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## A Journey of Resilience and Triumph Leads Tshepo From Foster Care to Wits University

By Tshepo Motholo

Meet Tshepo Motsami, a young man who has defied the odds to achieve his dreams. Despite facing numerous challenges in his early life, including the loss of his first foster parent and struggling to adjust to new environments, Motsami has persevered and is now on his way to university.

He moved in with his current foster parents at the age of 17, and despite initial reservations, he quickly settled into his new family. His foster parents provided him with unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement, which helped him navigate the complexities of adolescence.

Throughout his high school career, Motsami remained focused and driven, motivated by a desire to create a better life for himself and his loved ones. He worked tirelessly to excel academically, and his hard work paid off when he received his Grade 12 results.

"I was nervous when I received my results, but I had always been optimistic about my performance," he recalled. "I was thrilled when I found out that I had been accepted into university, especially when the acceptance offers started rolling in."

Motsami will be furthering his studies in Bachelor of Science and Environmental Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, a testament to his passion for creating a more sustainable future.

Throughout his journey, he has learned valuable lessons about resilience, adaptability, and the importance of appreciating what he has. He has also developed a strong sense of determination and purpose, driven by a desire to make a positive impact on his community and the world at large.

As he embarks on this new chapter in his life, Motsami is filled with excitement and anticipation. He is eager to meet new people, learn new things, and explore the opportunities that university life has to offer.



Picture: Supplied

### Foster child Tshepo Motsami at his former school

"I want to help others by solving environmental problems, teaching people, or sharing ideas to make the community better," he said, reflecting on his future aspirations. "I believe that education is the key to unlocking my potential, and I am grateful for the support of my foster parents and everyone who has helped me along the way."

Motsami's story is a powerful reminder that with hard work, determination, and the right support, anything is possible. As he begins this new chapter in his life, we have no doubt that he will continue to inspire and motivate those around him.



# Banele Mlamlamla, a foster care beneficiary among Gauteng's Matric Top Achievers



Picture: Phetoho Maja

## Social Workers - Lesego Mathebula and Makhosazana Mahlangu with top achiever Banele Mlamlamla and his foster parent Nhlanhla Mlamlamla

### By Phetoho Maja

Banele Mlamlamla from Duduza in Ekurhuleni is proud to be the first in his family to attend university. The 19-year-old passed matric with five (5) distinctions during the 2024 National Senior Certificate exams and was second top learner at his school, Esibonewesihle Secondary School in Duduza.

Mlamlamla, a beneficiary of the foster care program at the Gauteng Department of Social Development, will be heading to the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) to study for a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering through a bursary from the Gauteng City Region Academy (GCRA).

The bursary is awarded to top achievers from Gauteng schools, top learners from no-fee-paying schools, and the top three (3) learners with Special Education Needs from LSEN schools in Gauteng Province.

Mlamlamla was raised by his older brother, Nhlanhla Mlamlamla (33), who later became his foster parent following the death of their mother in 2019, which left them vulnerable and orphaned.

The young and energetic top achiever said his journey to matric was very difficult, as he had to leave friends to focus on his studies.

"I want to thank the Gauteng Department of Social Development and my case manager, Makhosazana Mahlangu, for always being there for me. She helped us a lot with our court case, and we managed to receive the foster care grant as my brother was and is still unemployed," said Mlamlamla.

He further encouraged the matric class of 2025 to remain disciplined. "It is going to be a lot of work in a short space of time, but you need to be disciplined and take your studies seriously. This one year will determine your future," he said.

**"As the Department, we wish him well as he begins another stage in his life"**

Social Worker Makhosazana Mahlangu from the Gauteng Department of Social Development's Duduza Office reiterated that Mlamlamla was always a focused child despite having a tough upbringing.

"As the Department, we wish him well as he begins another stage in his life. We will continue to support him until he turns 21 years old. He must do well and always remember where he comes from," added Mahlangu.

# Soon to Be Honoured: Darius Mnisi's Inspiring Journey from Gardener to Store Assistant

**By Madali Chibambu**

Fifty-eight-year-old Darius Mnisi, who began his career as a Gardener at the Soshanguve Secure Care Centre, is set to be recognized for his 30 years of dedicated service to the Gauteng Department of Social Development. Recently promoted to Store Assistant, Mnisi reflects on a journey filled with perseverance, growth, and gratitude.

Hailing from Hammanskraal in the Northern Corridor, Mnisi admits the promotion came as a pleasant surprise. "The Department has changed my life and that of my family. I was working as a Petrol Attendant when someone told me about job opportunities advertised by the Gauteng Department of Social Development. Like anyone else, I applied with hope, and to my surprise, I was shortlisted and called for an interview," he recalls.

"I never thought I'd get the job, but my prayers were answered. I was thrilled to secure stable government employment. I made sure to impress my supervisor by keeping the garden in excellent condition, with vibrant flowers that looked like they belonged to a wedding," he adds with a smile.

Mnisi attributes his professional growth to the training and skills development programs offered by the Department. Over the years, he has shared his acquired knowledge with junior staff and maintained a positive relationship with colleagues. "We resolve challenges together since we spend most of our time as a team," he says.

A devoted husband and father of three, Mnisi's dream is to see his children complete their education and establish independent careers. He encourages general workers to remain hopeful and believe in themselves.



Picture: Supplied

## Store assistant at Soshanguve Secure Care Centre Darius Mnisi

Patricia Ramere, Head of Institution at Soshanguve Secure Care Centre, commends Mnisi's commitment and work ethic. "He is a dedicated team member who is not afraid to speak up against wrongdoings. During his recovery from a car accident, his absence was felt deeply. We're thrilled to have him back and congratulate him on his 30 years of service," says Ramere.

Mnisi's journey from Gardener to Store Assistant stands as a testament to resilience and dedication, making him a deserving recipient of the Long Service Award.



# Lehae and Vlakfontein Ke Moja Friday Activation

Pictures:

Eric Malema





# Duduza Office ready to hit the ground running for 2025

 Pictures: Phetoho Maja





# Ke Moja Friday activation, Eastern Corridor

📷 Pictures:

Phetoho Maja





# Ke Moja Friday activation, Eastern Corridor

 Pictures: Matlaba Machethe





# Back to School campaign in Eden Park, Eastern Corridor

📷 Pictures:

Phetoho Maja



For comments, contributions and suggestions please send an email to:

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