



education

DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

News Brief

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MPUMALANGA
A Pioneering Spirit

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Vodacom heroes say yes to the needy

Lolo Madonsela

BELFAST - Vodacom Yebo Heroes visited the SAVF Children's Home last Thursday to hand over donations to assist the home to carry out its duties.

They donated books, stationery, food, school uniforms for six children and a cash cheque of R20 000 that will benefit 198 children at the home.

The home takes care of children from the ages of two up to 18 years, both girls and boys of different races. These children are sent to the home by social workers and they all have different backgrounds and situations, including those who have been abandoned, others from abusive families and some that were living with their grandparents who could no longer take care of them.

They all speak three different languages; English, Afrikaans and Zulu and they are very obedient children.

Last year the home had four children who were doing grade 12, three of them got distinctions and bursaries to go to universities of their choice.

This year, there are five children in grade 12 and the manager of the home, Ms Marita Enslin said they hoped that all of them will get distinctions again because, "education is our focal point here.

"We want them to be something as they grow up, that is why we make sure that they get educated," she said.

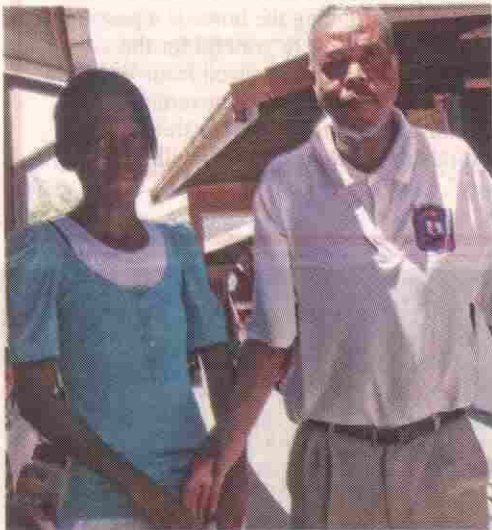
The home also caters for those children



Ms Michelle du Plessis, Mr Richard Sithole, Ms Marita Enslin, Ms Desrie Roux and Ms Tiisesto Mantu.

who are academically challenged, by sending them to a special school of skills and talent.

Enslin said the school is more dedicated to education, hence children have study time from 15:00 to 16:30 every day. She added that since she has been a social worker for many years, running the home is a passion for her and they were grateful for the assistance they have received from Vodacom because, "even though the government subsidises us, at times we are short of cash and other vital things, so this will go a long way".



Khosi Mhlabane receives a laptop. She achieved second place with her four distinctions.

AutoTec rewards its finest schools

Lolo Madonsela

KABOKWENI - The AutoTec Foundation recently recognised its adopted high schools for a job well done.

Sakhile High School based in Mganduzweni Trust, performed the best of all five schools adopted by the foundation with an 80% pass rate and was followed by Khutsalani Senior Secondary School in KaBokweni.

The Sakhile learners were awarded for performing well in sport (soccer and netball) and in matric last year while the best performing teachers received incentives. The best achievers in this school are Thulani Gumbi with 71,9% (grade 12), Colisile Mlotshwa 60,1% (grade 11),

Agripa Dube 56,9% (grade 10), Antonette Makoma 66% (grade 9) and Stando Mlimi got 69% (grade eight).

The top grade-12 teachers are Ms Gladys Koma who achieved 100% in business studies and Mr Mandla Mabuza who also achieved 100% in economics.

The best performing learners in both sport and academics received medals and certificates

All the best performers got medals and certificates from the foundation.

At Khutsalani, AutoTec Foundation honoured Nelisiwe Morale who achieved five distinctions in grade 12. Khosi

Mhlabane came second with four.

Other academic achievers are Lindelwa Shakoane with 72% (grade eight), Lindokuhle Gama 75% (grade nine), Julia Nkosi 63% (grade 10) and Ntando Ndukuya 67%

(grade 11).

At this school the teachers who received incentives of R500 each are Ms Srilekha Mohan and Mr Thuli Sibamba. The best teachers are Mr Musa Phakathi in English, Ms Angel Philson in SiSwati, Mr Collins Letsang in English and Ms Velma Khoza who achieved 100% in hospitality studies.

The best performing learners in both sport and academics received medals and certificates.

The Department of Education also honoured the top learners and a top teacher. Nelisiwe Morale received a laptop and laptop bag, printer and printing papers, Khosi Mhlabane who was second received a laptop while the top teacher, Ms Velma Khoza received a laptop and laptop bag, printer, printing paper and trophy.

The other best performing teachers also received trophies.

Matric results questioned

Selinah Motijoane of Acornhoek writes:

It is so disappointing to read about the alleged interference by Umalusi in adjusting last year's matric results. What are we supposed to think about the overall results, that they were good and fair? Or maybe that they were adjusted to suit the government's political agenda of appearing to be on the right track as far as education is concerned?

It also puzzled me further to learn from a report from Umalusi that some underqualified people were also used to mark the matric

papers. Why should the government compromise our children's future in this manner to the extent of being marked by incompetent people?

Secondly, there is also this tendency by some schools to register only pupils whom they trust to pass and the rest are registered as private candidates. Do the statistics that are always flaunted around, truly reflect the situation or are we just being taken for a ride?

Why can't schools register all pupils and let them be judged and evaluated for what they truly represent? Are the statistics about numbers or mere percentages?

'DARKIES' NOT FOR PARLIAMENTARY USE

Anna Majavu

MEMBERS of Parliament should exercise caution when using the word "darkies" in debates, Parliament's deputy speaker Nomaindia Mfeketo ruled yesterday.

"The way in which the remark is made or the tone can make a difference. After consideration I must agree that the word might be seen as a racial label and could easily be seen as derogatory by some people.

"I would, therefore, like to urge members generally to avoid language which could be construed as offensive and provocative by others," she said.

This came after Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande lashed out at the DA's Wilmot James in a National Assembly debate on Tuesday.

Mfeketo rules on Nzimande

James said matric marks had been pushed up to pass students who would otherwise have failed.

But Nzimande hit back accusing James of being racist.

"If the matric results are bad, this is taken as proof that this government of darkies is incapable. If the matric pass rate goes up, it means the results have been manipulated by these darkies ... the arrogant, sneering tone of this discourse, which is often racist, frankly, is aimed at undermining the confidence of our people in both our education system and government."

An angry DA MP Lindiwe Mazibuko demanded that Mfeketo make

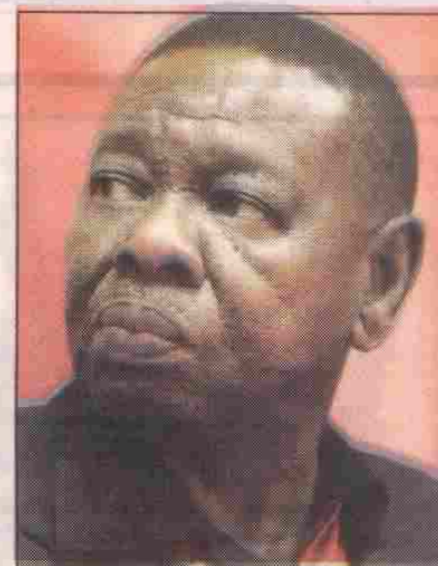
a ruling on whether it was parliamentary for Nzimande to use the word "darkies" in the National Assembly.

She was backed by Cope president Mosiuoa Lekota.

"A ruling must be made whether white members of this house may not criticise the government because they will be called racist," said Lekota.

But Nzimande hit back at both the DA and Cope saying: "You are portraying the DA as the best thing.

"We have open toilets here which are an affront to our people. Your own premier stopped the minstrels here from having a celebration."



UNDER FIRE: Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande

'PAY UP OR NO DIPLOMA'

Certificates withheld for owing fees

Sne Masuku

SOME universities have confirmed that they have resorted to withholding the certificates of qualified students who still owe the institutions money.

Students with outstanding fees are allowed to take part in the graduation ceremony but the university withholds their certificates until the fees are paid in full.

Students with outstanding fees merely pose for pictures on graduation, a statement that was confirmed yesterday by two universities in KwaZulu-Natal.

This practice has drawn the ire of the ANC Youth League leadership at Durban University of Technology.

The ANCYL says many students are graduates in name only because their certificates are withheld until they pay their outstanding fees.

The ANCYL has attributed the high unemployment and crime rates to the "withholding of certificates". It complained that many young people were unable to find jobs without their certificates.

Mangosuthu University of Technology spokesperson Bheki Hlophe said the institution was very strict when it came to payment of outstanding fees.

"We are serious about the pay-



MAKE A PLAN : The ANC Youth League at the Durban Institute of Technology has complained about the institution resorting to withholding the certificates of qualified students who owe it money. The League said students should get their certificates and only pay when they find employment.

PHOTO: THULI DLAMINI

ment of outstanding fees. We have, however, made some concessions," Hlophe said.

He said in 2006, 470 students did not graduate because they owed the institution. This figure was the highest since year 2000.

The figure has apparently gone down over the years. In 2007, 414 graduates' certificates were withheld. In 2008, 343 students did not graduate and the figure went down to 324 in 2009. There was a dramatic drop last year with only 24 students

not graduating.

Hlophe said: "Some students misused their fees, got into protests by blaming universities for withholding their certificates. Parents, in most cases, are not aware of what their children are up to."

ANCYL DUT secretary Gwajo Hadebe said institutions should stop withholding the certificates of students with outstanding accounts.

Gwajo proposed that a plan be put in place to trace students to pay their outstanding fees once they are in

full-time employment.

Student debt at DUT currently stands at R253 million while at Mangosuthu University of Technology it is R82 million.

DUT vice-chancellor Ahmed Bawa said students are allowed to write their examinations, but the results are withheld until they settle their accounts in full. At the time of going to print, *Sowetan* was unable to get the exact number of students whose certificates had been withheld because they owe fees.

Parents blast the SRC as DUT reopens

Khulekani Mazibuko

PARENTS yesterday welcomed the reopening of the Durban University of Technology.

The university's academic classes were suspended last week after students disrupted classes demanding financial aid for students who are unable to further their studies due to financial problems.

The parents have also appealed to students to elect a "responsible student leadership". One of the parents, Thami Mthethwa from KwaMsane, said he recognised the students' right to protest but stated that he did not approve of the SRC's decision to disrupt lectures.

"I was once a university student myself and I know about the intimidation that comes from the striking students. But times have changed and the university must take a strong stance against the interruption on learning," Mthethwa said.

He said he was worried when his son, Lindokuhle, returned home last week unexpectedly, complaining that the university was closed.

Second-year Engineering student Makhosi Dladla said the suspension of academic programmes affected her as she was preparing for her supplementary exams for next month.

"I needed more books from the library, but because the university was closed I had to find alternative ways like studying with friends to prepare myself," Dladla said.

Another parent, Zelda Hlengwa, said if the SRC interrupted classes again they should be dealt with harshly.

Schoolgirl drowns at botanical gardens

**CITIZEN REPORTER
AND SAPA**

A 13-YEAR-OLD schoolgirl drowned at the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Gardens yesterday.

Johannesburg Emergency Services (EMS) said the teenager, from the Johannesburg Muslim School,

was on a school outing when she and her friends broke away from the group and went swimming near the Witpoortjie waterfall.

“Thirty school kids were at the gardens for an outing. The young girl and two of her friends decided to go swimming in the waterfall.

She drowned and her friends called for help,” said EMS spokesman, Nana Radebe.

The girl’s body was recovered from the water by divers after about two hours of searching. Radebe said the girl’s father was present when the body was found

and had to receive counselling at the scene. “He was very traumatised. He could hardly speak,” she said.

Radebe said the school children had been warned before the tour not to go swimming or near the waterfall without a teacher or guide.

HIV/Aids awareness organisations welcome testing in schools

CITIZEN REPORTER

HIV/Aids awareness organisations have welcomed testing in schools but have added protecting the human rights of pupils in schools is essential.

This follows the announcement by the department of basic education (DBE) that it would introduce

HIV/Aids Counselling and Testing (HCT) campaign to schools.

The school HCT campaign would be made available to teachers, support staff and pupils.

Services would include HCT and other screening tests.

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) have called for the new HCT

campaign at schools, to be completed in a "measured, phased manner with thorough and consultative planning".

Education department spokesman Granville Whittle on Monday said the department would be handling the matter cautiously, following concerns raised in media reports

about the safety of pupils.

The TAC, The Yezingane Network and Equal Education, have said they welcome the department's plan to implement the HCT campaign to children older than 12 years of age.

The awareness groups added extending the campaign to teenagers, could benefit the youth if it was

carefully approached.

Treatment Action Campaign general secretary, Vuyiseka Dubula, said there needed to be clear guidelines and a long-term strategy that would look at the psychological support children needed during pre- and post-testing.

– healthnews@citizen.co.za

Nzimande must go – DA

THE Democratic Alliance (DA) yesterday called for Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande to resign because of a statement he made in the National Assembly on Tuesday.

DA spokesman Wilmot James said: "Time and again, Minister Nzimande has demonstrated through his words and actions that he is not fit to be a Cabinet minister let alone at the helm of a ministry that is supposed to be the custodian of critical and engaged thinking.

"He is a disgrace to our parliamentary system and constitutional democracy."

He said Nzimande's "latest reduction of legitimate criticism of President Jacob Zuma's administration to inappropriate and derogatory racial terms" merely confirmed his unsuitability.

In his speech during debate on Zuma's State of the Nation address, Nzimande, "lacking the wit" to address James's concerns about the

Plus
'We thought the era of cheap racial politicking, President Mbeki's favoured response to criticism, had died with his administration.'

state of education legitimately, resorted to "crude name-calling and portrayed the administration as helpless victims of a race conspiracy".

Nzimande said: "If the matric results are bad, this is taken as proof that this government of darkies is incapable. If the matric pass rate goes up, it means the results have been manipulated by these darkies."

James said Nzimande could play the game of racial victimisation as much as he liked in private.

"However, in our country's most important forum for debating issues that affect the lives of all South

Africans, he should at least treat the issues at hand with the respect they deserve and not with utter contempt."

James said he had raised legitimate concerns to all who cared about education in South Africa.

"Additionally, as far as matric results go, if Minister Nzimande is so confident of all the processes involved, why does he simply not state the facts? Perhaps it is because the fact is that the standards board, Umalusi, practised grade inflation, leaving matric results an uncertain determinant of education success, as most education analysts agree.

"We thought the era of cheap racial politicking, President Mbeki's favoured response to criticism, had died with his administration.

"However, it seems the paranoia that relies on such cheap ripostes runs very deep indeed.

"Minister Nzimande should be ashamed. He should leave and leave now," James said. – Sapa.