



MEC Hlophe praises DSD Matric Class of 2023 for showing resilience



Pictures: Phetoho Maja

MEC Mbali Hlophe handing over digital tablets and headphones to GSD top achievers at Birchwood

By Phetoho Maja

Gauteng MEC for Social Development, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Mbali Hlophe has hailed Social Development beneficiaries for being amongst the cohort of learners that achieved the highest pass rate of 82.9% since the dawn of democracy.

Hlophe echoed during a ceremony at Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg, Ekurhuleni on Thursday where 250 beneficiaries were handed gadgets in a form of digital tablets and headphones as a token of appreciation for passing their 2023 matric.

The gadgets will assist the learners to easily facilitate post-matric education and studies as many of them are heading to university and other institutions of higher learning.

Addressing learners and parents, MEC Hlophe said a winning mentality is a start of many greater things to come.

“tell us your story so that you inspire the next generation of beneficiaries ”

“It does not matter what you want to venture into, whether music or sports, being a doctor or a nurse, but everything that you want, you can only achieve it if your mentality is correct and you are focused,” she said.

“We are here to celebrate you and really indicate that at the heart of everything that you want, is that winning mentality. Many of you come from different backgrounds that are not privileged, some of you have no parents. But you must consider yourselves as lucky because you have the backing of government.”

“You have proven that you can pass the first phase and there are many other phases coming. So, you must be able to withstand the pressure that comes with it,” said Hlophe.

A former foster care beneficiary who now works as a qualified Social Worker for the Gauteng Department of Social Development in Duduza Office, Mpho Thubakgale was a beacon of inspiration and motivated the top achievers.

She said, “In the next five years, I want you to stand here and tell us your story so that you inspire the next generation of beneficiaries. Against all odds you will make it. Twelve (12) years ago, I was wearing the very same shoes that you are wearing.”

“I lost my parents when I was very young, and being an orphan taught me many traits such as patience and resilience. These two traits took me far in life,” echoed Thubakgale.

One of the top achievers for the class of 2023 was Phumlani Ntusi, a former learner at Simunye Secondary School in Bekkersdal. The 18-year-old said he overcame difficulties by remaining focused to his schooling.

Ntusi will be studying Electrical Engineering at Wits University.

Foster care beneficiary to study at Wits University



Pictures: Eric Malema

Foster care beneficiary Tshegofatso Mogale at honouring ceremony in Birchwood

By Madali Chibambu

17-year-old foster care beneficiary Tshegofatso Mogale said the counselling she received from the Gauteng Department of Social Development after the death of her mother played an important role in her completing high school education.

Mogale, who obtained two distinctions in History and Life Science, was a learner at Masupatsela High School in Kagiso, West Rand.

"After my mother died. I was lonely and did not want to talk to anyone. My mother was my pillar of strength, but Social Workers from the Krugersdorp Office came to my rescue. They arranged therapy sessions for me to deal with my loss," she explained.

Mogale said she knew that she was going to pass, but she did not expect two distinctions.

As a result of the counseling she received, she now wants to pursue a career in Industrial Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand.

"At first, I did not want to go for counselling sessions but in the end, I was able to understand the purpose of it. It was not even easy for me to share what I was going through with my peers," she said.

After her mother's passing, her unemployed aunt became a guardian to her and her little brother.

Mogale slowly began to accept her loss and paid more attention to her studies with the help from Social Workers.

"I cannot wait to commence with academics and experience life as an independent young person. I thought losing a parent was the end of the world, not knowing that it was the beginning of a new chapter. I want to make sure that my mother is proud of me, and I will always support my little brother in his studies to become a better person", she added.

"My bags are ready, and Wits University is waiting for me, this is a dream come true for me and my aunt.

My message to foster care beneficiaries is to take their life serious since the government has taken the initiative to assist people like us who are orphans.

Being a foster child did not limit me, instead it opened opportunities for me, especially for government programmes" said Mogale.

Mogale encouraged young people to take counselling seriously when they have challenges.

Hlophe hands over stationery and dignity packs to children in need



Pictures: Shaulin Lai Wai

MEC Mbali Hlophe addressing children under the care of government at Mary Moodley CYCC

By Phetoho Maja

The Gauteng Social Development, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, MEC Mbali Hlophe has encouraged children admitted in government run Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) across the province to become future leaders despite their past traumas and exposure to many social ills.

Hlophe was speaking to over hundred and twelve (112) children at Mary Moodley CYCC in Benoni, Ekurhuleni, on Saturday.

The visit formed part of the Back-to-School Campaign to guide learners about their schooling as well as to hand over stationery, school bags, and dignity packs to both girls and boys.

"We brought young people to speak to you in a language that you understand. Our message today is to encourage you to never give up. Part of never giving up is about taking care of yourselves and taking your education seriously," said Hlophe.

She added, "What you are taught in class is going to be critical for you in the future. People like our celebrity

guest today, Musa Keys would not have been able to understand the signing of contracts, or the music business had they not taken their education serious."

"As children and youth in our care facilities, you are the luckiest in the country because you have the government directly taking care of you. So, this means everything that you require as a child, is on your doorsteps. You have clinics in your facilities, and our Social Workers are immediately in direct contact. When you need food and shelter, you have it."

"So, you are the luckiest children and must take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the state. Forget about your struggles, hardships, and where you come from because you now have the backing of our government," Hlophe said.

The Gauteng Department of Social Development has nine (9) Child and Youth Care Centres that have school going children. Out of those, seven (7) have in-house schools managed by the Gauteng Department of Education while two (2) have children going on the outside schools.

Alberts proves it is possible as he heads to study coding



Pictures: Phetoho Maja

A beneficiary of Social Services who completed matric last year at a matric honouring ceremony

By Sipho Ncube

19-year-old Xavier Alberts is among the class of 2023 learners who passed their matric and are looking forward to a future ahead.

Speaking to the Weekly Bulletin, he said, "I'm delighted for passing my matric, and I'm positive about my future. I intend to study software coding course, which is my passion".

Alberts got a diploma entry, among subjects that he passed were Mathematics Literacy , Tourism , and English First Language.

Social Auxiliary Worker from the Gauteng Department of Social Development, Lerato Chiloane, said that Xavier is an intelligent young lad and has a bright

future ahead of him, "though as a young person, he also needs guidance and monitoring frequently".

To those pupils who are doing matric, Xavier said, "Focus on your studies because success does not come easy, and sacrifice if you have to".

Last week President Cyril Ramaphosa congratulated matriculants who wrote the National Senior Certificate for a stellar achievement and said that the 82.9% pass rate is the highest rate obtained since 2008.

To the class of 2024, the President said, "We have high expectations from young South Africans who will sit for the exams this year".

A guide to potential foster care guardians



Pictures: FREEPIK

By Madali Chibambu

Foster Care grant is one of the services offered by the Department of Social Development which takes care of a child placed in custody by the Children's Court as a result of being orphaned, abandoned, at risk, abused or neglected, this is according to Section 150 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

Foster Care grant is also intended to provide basic needs for children between the ages of 0 and 18 years, and it is a temporary placement of a child who needs care and protection.

When a child turns 18, the grant will stop in the last month of that year. However, if a child is still at school and over the age of 18, the foster placement can be extended until age 21.

The Foster Child Grant primarily provide financial support to the foster parent for the care of a child in secondary schooling or tertiary education, who had been placed in his/her care in terms of the court order.

For one to apply for Foster Care grant you need your identity document and that of your spouse, birth certificate of the foster child and where the child does

not have an identity book, or the child does not have a birth certificate, an affidavit may be used to make an application at the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).

If you want to look after a child who needs care and protection, apply to the Department of Social Development or an accredited child protection organisation for permission to foster the child.

Please note the difference between Foster Care and Child Support Grant. Foster care: applications are done at Social Development; Children's court is involved, and Court Order is issued. Whereas Child Support Grant: The application is done at SASSA.

The Children's Court may place the child in foster care for a period of 2 years. The order may be extended if circumstances do not change.

For one to qualify for a Foster Care grant, you must be a South African citizen, permanent resident, or refugee. You and the child must live in South Africa, and the foster child must be legally placed in your care, and the child must remain in your care.

Social Development conducts imbizo to address social ills



Pictures: Tshepo Motholo

Community members presenting their challenges and solutions during a community dialogue in Sedibeng

By Tendamudzimu Goza

Last week Friday, the Gauteng Department of Social Development hosted a community dialogue at Thy Kingdom church, Tshepong in Sedibeng.

The hosting of the dialogue follows community profiling conducted in the area by the Department. The dialogue also aimed to provide the community an opportunity to contribute to finding a possible solution to their own problems.

During the engagements, Andile Vilakazi, a Social Worker in the Department did not want to impose solutions but rather hear from the community about what they think can be done to solve their challenges.

Vilakazi added that towards the end of 2023, the Department managed to distribute food parcels in the ward where the dialogue was held. This was after the officials had assessed and profiled every household, where individual needs were identified with an aim to intervene accordingly. To make sure that all issues were given attention, the department used a group

breakaway discussion system where the community was asked to divide into five groups to discuss different issues they are facing in their community.

These issues included lack of youth development, lack of support for the disability sector, the community not understanding government supply chain management, no agricultural programmes and projects, not enough early child development (ECD) schools, lack of support for support for older persons, no skills development (NPOs), and no sustainable livelihoods programmes.

After the presentations of their challenges, officials from the different units outlined various programmes that can assist in addressing the said challenges and the officials also advised on how the community members can access these programmes.

The Department also committed to conducting more engagements so as to assist this community with development.

Athletes aim for big races



Pictures: Eric Malema

Member of the GSD athletics team Onicah Maduenyane after completing 42kms at Johnson Crane Marathon

By Madali Chibambu

Last Saturday, more than thirty members of the Gauteng Department of Social Development's Athletics Club participated in the Johnson Crane Hire Marathon that was held at Sahara Park Willowmoore Cricket Stadium in Benoni Ekurhuleni.

Members of Athletic Club participated in the 42KM, 21 KM, 10 KM and 5KM races.

Some used the race to prepare for the Two Oceans Marathon and Comrade Marathon, while for others, it was part of a healthy lifestyle.

One of the Gauteng Department of Social Development participants from Walter Sisulu Child and Youth Care Centre, Onicah Maduenyane (44), completed her 21 KM race successful without any challenges.

Maduenyane, a Care Worker, said she has already started preparing for Two Oceans Marathon. She said she makes sure that she eats healthy food and drinks a lot of water. "I am happy to be part of this race, and this lifestyle also contributes to our daily work since we are working with children and that often requires energy," she adds.

"I am looking forward to the Two Oceans Marathon with my other colleagues, and we really appreciate your support in every race," says Maduenyane.

A 39- years old Mpumelelo Khanyile, also a Care Worker from Mary Moodley CYCC says he cannot wait for Two Oceans Marathon. Khanyile is also preparing for the big marathon.

MEC honours foster care beneficiaries who passed matric

📷 Pictures: Eric Malema



Back to School campaign in West Rand

📷 Pictures: Eric Malema



Back to School campaign with CYCCs at Mary Moodley

📷 Pictures: Shaulin Lai Wai



Members of GDSD athletics team participating at Johnson Crane Marathon

📷 Pictures: Eric Malema



Social Workers at Duduza Service Point ready to serve the community

 Pictures: Phetoho Maja



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