

# Hudson Park celebrates more than a century of excellence

The school and guests reflected on beautiful memories forged since its establishment

ANELISA GUSHA

Past headmasters, pupils, prefects, staff and BCM officials gathered to reflect on Hudson Park's influence since its inception more than a 100 years ago at a special ceremony last week.

On Friday the school celebrated 117 years since its establishment.

Among the dignitaries attending on the day was BCM executive mayor Xola Pakati, who beamed with pride as he spoke of how the school had impacted on the metro.

Pakati described Hudson Park as one of the schools that would continue to provide quality education in years to come.

He said the school was steeped in an inclusive and

transformative spirit.

Pakati said the school had been true to its mission and had over the years produced leaders in various fields and industries for the city and the country as a whole.

"The school has laid a foundation for the production of top engineers, architects, doctors, lawyers, business leaders, teachers and leaders in various vocations."

He urged current pupils to show dedication to their studies which was the only key to success.

"You are studying in one of the best schools in our country but you will not succeed by association," he said.

"Passing is dependent on you listening to your teachers, being willing to learn and being disciplined."

"Always want to know more, always ask, the teachers will not give you all the answers but will guide you to them," Pakati said.

He said what made a pupil remarkable was their obsession with development.

"A good learner is one who is obsessed with their personal development and one that is knowledgeable about things that will hinder their progress," he said.

Principal Dennis Vorster, who took the baton from Roy Hewett in 2017, said it was an honour to be leading a school with such a rich history.

"Being the headmaster of a school with such a rich history is both a privilege and an honour."

"The pace and magnitude of the task is immense and it cannot be achieved without dedicated and loyal staff."

"Support from the community is vital to progress and remain relevant."

"Our aim is to remain one of the leading coeducational schools in SA," he said.

Vorster described Hudson Park as a school of diversity



CELEBRATION: Former pupils, prefects and staff members beamed with pride as they reflected on how the school had positive impact in their lives on their founders day. Picture: SUPPLIED

which he took pride in.

He said the pupils were encouraged to participate in as many spheres of the school as possible.

"They need to be able to provide meaningful contribution to society when they leave school."

Vorster said one of his greatest highlights was seeing pupils transition and become better individuals as they get to higher grades.

"It is pleasing to observe the

development of learners who have come from difficult circumstance and have gone on to become successful people of influence," he said.

Asithandle Peteni, who articulated in 2014 and is doing his articles in chartered accounting, said the life skills given at the school were unmatched.

Peteni said Hudson felt like a family and he would forever be grateful for the opportunity he had to attend the school.

# Merrifield pupils scoop gold for their isiXhosa poems

ANELISA GUSHA

Three Merrifield pupils whose isiXhosa poems won gold at the East London Eisteddfod are proud of elevating their home language.

Lilitha Madikizela, Zizikazi Bidla and Mbutokazi Mavuso said impressing the judges with their native language while delivering their poetry was a fulfilling feeling.

The three pupils said the language had the ability to express emotions and draw the attention of an audience.

Lilitha, in grade 11, was awarded a double gold and said it was her first time taking part in the isiXhosa section but she had participated in the annual arts and drama festival for a number of years.

She said isiXhosa was a beautiful language which needed to be embraced.

"Xhosa is a beautiful, emotive and powerful language. The adjectives convey meaning in such an exceptional manner with an emphasis on the message," Lilitha said.

She said she felt like it was an honour to perform among beautiful and talented humans who understood their craft. "All participants were highly

talented. It was such a remarkable moment to be surrounded by such gifted people."

Zizikazi, in grade 10, received a double gold for her poetry and said performing and seeing other talents was fulfilling.

"It felt great being able to compete with other learners and see how they had prepared their piece and performed them in front of everyone. The atmosphere was warm and safe. Everyone was there to see others shine with their skill."

Zizikazi had been in the competition over the past years but had competed in the English section.

She said the beauty about performing in one's own language was being able to express feelings and emotions.

"The poetry in your language makes the audience feel what you want them to feel at that very moment."

"My language is isiXhosa. This was the best thing to do because it is my home language and something I am proud of."

She said her shining moment was walking bravely to the stage to share her craft and coming back victorious.

"My highlight was going to the stage and reciting my poem in front of a crowd I did not know and coming back with my double gold at my first isiXhosa Eisteddfod," she said.

Mbutokazi, in grade 12, scooped gold for her poetry.

"It felt empowering to compete at such a level in my language but exciting because of the support each performer received from the competitors."

"I enjoy performing in isiXhosa because it is my native language. The cheering and the laughter inbetween our performances were the greatest highlights of the day," she said.



WINNERS: Teacher Phivokuhle Yase with Merrifield pupils Zizikazi Bidla, Lilitha Madikizela, and Mbutokazi Mavuso and their awards for isiXhosa poems presented at ELfest. Picture: SUPPLIED

# Duncan Village choir's viral video leads to sponsorship

ANELISA GUSHA

The joyous voices of Duncan Village pupils who received a standing ovation, warmed the hearts of local media organisations who saw the pupils' videos on social media.

Mzokhanyo High School pupils made a name for themselves when they came third in the female voice category at the ABC Motsepe South African School Choral Eisteddfod national championships held in Randburg in July.

Non-profit business incubator The Cortex Hub and media training institute NEMISA partnered to help the pupils document their journey of conquering the choral world from provincial to national level.

About 40 pupils were given free digital training to tell their story.

The two companies said it was important that the good work done by the girls was

preserved and documented for future generations.

Hub manager Aya Dlepu said they were touched by the video which made the rounds on social media and saw it as necessary to reward the pupils for their hard work.

Dlepu said in the process the pupils would not be only telling their stories but would learn how to do robotics, coding, film and digital photography.

When the idea was presented to the headmaster, Dlepu said he opened his heart and the school to run the programme.

About 40 pupils are part of the programme, which kicked off at the beginning of August and will run until the end of the month.

"With technology being at the heart of Cortex Hub's operation, we saw it fit to invite our partners to support the campaign of teaching the pupils how they could amplify their own story.



REWARDED: Mzokhanyo High School, which represented the Eastern Cape in a national choral competition in Randburg, is shooting a documentary following their story. Picture: MICHAEL PINYANA

"We want them to be able to create content about their school work and when they

have been able to grasp that, they can knock on doors to ask for sponsorships."

Dlepu said the achievement was a big one and needed to be shared.

"The plan is for the company and affiliated partners to not only be responsible of trying to

create the buzz of the story but raise an awareness that it was heading in the right direction."

He said any potential sponsors that may come along and wanted to make difference in the school would be welcome.

Dlepu said the training workshop had been a beautiful journey and having to work with the pupils had been amazing.

"We will go back to the school and hand over all the video assets produced and any other sponsorships secured."

The manager said ideally they would love to leave the school knowing they had shared digital skills with the pupils and showed sponsors that schools like Mzokhanyo existed and were progressing.

"We are also hoping that the learners will be able to produce the final video product showcasing their triumphant story and be able to see demonstrations of music instruments made by the learners that are

built on Arduino technology."

Mzokhanyo teacher and choir leader Bulelwa Buso-Nontshinga said they felt blessed when the stakeholders approached them to bring the programme.

Nontshinga said the competition had been difficult but they were grateful for the love shown.

She said every day she had to motivate her pupils and tell them they just needed to be patient.

"This generation is a handful, but we made it this far. We are truly grateful."

"There were times I had to bribe them with goodies, but eventually they understood the musical language and loved it."

"When people approached us with the offer we were so humble, and still are humble. They took it as a joke when I said we will take home the trophy and indeed we took it. Now the results are paying off," she said.

# Period pad prices push girls out of school in Africa

KENT MENSAH

After being shamed over bloodstains on her uniform, Ghanaian student Juliet Opoku misses about a week of school each month because her parents, who are farmers, can no longer afford pads.

The cost of pads has more than doubled last year in the West African nation, where inflation is about 32%, forcing poorer families like Opoku's to focus on buying food over sanitary products.

"I skip school because once I stained my uniform and the boys teased me," Opoku, 15, said.

"Sanitary pads are very expensive... I sometimes use toilet rolls, baby diapers or a cloth," added Opoku, who wants to become a nurse.

The global problem of spiralling inflation has pushed up the cost of pads in many African nations, driving more girls out of school or to unhygienic alternatives that can cause infections and infertility, say health experts and charities.

The price of a packet of pads had increased by 117% in Zimbabwe and by 50% in the Democratic Republic of Congo by April compared to January, found ActionAid International, which campaigns on women and girls' rights.

Charities say this could have dire consequences for millions of African girls — impacting their education, health and dignity, driving them to have transactional sex with older men — and ultimately worsening gender inequality.



"Our main concern is that women will forgo spending on health, such as on medicines and sanitary products, to prioritise food and other things to support their families," said Suganya Kimbrough of Catholic Relief Services.

"This could have a tremendous impact on girls attending school and women earning their livelihoods," said Kimbrough, deputy director for program quality in East Africa, adding that families were also skipping meals and selling livestock to cope.

## EDUCATION, HEALTH RISKS

Period poverty, often defined as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene information, products and toilets is common across much of Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the face of stigma, girls often miss classes and can even drop out altogether.

In Kenya, a study sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation found 65% of women and girls were unable to afford pads, and only 32% of rural schools had a private place

**A STEP BEHIND: Even if the girls complete their schooling, they are likely to fall behind boys of their age, exacerbating existing inequalities in educational attainment, say campaigners.** Picture: vectorpouch/123rf

such as toilets for girls to change their pads.

The United Nations estimates that one in 10 girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school during their period, which can add up to as much as 20% of a school year.

Even if these girls complete their schooling, they are likely to fall behind boys of their age, exacerbating existing inequalities in educational attainment, say campaigners.

When girls use makeshift alternatives, such as paper, old rags, leaves and even dried cow dung they risk falling ill with reproductive and urinary tract infections, say health experts.

"Girls can contract general bacterial infections from using pieces of cloth," said Anita Asamoah, an independent public health advocate.

"If proper care is not taken, these infections will, later on, lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease or infertility."

Without money for pads, some girls have sex with older men, perpetuating a cycle of reliance and exploitation, which can lead to unwanted

pregnancies and early motherhood.

"Many girls have fallen victim to adolescent and unplanned pregnancy."

Research by the Kenya Medical Research Institute and US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in rural Western Kenya found that 10% of 15-year-old girls surveyed had sex with men to get menstrual products.

## TAMPON TAXES, MENSTRUAL CUPS

Campaigners are urging African countries to remove taxes on period products — often dubbed tampon taxes in the West — to make them more affordable.

Only a handful of countries, such as Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa, have done so.

In addition, campaigners say more countries should provide free pads to schoolgirls, following the example set by Kenya, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia, as well as cheaper, reusable products like pants with washable liners and menstrual cups.

Kofi Kyerematem Nyanteng is Ghana country director for CouldYou? which distributes silicone menstrual cups to marginalised girls globally.

"We need to explore efficient and sustainable ways to address menstrual poverty," he said.

"One sure strategy is to put reusable products like the menstrual cup on the desks of policymakers," he said, adding that the cups can last for up to 10 years. — Thomas Reuters Foundation

# DailyDispatch

## PRICE FREEZE

Local, Fearless, Empowering you

**DailyDispatch** NEW & EXISTING SUBSCRIBERS

MAKE THE MOST OF THIS SPECIAL OFFER AND SAVE TODAY!

### SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

Retail prices have increased, but we are offering you a price freeze until 29 August 2022.

#### DispatchLIVE Prime Package

3 months	R510.00
6 months	R880.00
12 months	R1610.00

**TO SUBSCRIBE**

☎ 043 702 2239/2000 ✉ subscribe@dispatch.co.za

👉 Visit [dispatchlive.co.za/buy/](https://dispatchlive.co.za/buy/)

TERMS & CONDITIONS: This offer available from 1 August 2022 to 29 August 2022 and is available on existing routes in East London, Mdantsane, King Williams Town, Bisho, Queenstown and Mthatha. Available to new subscribers, and existing subscribers who renew their subscription for 3, 6 or 12 months. E & OE.