff members. RUMEP taught specific mathematics topics twice a week.

The programme was disrupted just before the 2013 trial examinations when community members prevented learners from attending the Department of Education revision week during the September school vacation.

The appointment of the new principal in August 2009 by an independent panel which did not involve the School Governing Council (SGB) had proven the tipping point for conflict at the school. Having attended the RUMEP in-service mathematics professional development programme from 2009 to 2011 he has been able to improve Grade 12 results despite the adverse circumstances the school has faced. He attributes the improvement in the mathematics results to the involvement of the RUMEP staff facilitators and the support from the ZENEX Foundation in the school’s learner programmes.





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remains that it must be a stressful transition, which will influence their life after school and their whole identify. Essentially their lives are altered forever by their new school experience. We want to track their experiences without invading their privacy and by being alongside them when they need support.

"The Transnet Foundation has gone beyond the role of a mere donor to ensure that the pupils have all they need to fit into their new environment. They have cell phones, nice bedding, toiletries, clothes, uniform and sports equipment like any other pupils at Kingswood. They are even supplied with the same amount of pocket money as any regular kid at Kingswood".

Ms Phumza Gesha, who works in the marketing department at Kingswood, is the 'Transnet mom' and she is their first port of call with queries and requests for items of uniform. She is firm and kind, and treats them like any mom would – going to the secondhand shop, or telling them to borrow a tennis racquet until she's sure they are going to stick with the sport! She knows better than anyone what a wonderful opportunity they have been given, and she makes sure that they make use of every available opportunity provided at Kingswood.

"Theresa Vivian Moila, Senior Manger for Education at Transnet Foundation, is extraordinary, she takes a deep interest in the wellbeing of the children, unlike any other scholarship programme manager I have ever worked with," said Mrs Hornby "She phones each one of them individually, and follows their progress with motherly pride. However, she does not interfere with the school's management of difficult situations. She supports the kids and I think she is another reason why this project will succeed."

And succeed it will. Under the guidance of these particular people and other staff members at Kingswood, the four pupils are holding their own.

"Jaslin has had to be an adult all his life and had never had anyone to trust," said Mrs Hornby. "To give him peace of mind we have made sure that his two siblings are at St Mary's Daycare Centre and they are getting good care and that they are looked after in the foster home. His housemaster at Kingswood has a lot of insight and empathy and Jaslin is responding to the care and faith that has been shown in him.

"The girls have just hit the deck running and they are blossoming. Interestingly, another new pupil at Kingswood who arrived at the start of the year was really struggling with homesickness, and these girls took her under their wing, despite the fact they too were new pupils. Their friendship and support have contributed largely to the homesick child settling in."

Another four pupils will follow on in this

programme next year, but they will be selected early and given academic support at the Lebone Centre, which is Kingswood's community engagement project. This will give future pupils a bit of an advantage on the four from this year.

THE TRANSNET FOUNDATION YOUTH EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

According to Vivian Moila, Senior Manager for Education at Transnet Foundation: "Education is the responsibility of all SA citizens and companies doing business in the country. It takes a village to raise a child. Each of us is part of that village and should seek to make a meaningful contribution. Transnet Foundation has heeded the call to be part of the village that raises a South African child, by making education one of its focus areas. Most importantly the Foundation identified the need to open up opportunities for orphaned and vulnerable children for attaining quality education in a caring and supportive environment".

Transnet Foundation envisions every community in South Africa peopled by a critical mass of leading experts. Towards that vision the programme aims to equip orphaned young men and women in selected underprivileged communities with the tools that will enable them to matriculate with a firm foundation in critical subjects such as Maths, Physical Science, Accounting and English.

The Transnet Foundation Orphaned Youth Education is a programme targeted at academically gifted students – defined as those who demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate outstanding intellectual aptitude and specific academic ability. The main aim of the programme is to promote a culture of academic excellence in South Africa by providing comprehensive educational and psychosocial support to orphaned youth in strategically targeted areas.

Ms Moila says: "In order to ensure the success of the programme Transnet Foundation engages in a rigorous and culturally fair selection process to identify the youth who are placed in top performing schools. The youth are put in various academic enrichment programmes to enable them to cope with their studies. They are equipped with lifeskills and given continuous structured support to enable them to cope with the challenges of the new environments. They will receive Transnet bursaries to enable them to further their studies at universities of their choice within South Africa".

She goes on to say: "Transnet Foundation knows how to unearth talent and unleash potential. In the programme we have 30 dynamic and sharp minds



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1: XOLELWA PHENDLANI WITH HER AUNT, NOMSA PHENDLANI, AND MPISEKHAYA YONA, HER GUARDIAN.

2: JASLIN JOE WITH HIS FAMILY.

3: YONELA BUKULA WITH LUNGELWA AND THAMSANQA BUKULA, HER GRANDPARENT

4: ATHI XUNDU WITH HER FATHER, KHAYALETHU, AND HER STEPMOTHER, NTOMBOMZI SODLADLA.



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that are carving a bright future for themselves and have proudly become Transnet Ambassadors of note. What is more gratifying about the programme is that it has support from the Group Chief Executive (GCE) of Transnet, Mr Brian Molefe, and Transnet Executives, who go to the extent of visiting the learners at the schools to see how they are coping with their studies. This for me symbolises the caring persona of Transnet, a true corporate citizen”.

Moila concludes by saying: “With the GCE and 65000 odd employees of Transnet behind them and the consistent and structured support programme these young people are set to succeed and become self-reliant adults who will help shape the economy of South Africa”.

KNOWING HOW TO OPERATE IN DIFFERENT SPACES

The community engagement connection

“It is important to choose schools that participate in these kinds of programmes carefully” said Mrs Hornby. “Nothing can be more damaging than pupils feeling that their backgrounds are embarrassing or feeling humiliated. Kingswood is a gentle school in this regard and pupils from all backgrounds find a home there. The school’s community engagement programme teaches pupils that if you come from a place of poverty it doesn’t mean that you are poor in everything. Community engagement thus plays a critical role in, firstly, growing the kind of pupils who will be able to go out and use their agency one day to create a more just and equitable society. Kingswood takes its mission, part of which is to ‘be a transforming influence in society’ very seriously.



TWIZZA HELPS PROMOTE SQUASH

The soft drink company, Twizza, is sponsoring the Twizza Rhodes Open squash tournament for the second consecutive year. With Twizza’s help, the tournament has become an accredited event on the South African Squash Calendar, attracting layers from many different provinces.

In 2013 the chairman of the Rhodes University Squash Club at the time, Brendan Martens, approached Garrett Amm to sponsor the Rhodes Open. Before this, the event was funded by smaller donations from local businesses. The Twizza Rhodes Open 2013 proved a huge success with 32 men and 16 ladies competing in three different sections. The finals were won by Lizelle Goosen and Adrian Hansen, both national players.

This year Twizza's sponsorship will again allow local Eastern Province players and Rhodes squash players to pit themselves against some of the best that South African Squash has to offer, which will have a positive impact on the growth of squash in the region.



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If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact: The Manager, Development Services, Development & Alumni Relations Division, Rhodes University at v.adams@ru.ac.za or +27 46 603 8510

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Kerry Peter

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creativesonclick

Conscious Creativity. Dynamic Design.

TO CONTACT US:

Kerry Peter | 083 794 0005 | kerry@kerrypeter.com
www.kerrypeter.com

Robyn Oosthuysen | 082 454 8242
robyn@creativesonclick.com
www.creativesonclick.com



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CHANGING LIVES

The spirit of Ubuntu is alive and well here at Rhodes University where Ceramic Industries, generously donating towards the fees of undergraduate students since 2010, have allowed us to identify needy and deserving recipients who intend giving back to their communities tenfold.

Selected out of 38 applications, this year's recipient is Siyanda Centwa, a born and raised Grahamstonian from a desperately poor background who, despite his previous lack of educational prospects, continues to lead by example in his community. With a mother and a sister to support, the opportunity to study towards his BA (Law) has been a life-changing event. Below is an edited excerpt from his motivational letter.

"My name is Siyanda. At home we are a family of three, and five other relatives. I stay in Extension 8 at the back of my grandmother's house, my mother

has built a one room shack, in it is I, my mother and my nine-year-old sister.

I have schooled in Grahamstown's township primary and high schools. In 2009 I did my matric and passed. Due to financial constraints I could not further my education. In 2010 and 2011 I joined the social movement called The Unemployed People's Movement (UPM). I got an opportunity to help poor people like me as I understood them better because I know the situation. I participated in so many projects... such as, building homes for people in Hlalani Location, visiting the sick old people, giving motivational talks to young people in the poor community in eThembeni Location.

I was elected as an ELDER of the church, a very important office in the church.

In 2011 I got a temporary job as an interpreter at the High Court. It is where I got the inspiration

to become a Lawyer. Professor Pedro Tabensky at the Department of Philosophy at Rhodes University, who saw my potential of leadership, academics and family background; he decided to take me to GADRA matric school and paid for me to upgrade my results.

I would be greatly honoured if I would be granted this assistance with my fees. As it would empower me more to give back to the community when I finish my degree."

Sanelisiwe (Sane) Siwundla, an Environmental Science graduate, is another success story who was the first recipient of the Ceramic Industries bursary in her final year of study. She has been working for Ceramic Industries ever since and has now taken over the CSI portfolio of the company.

