

Thirteenth Stars



A Botswana Examinations Council Publication Profiles of the 2021 BGCSE Top Achievers



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

13th ANNUAL
Excellence Awards



ABOUT

BOTSWANA EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL



BEC VALUES



EXCELLENCE

We have passion for quality work and outstanding performance characterised by the use of innovative and creative solutions.



INTEGRITY

We uphold best practice standards, honesty, professionalism and ethical behaviour.



TRANSPARENCY

We are open in all matters of public interest while safeguarding confidential information.



PEOPLE FOCUS

Our people: employees, the community we serve and the nation at large are profoundly important to us. We are thus committed to cultivating a culture that is characterised by mutual respect, professionalism, courtesy, compassion and sharing to build lasting and rewarding relationships.

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OUR VISION

To be a provider of accessible and globally competitive qualifications.

OUR MISSION

To provide a credible and responsive assessment and examination system.

- Advise the Ministry of Basic Education on assessment issues;
- Withhold or cancel examination results if candidates involved in examination malpractice;
- Develop standards for the conduct of examinations in all registered examination centres;
- Maintain standards in the system of examinations;
- Generally attend to matters related to the conduct of examinations;
- Develop examinations and assessments in general education, technical and vocational education training;
- Register and accredit examination centres for general education or equivalent including centres for technical and vocational education and training;
- Conduct regional and international comparability studies and other relevant research relevant to its mandate;
- Conduct training, registration and accreditation of examinations personnel;
- Make rules regulating the conduct of examinations and assessments;
- In consultation with the Minister authorise the release of examination results;
- And perform such other functions as may be conferred on it.



**“EXCELLENCE ISN'T A
ONE-WEEK OR ONE-YEAR
IDEAL. IT'S A CONSTANT.”**

Michael Jordan



Foreword by The Chief Executive Officer

This year Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) toasts to the thirteenth consecutive ceremony of the Annual Excellence Awards. This idea to celebrate excelling students and motivate their peers to also aim for top performance in their studies was birthed by the BEC in 2010. This noble initiative would soon grow to attract partnership from our parent ministry, Ministry of Basic Education (MoBe) and Office of the President. These partnerships have given the event the much-needed A grade status as we have seen them become very popular with students, schools and the Batswana at large. This year's ceremony is very exciting as for the past two years we were forced off stage by the Covid-19 pandemic. This however did not stop the BEC from honouring its commitment of rewarding our top achievers at all our three levels of education PSLE, JCE, BGCSE.

This magazine is an honour and everlasting memorabilia to our Top Ten BGCSE Excellence Awards recipients and two SPED students also featured in this booklet, their schools and families. This is well in line with the core intention of the BEC Excellence Awards which is to celebrate outstanding performance. The magazine started as a pilot project nine years ago profiling featuring the Fifth Stars and it passed the test to become very popular amongst students. The Magazine has proved to be indeed inspirational as our BGCSE Top Achievers always draw inspiration from this past Top Achievers by not necessarily having any contact with them but through interaction with this book. We have seen the book's demand cascade to Junior and Primary Schools around the country.

The custom-tailored stories are not only a point of reference to students but teachers, schools also benchmark against this book as Teachers and Headmasters share their teaching methods and what their schools are doing to get the best of their students. Parents are also part of their children's stories and give tips on parenting a Top Achiever. Having teachers and parents' names appearing on this book is a deliberate motive to motivate especially the hard-working teachers to keep up the good work of producing stars. It worth noting that putting together this product and the Awards ceremony is a one-man effort as the corporate world come on board for this course. The business community has made this event a success even at times when their future seemed to be in bleak, for that we remain grateful.

I would like to congratulate this edition's recipients, well done and keep working hard to reap more from your sweat as you still have dreams to fulfil.

I trust the ceremony is befitting to celebrate your efforts, and that this will be a good and inspirational read.



Dr. Moreetsi Thobega

Tsena Golden Star!!

Lightning does not strike in the same place twice, well maybe not that narrative has been broken, as Phemo Den Chaba a former Mater Spei College has set a record in the history of the BEC Excellence Awards. The Tutume born young man is the first student to finish top of his class at both JCE and BGCSE.

Finishing top of the BGCSE Class of 2021, Phemo earned himself a Golden Star Award, an award presented by his Excellency the president of the Republic of Botswana Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi. The award rewards him with more than just a handshake and a picture moment with the first citizen as he walked home with a MacBook and P15,000.00 (Fifteen Thousand Pula) richer.

'O a tsena Mr. President, Golden Star' was Phemo's phrase, call it daily song if you like as these were always the first words he would utter as soon as he opened his home gate when he arrived from school. This he would say shaking his shoulders in a manner that exudes confidence and high self-esteem. (Phemo was the President at his school), and did not he make it! This whole story was revealed by his mother Ms. Monica Chaba who said her son can be quite serious but has a great sense of humour. I was not sure if I should continue with the interview or put away my note pad, I mean come on the first statement gave me the whole story and a light moment. Anyway, the interview continued, nonetheless. The seriousness of our Golden Star is echoed by his actions, the young man is said to have spent all his time at home if not at school. "Once he is determined to get something done, he gets it," Ms. Chaba said. Though he is not a big fan of house chores, he does them when he must. I do not know if it is because the mother long gave us the whole story with her first statement or Phemo's father is a man of few words. Mr. Ntso Albert Chaba could only describe his son as dedicated and selfless, shaking his head in disbelief that resembles a proud moment. "He always held tutorials at home to help other students," he said. Phemo has set a good example for his little sister Katso. "He was always reading when I went to bed," she said. The baby sister went on to say her brother has made not only the family proud but the entire country.

He might have had the bragging rights at JCE finishing top of his peers, still approached BGCSE with caution and was careful not to invite complacency. "I was shocked and elated at the same time when I learnt that I was in the Top Ten. Reason being that even though I worked towards it tirelessly it seemed like a shot in the dark," he said. The 2021 King of academics said his came from the assurance that all the effort and smart work was not in vain. "As for my family they were excited and really proud of my achievement because it served as proof that they did an excellent job in raising a champion. Moreover, it was something they could take pride in," he stated. Phemo's journey started with him setting a goal to become a top student when he was doing my Form 4. "What kept me going was my faith in God. The degree of my determination and support from my family, my former Head of House, Ms. Smarts and My former class Teacher Mr. Lungisani also played a pivotal role in me achieving this. My friends and

schoolmates were also helpful in helping achieve this as they would offer to help me especially with the extra subjects I took, and it was really motivating to be in a supportive environment," he said. The top student also attributed his success to what he dubbed little things that he did to motivate himself such as writing in some of his notebooks, that he will be the top student in 2021, and practice a speech he would give as a top student. "Susan Charlie's stellar performance motivated me to work towards it. Another Top achiever that motivated me was Theo Ramagonono who also guided me through my final year and passed on some of her study material to me," he acknowledged.

He attests that his winning recipe would be working Smart. Despite doing twelve (12) subjects he was never under pressure because of how he approached his subjects. "I made sure that before I added other subjects I had made considerable progress on the syllabi I already had," he advised. He further said studying ahead made it all simple when the teacher now stepped in. "I also sacrificed a lot of sleep especially in my first and second terms but eased on it during the third term, because I had already done most of the work and I had to get enough sleep as a fresh and relaxed brain is essential during examinations period", he emphasised as he went on with his advice.

Mr. Lizwe Lungisani was entrusted with Phemo's custody as his Class Teacher since Form Four (4), he was also his teacher for mathematics, statistics and additional maths. Mr. Lungisani praised his student for having been disciplined and with the right attitude towards his studies. "I always encouraged him and also allowed him to study other subjects during my lessons," he said. Lungisani had so much faith in his boy such that sometimes he exempted him from writing tests. "He is just brilliant," he said. another support system at Mater Spei was his Head of House Ms. Zibisani Smarts. Ms. Smarts said much as Phemo was brilliant she never took chances as she kept his leash short and tight. "When he wanted to add the third extra subject, I refused but he went behind my back," she said. Smarts also credited Phemo's success to a motivational speaker Ms. Patricia Nkwane. "It's a blessing to have a Golden Star from my house as I am nearing retirement, he has honoured me," she said. The School Deputy Head Ms. Clara Kesianye praised the man who redeemed their pride as a hard worker. Mater Spei had for the first time in history failed to produce a Top ten achiever in 2020, so Phemo was just the confidence booster they needed. "We groomed him to make sure he lives up to his potential," she said. Kesianye stated that their darling student is a good example to their students as they are keen to emulate him.

Upon completing his studies he would like to study Finance and Investment in the United Kingdom. "This is purely because of my long-esteemed love for numbers and desire to work in the finance industry" he said.

Well you long said it "O a tsena Mr President, Golden Star." Congratulations, you aced it, enjoy you moment of glory. Drum roll!



1. Deputy School Head Ms. Clara Kesianye will be hoping their students are inspired by Phemo.
2. Ms. Zibisani Smarts will retire proud, having produced a Golden Star.
3. Mr. Lizwe Lungisani never doubted his student.
4. Phemo's family are proud their son keeps on delivering exceptional performance.
5. Another accolade will be added to Den's trophy cabinet.

The Heir



Naledi Senior Secondary School seems to have mastered the art of delivering their excelling students to promised land. The Class of 2021 is represented by **Katso Ketj** who says he simply inherited his predecessors' tactics.

The Moroka born native tapped on the school's constant glory to get his badges of academic excellence. Katso reckons he could have made it to the Excellence Awards podium for the JCE accolade, but he fell short of getting a Merit pass. "I started Form Four (4) with so much determination to get a BGCSE Excellence Award," he said. The party was almost spoiled as the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to be closed for the whole term, just two weeks after his senior secondary school journey started.

The 1st runner up to the 2021 Golden Star laurels having lost study time due to not having adequate study material during the lockdown period. "I did not know that one can actually study ahead against a syllabus copy, so I mostly relied on the material teachers shared through digital platforms" highlighted Ministerial Award winner. But this is a determined young man who knew the road to academic excellence won't be smooth, he took the challenge head on. However, the bumpy ride would not have been easier without the help of Naledi SSS previous Top Achievers like Danish Galebotswe. It was his Head of House Ms. Margret Lekorwe who linked him up with the previous stars of Naledi and that proved to be a master move as their guidance helped him to study better. "I literally inherited their study methods and that really worked for me," said the grateful young man. Katso failed to get at least six A* at the end of Form Four (4) and that should have spelt doom for him, but the star student refused to back down. So determined and brave was Katso that he pulled a mission impossible stunt; just two months before sitting for his BGCSE examination he registered for History Examination, a subject he has yet to study. "I started history classes in August and sat for exam in October," he revealed. He went on to say he finished the syllabus only two days before the examination. History has two components being Paper One (1) and Paper Two (2), one is African history and the other is European history. Oh yes you guessed right he aced the subject with an A*, in just two months, bravo bravo!!!

Katso was happy to share his magic recipe. The young man did not dwell much in studying subjects he was very good in and focused more on the ones that he was struggling with. "For example, if I study maths or don't study, I will still pass with flying colours, so I sacrificed it to study other subjects," he said with composure. Katso also said he never left anything to chance as he put everything that he knew on paper. Showing determination and willingness to

learn also goes a long way according to the class of 2021 number two. "When teachers see that you are putting effort in your studies, they also go all out to assist you," he said.

Indeed, he was a self-driven student, his Class Teacher Ms. Shirley Nkepe's interview is dominated by two words; self-driven and disciplined. "He was always working hard and kept his teachers on their toes" she said. Nkepe said her student was loving as he always shared knowledge with his colleagues and executed his responsibilities well. Ms. Margret Lekorwe who Katso earlier highlighted that she helped him liaise with previous Top Achievers described their star as a high-profile student. "He was very focused and made good use of the human resource in the school", she said. Lekorwe further noted that she always motivated her students to believe they can reach the stars and Katso did exactly that.

For Naledi SSS to consistently feature in the top ten achievers list, their secret is talent identification. This was revealed by the man at the helm of Naledi SSS Mr. Othusitse Othusitse who every year without fail ushers a student if not a few onto the Stars Magazine. "We approach them individually and assure them of their potential," he said. Moreover, the school has initiatives in place that are aimed at motivating students to keep improving their performance. The Headmaster hosts students with 48 points for lunch after end of month tests, and those with 6A* get gift vouchers as well. About the man who helped them protect their beautiful academic record, Othusitse said Katso had an appetite for knowledge and always assisted his peers, and in the process learning something at the same time.

Katso's family is in a celebratory mood for their son's achievement. Mrs Boingotlo Ketj said they are a Christian family, and her son was raised against a Christian background. "As his parents we are really delighted, we can only dance and ululate to express our joy", said the proud mother. His parents hired him private tutors and avoided giving him domestic chores as a way of giving him the much-needed support. "We encouraged him to be amongst Top Achievers", she revealed. When he is taking a break from books, the jolly and respectful young man loves watching gospel movies and reading novels and loves cooking. "Though blessed we so much talent he is humble and knows that ordinary people ought to be respected" praised the Top Achiever's mother.

Katso's efforts were rewarded with a Ministerial Award that also comes with a cash prize. What's next for Katso? It would be a dream come true to go to Oxford or Cambridge University to study Neurology, a choice influenced by his love for Biology.



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1. Naledi SSS School Head Mr. Othusitse Othusitse has mastered the art of producing Top Achievers.

2. Mr. Best Bechwa just joined Naledi SSS but with his short interaction with Katso, he found him to be a focused young man.

3. Ms. Margret Lekorwe linked Katso with their previous Top Achievers.

4. Ms. Shirley Nkepe was the Ministerial Award winner Class Teacher and attributed his success to discipline.

It was never mine

Ofentse Ramagapu caps off the Thirteenth Stars Top Three, giving his school Moshupa Senior Secondary School something to toast about for the second consecutive year, having only made their debut in the last edition.

The Moshupa born young man had his eyes locked on the Top Achievers scholarship and was confident he will get at least 6 A*. The young man got more than he would have been happy to settle for as he amassed a total of 8A* from all his BGCSE subjects including Statistics which happens to have been an extra subject he added to the minimum required and studied the subject at his own spare time. His bronze place on the podium is what he thinks he deserves if not more. Ofentse revealed that his JCE results were not anywhere near a true reflection of him. When his JCE results were released in 2019 he got the shock of his life, as a Second Class pass was not what he could have ever imagined because he believed that he had put weight on his punch, enough weight to get him at least a First Class. "It was not easy to accept, I was weak, my mind was restless, and I was stressed," his voice fades as he reveals the ordeal. The hurt still wells up on him more than a couple of years later, not even the redemption he got with his BGCSE results can heal the wound, at least not just yet. Slightly shaking his head in disbelief and disappointment his glands came through for him with just enough saliva to burry down the painful lump on his throat. "It was never mine," he said referring to the Second Class he got at BGCSE.

But what went wrong? In the build up to his final Form Three examination Ofentse was scooping all prizes that came his way and worked hard not to drop the ball, but the ball still dropped, dropped like a wrecking ball leaving behind a colossal damage. "Maybe I just panicked," he said. It was the young man's older brother who pulled him out of the wreckage with words of encouragement. "He told me it was not over and reminded me I still have a chance to redeem myself at BGCSE," he said. Ofentse expressed that the pain of coming second to those he had always finished ahead of was a bitter pill to swallow he says.

Armed with determination and shy to fall twice Ofentse started his raging inferno on to the last day. Moshupa Senior Secondary School teachers never saw a Second Class student in him. His Head of House (HoH) Mr. Garenathata Ramaphoi still can't believe their wonder boy graduated to Senior Secondary with a Second Class Pass. "The JCE Second Class wasn't his," said the jubilant Ramaphoi. The relief on the HoH's face shows, as if he is the one who had a point to prove, he is a teacher happy to have helped his student achieve his mission. Ramaphoi put humility top of the list of attributes that drove their Top Achiever to excellence, perhaps that is the reason why he is head over heels about the young man's achievement. Show me

a teacher that is not charmed by a humble student, moreover a Top Achiever. Ramaphoi who also taught Ofentse Geography said the top achiever always studied ahead of the syllabus and often asked for more assignments. Ms. Segolame Maligen was the first custodian of this highflyer as his Class Teacher. Maligen will forever be proud to have had a shot at overseeing a student who finished third in the Top Ten of a national examination. "It is quite a special privilege to have had been his Class Teacher, he made me proud", she said. The proud Maligen went on to say she encouraged her wonder boy not to be shy to consult even those teachers that didn't teach him whenever he needed help.

Moshupa Senior Deputy Head Mr. Caliston Tachinyunyi enlightened the profiling crew that their school has academic initiatives that are designed to carry everybody on board and their Top Achiever tapped on these to reach his full potential. Tachinyunyi was happy to shed more light on their turn around strategies, which include amongst others having two extra lessons in the afternoon for Form Five (5) students. About Ofentse, Tachinyunyi said the young man had fostered a very close relationship with teachers and sometimes brought to their attention some difficult questions they did not include in tests. Moshupa SSS's ambitions is to be amongst the best ten schools in the country by 2023. This revelation was made by the School Head Mr. Herbert Setume who is on his second year at the school and is confident they are well in course to turn around the school's outlook. While they wait for their turn around strategies to bear fruit, they will be happy to take consolation in having produced two students who qualified for the national top ten over two consecutive years, with this year's top achiever even making it to the Top Three. "All schools are the same, what lacks is coaching, motivation, and enforcing rules and regulations," said Setume. Setume who talked highly of discipline, said it is the corner stone of every institution. He says not only students should be disciplined, teachers and the support staff should also walk the talk.

Ofentse's mother Ms. Keolebale Ramagapu was also dealt a big blow when her son did not get his desired results at JCE because she had seen the hard work and determination he put into it. She said she had to put on a positive face to help him move on and stronger from the disappoint. "I was deeply hurt but I told him to dust himself up and go for his desired results at senior school," she said. Ms. Ramagapu is happy that her son listened to her advise and stayed away from waywardness was that marred their community. "I am just happy, my heart is full of joy," she kept saying.

Ofentse walked away with the BEC Chairperson's Award for finishing third of the 2021 BGCSE cohort. The Maruapula A Level student aspires to be a Neurologist.



1. School Head Mr. Herbert Setume is happy their turn around strategies are already bearing fruits.
2. Deputy School Head, Mr. Caliston Tachinyunyi was impressed by Ofentse's commitment.
3. Head of House Mr. Garena Ramaphoi never saw a second class student in Ofentse.
4. Ms. Segolame Maligen is proud to have been the wonder boy's class teacher.
5. Ofentse and his mother showing off his track record.

A Diamond is Shaped by a Diamond



Judging from their evergreen performance, St. Joseph College is a breeding ground for excellence. This gave **Jim Junior Letso James Mminakgomo** confidence that he has a fat chance to be a Top Achiever.

His move to St. Joseph might have been coupled with the hope that he might just be a Top Achiever; but he had no ambitions for a Top Ten status. "At the time, the idea of being amongst the BEC Excellence Awards recipients was not really established in my head," he revealed. The first born of three also entrusted himself with the responsibility of being a good example to his siblings. "Being the first born child, I am essentially supposed to set the bar relatively high especially considering my siblings' capabilities," he said. The Kanye born native went on to say this makes him feel like he is a matured investment especially given that he was not living with his parents at the time and had to keep eyes on the ball which he did with finesse. Jim sees himself as a pride and joy of his parents and the whole village that raised the child into a star. "Growing up I was exactly an 'uptight' child especially in my teenagehood, so this is a pat on the back for my parents for having moulded what many fail in parenting our generation," he said with a chuckle. "These boys were living their best lives. And at that point the goal was best refined in my head. I owed myself such a life," he said.

Jim reckons there would not have been a Top Ten toast for him without six of his study group members, who did more than just sharing and helped him keep his act together by always reminding him what was at stake. Expressing his gratitude, he thought his squad deserved to be inked on this beautiful chapter of his life. The gentlemen are Temo Matutu, Kopano Hunyepa, Magnus Makgasane, Tefo Lekoko, Kutlwano Mmika. Mojalefa Molelekwa, thank you gents for being your brother's keepers. "I came with a vision, lacking in work ethic and these boys had both, and almost instantaneously diamond began sharpening diamond," as he dished a ballad for his friends. He continued to say his friends used to force him into reading until the wee hours of the morning. Of course they knew they had school in a few hours but to them the idea was to tackle their work in bits to fortify the foundation before grappling with further content later at school. Jim also reserved praise for those who imparted knowledge, wisdom and guidance to him, his teachers. A big thank you to his subject teachers, class teacher; Ms. Theo Wantwa and Head of House; Mr. Tabona, who always reminded him that practise makes perfect and that he was not going to pass on his acquired knowledge alone. "I had a strong team behind me really" he said.

Ms. Wantwa who was showered with accolades by the Top Achiever for having been a good Class Teacher; affirmed that indeed their achievement was a collective effort. "He was a persistent, consistent team player," confirmed Wantwa. She went on to say it was quite a joy to also have been his English teacher as he always strived to improve. Wantwa

went on to say theirs was a two way street as she also learnt a lot from her student. Jim's Head of House Mr. Tabona made a shocking revelation. He said the young man was so focused and did not want any distractions in his quest such that he served as a Prefect for only two weeks before he resigned. "The young fellow prioritised his studies," he said. St. Joseph's only Top Ten finisher in this edition could not have made it without the defined mentorship programmes the school has adopted to encourage top performance. This is according to the School Head Ms. Sethunya Male who is happy that her school has featured on all the Stars magazine editions. Male said amongst their master tactics is an exchange programme in which they send their students to A Level schools to attend lessons so that they could be exposed to the environment and aspire to go to those schools through the Top Achievers programme which is reserved for any student who attains at least six A* at BGCSE. "As much as our colleagues benchmark from us from time to time, we are humble enough to appreciate that we also need continuous improvement," she said. The school also invites its alumni to motivate their students as a way of trying to retain the college's culture. It would not be a mission school Head's interview if it could end without echoing the importance of Christian values, prayer and discipline. "There is no academic excellence without prayer and discipline," she said. The College's Deputy Head Ms. Sekete Ngope said some teachers and gifted students utilised the morning study to teach and push the syllabus. "We capitalise on every minute we spend in school", she said. Ngope further said on Saturdays students came in to do their projects and sometimes wrote tests.

The path has always been clear for Jim, this is according to his parents who said they were not surprised by his results. His father Mr. Peter Mminakgomo described his son as a visionary who they never needed to remind what was at stake. "He is a good example of the fact that if we were all self-driven we could achieve a lot in life," he said. Though the young man had aimed higher and was disappointed not to have attained his target, his mother Ms. Boitshwarelo Mminakgomo said they were happy with his efforts because he did his best. "We had to talk him out of his disappointment and assured him that he had made us proud," she said. The said to be a talkative person by his peers, would be studying the dictionary and reading novels whilst relaxing at home. "He does house chores but does not like working at the fields," Boitshwarelo revealed. His father advice to other parents is to raise their children under Christian values to help keep them grounded.

The top achiever is currently undertaking the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Westwood International and his plan is to study Aerospace Engineering or Aeronautical and Astronautical Sciences in the US or UK. His prospective universities are Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University and California Institute of Technology.



1. Ms. Constance Male is happy her school is represented in the Top Ten yet again.
2. Mr. Sekete Ngope, the Deputy Head commended their programmes.
3. Head of House Michael Tabona kept Jim in check.
4. Ms. Theo Wantwa will cherish being associated with the star student as his class.
5. Jim's parents are very pleased with his performance.

The Bigger Picture

Kgosi Sepadile finished his JCE with just a Second Class and it was just okay for him as he indicated that he actually got what he thinks was equal to his effort.

The Moshupa born former Shashe River School student would only put more effort and set the bar high after interacting with his friend's cousin Palesa Baraki, who is a former Top Achiever and a beneficiary of the elite scholarship. Kgosi has always had a dream of studying abroad and meeting someone who was already living that dream made him realise he was not dreaming beyond his limits, he just had to do something about it. "After meeting Palesa I was inspired to chase my dream," he noted. The young man confessed that before meeting his role model, school was just school he did not really understand the importance of education and cared less about the quality of his pass. "For as long as I was not failing, it was good enough," he revealed. A chance to go abroad would line him up for better opportunities he reckons, and this became driving force. "It was now about what was in it for me, I looked at the bigger picture," he said. A picture so beautiful, when Kgosi talks about his overseas dream you literally see the fantasy in his eyes.

The Top Achiever leaked his Excellence Award formula as he shared a few tips he tried and tested. Besides YouTube videos coming in handy for him, Kgosi capitalised on listening attentively in class. Paying attention helped him grasp what teachers had to offer as he schemes, teachers have a lot of information that is not in textbooks. "This also reduced the burden of the workload as he did not need to read much," tipped the young man. Kgosi spoke highly of his tactics which he said helped him to have a 'smooth exam'.

Kgosi's latest academic achievement has left his mother Ms. Boikaego Sepadile in shock, a shock that led her to the therapy room as she needed to undergo counselling to help her believe the dream has come to life. This perhaps is because she has been there every step of the way and she has seen her son's academic struggles and gradual improvement to even surpassing her expectations. It was only until Standard Five (5) that he showed what she said was an amazing improvement. Ms. Sepadile who is a teacher by profession said she helped her son with breakthrough at home. "I constantly visited his teachers and monitored his schoolwork to make sure he passes his PSLE," she said. She emphasised that being in touch with her child's progress at school assisted her to realise that

he needed remedial work, which she requested for her son. Never mind that he had previously needed remedial classes, Kgosi refused to have a tutor when he was preparing for his BGCSE. He however, knew that no man is an island and found another bird of the same feather Florence Pillar who also made it into the Top Ten. "He is a very determined person, once he puts his mind on something he gets it done," praised the mother.

An incredibly good cook, maybe it is because he took Food and Nutrition as one of his optional subjects. "He is very good in the kitchen, but he barely cooks," his mother said as she shared about Kgosi's personality. She went on to say her son had a very smart approach when he wants something especially sneakers as he has undying

Kgosi might have set a record at his former school Shashe River School as his lowest mark in Mathematics sits at a whopping 88%. His Maths teacher who was also his Class Teacher Ms. Golebaone Themba will surely miss the brilliant student she had in Kgosi. "He was a committed hardworking student," she said. Ms. Lenah Lekgetho who served as Kgosi's Head of House said it was a pleasure to have her student excelling. "His performance has never got us worried as we knew he was on the right track to make us proud," she said. The School Head Mr. Mpaladzi Majingo said he is very happy to have surprised many with their success. "We are glad to have produced Top Achievers almost from nowhere, especially that the school has not been doing well," he said. Majingo said even the Tonota community despised their school and transferring their children to other schools, which made it difficult for them to excel. He said now they have changed the perception, and they are hoping to maintain good performance as many parents have started to prefer their children to study at Shashe River School. His immediate Lieutenant Mr. George Showa is happy their tactics have delivered them to the promised land. "We put in place deliberate programmes to react to the challenges we faced as the school" he said. Showa promised that they will make sure they feature in the Top Achievers Magazine in future.

Kgosi will still have to keep his overseas fantasy on hold at least for two years as he needs to complete his A Levels before going to study a finance related programme at a country of his choice.



1. School Head Mr. Mpaladzi Majingo says Kgosi has helped change perceptions about the school.

2. Deputy School Head Mr. George Showa trusts this is the beginning of glory days.

3. Ms. Lenah Lekgetho was Kgosi's Head of House and she is proud he kept the promise.

4. Kgosi's Class Teacher will probably never come across a student who scores 88% as the lowest score in Mathematics.

5. Boikaego Sepadile holds her son's portrait with pride.



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Excellence Awards



GOLDEN STAR
GOLDEN STAR

Phero Den Chaba
Mafer Spei College

**PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD RECIPIENT**
BGCSE 2021



What a thrill



When you work hard towards something you expect nothing but good dividends. Letlhakane Senior Secondary School's **Calvin George** was not surprised by his results and the Top Ten spot.

Letlhakane SSS might not be regulars in producing Top Ten finishers, but they are not newbies either; they have once tasted the pecks of producing a Top Ten student through Pego Letebele. Speaking on behalf of the School Head Mr. Kelebogile Khamfore expressed delight at being back on the map. Khamfore did not waste time as credited their victory to the support that they enjoy from the PTA and their partners like LUCARA and Debswana amongst the many sponsors they have. "They help us to create and retain a motivated environment," he said. A man who keeps tabs with everything that happens within his school Khamfore is happy that the boy he always saw arriving at school around 0530hrs has reaped fruits of his sweat. "A very hard working student who never did wrong," described the Acting School Head. Calvin was described by his Head of House Ms. Florah Letebele as an ambitious student with a zeal to excel and very disciplined. "Such a student is a motivation to teachers to go an extra mile," she said. Letebele went on to share about the initiatives her House relied on to get the best out of their students. "After doing results analysis we invite parents to discuss their children's performance," she said. Mr. Onalethata Neo is a proud Class teacher and enjoys the feeling of having nurtured the school's gem to his success. He admitted that the Top Achiever served him a humble pie as his first impressions did not put him anywhere near an excelling student. "He coupled his talent with discipline and self motivation," he said.

changed his studying pattern after he realised that he concentrates more at night. He would sleep immediately after school and woke up to read through the night effectively. Though COVID-19 was a disadvantage to some extent he took advantage of the class shifts, he mentioned that he would remain behind after his shift to study, sometimes he went to school early to read at the hostels with the permission of the Boarding Master. "I would do that because my friends who were as focused as me were mostly boarders and I wanted to study alongside them as motivation," he said. Calvin went on to explain that the discussions he had with his counterparts on challenging concepts and questions gave him a different perspective. One other tactic that came to his aid was downloading marking schemes on the internet and mark his revision tests for himself. "Having a record of all the topics I did not understand well and revisiting them in a planned spaced period of time helped the concepts to sink in," he advised.

The excitement of engraving his name on history books of the BEC Excellence award is an everlasting feeling. "Though being a Top Achiever did not come as a surprise, being at the top is a thrilling and delightful moment. My family was overwhelmed by emotions, some even cried (tears of joy, I hope)," he said. He went on to say from the day he started his Form Four (4) being a Top Achiever was the ultimate goal, so he was willing to give whatever it took to reach that goal.

Calvin's desire to improve his family background is well appreciated by his mother Ms. Malebogo George who said his son is her hope. "I am counting on his success," she said. Ms. George said she admired her son's die hard attitude as he believes that nothing is impossible, something he always reminds them at home. "He always asks us what our goals are and encourage us to live our lives with purpose," she said. The pride of the George family also got praises from his aunt Ms. Ndapiwa George who gave a similar account with that of Calvin's mother. "He is a go getter; a very determined young man," she said. she went on to say her nephew was a living testimony that one can achieve anything they want in life.

Upon completion of his A Levels he would like to pursue Engineering Science at University of Toronto, Canada, to specialise in Engineering Mathematics Statistics and Finance, because of his genuine love for analytical work and the transferable skills the course offers that he can apply to boost his personal finances and be financially stable.

Calvin Boikarabelo's biggest motivation to show BGCSE flames is having financial freedom and changing the outlook of his family background. "I was driven by my strong desire to be financially independent, so that I can be able to look after my parents," he emphasized. Calvin has always been thriving right from primary school but only got to know about the top achievers' programme in 2020 after the release of the 2019 BGCSE results and was very much impressed by Loago Katholo who a top achiever was. "Since then, I have been in touch with him as I started to understand that being a top achiever is something I would like to go for. He has always been there to guide me through the entire process and for that I appreciate him, a lot," he acknowledged.

Knowing very well it was not going to be easy he was determined to work extra hard. He



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1. Mr. Kelebogile Khamfore LSSS, Acting School Head is grateful for the support his school enjoys.
2. Head Of House Ms. Florah Letebele said Calvin's commitment motivated teachers to go an extra mile.
3. Class Teacher, Onalethata Neo nurtured their gem.
4. LSSS are giving Calvin the honour he deserves.
5. Calvin has collected many awards as displayed by his family.

A craft of many hands

Titus Machaka came through for Selibe Phikwe Senior Secondary School who are also familiar in producing top ten finishers. His inspiration did not come from afar as he wanted to emulate his brother Millennium Machaka who is a final year medicine student abroad.

Being a Top Achiever and finishing in the Top Ten is only the first phase of his ultimate dream, just like his role model he wants to study medicine. "From a young age I have always been fascinated by the study of the heart, so I want to study Cardiology," he said. Other than finding a role model in his older brother, Titus was also inspired by 2017 Golden Star Lefika Matlho who in his story revealed that he scored 55% in a test just before his final examination but was not discouraged. The former SPSS student reminisces on what he described as a difficult but blissful journey, his face lighting up as he unpacks it all, one can see he misses the thrill. "My success is a craft of many hands," he said. He refuses to bask on the glory alone and credits his studying buddy Thabang Boy for having held his hand along their long journey. He went on to advice that even those he helped, they in a way helped him as it was also to his advantage. Titus is currently living his dream as an A Level student at Maru A Pula, the school he has admired all his life. "I am glad it finally happened I worked so hard towards this," he said. The aspiring Neurologist says life comes from within therefore self-belief is important. The tried and tested study method of the Top Achiever is the Pomodoro technique where one takes short breaks in between studying.

This is not only something to celebrate by SPSS, but it has also inspired their students to believe that yes, they can, this is according to the School Head Ms. Dorcas Olebile who vowed that the school will work very hard to maintain the legacy. Olebile hailed the discipline in her school as very impressive from both the students and teachers, "it is an amazing community," she said. Olebile took the opportunity to also congratulate their man of the moment. "A well raised child who

needed no motivation to do his school work," she said. SPSS second in command Mr. Mojadi Motswaiso is confident that the school will continue to produce students who feature in the Top Ten list of achievers. "We have initiatives to stretch our Top Students to excel," he said. Motswaiso went on to dissect the strategies that gives him confidence, amongst them he mentioned that the school is always striving to finish the syllabus by second term and said going forward they will introduce Saturday study time for the Form Five (5) students during the examinations period.

Mr. George Sentele who was tasked with being the Head of House (HoH) for the Top Achiever remembers their star as a respectful student who interacted with learning content and teachers very well. "He was well aware of the Top Achievers programme and was always preaching about it," noted Sentele. The head over heels HoH went on to say the student always strived to improve the quality of his grades, he was just never satisfied of his performance. Titus had a mentor in one Ms. Rachel Maupong. Her testimony of his understudy is in sync with that of the HoH. A very disciplined, focused and open student. "I told him to think beyond 6A* and just go for broke," she said.

History has repeated itself for the Machaka family, a miracle they will forever cherish. Titus's father Mr. Jonathan Mupamanga expressed gratitude in seeing yet another son lining himself up for an opportunity to go and study abroad. "It doesn't only make us proud as a family but it is a fulfilment to send children to school and they excel beyond expectations" he said. Mr. Mupanga is already fascinated by the idea of having raised two doctors. The aspiring doctor's mother Esnati Machaka was still overwhelmed by emotions battled with containing her tears of joy forcing out her voice, to share her proud story. "My boy worked very hard, day and night," she said. With the little speech she could manage with her squashed voice she went on to say her child was a very disciplined God fearing child and that guided him to excellence.



1. SPSS School Head Dorcas Olebile said the school was an amazing community.

2. Deputy School Head Mr. Mojadi Motswaiso has been there before, having seen the school's previous Top Achievers.

3. George Sentele, the Head of House closely monitored Titus progress.

4. Class Teacher Ms. Rachel Moupong encouraged Titus to aim beyond 6A*.

5. Titus family in jovial mood.

From Sorrow to Joy



They might be both salty on the tongue but surely tears of joy tastes much better than tears of sorrow. **Florence Pillar** has had a taste of both, she used to cry when she failed but when she received her BGCSE results the eyes welled up, only this time her heart was full of joy.

Giving her former school Shashe River School their debut in the Top Achievers Top Ten as one of their two Top Ten finishers Florence dismisses the narrative that she was a hard worker but rather a smart one. "I hate to believe I am a hard worker because I know I work smart, I identified my goal, and I focused on nothing but it," she said. Though she had worked smart and threw her best shots in the bout, her results were still a surprise especially that results came out when she was least expecting them. "There were hopeless moments before, so my hopes were not too high, but it had been something I wanted so much. Realising I now have it, I was overjoyed," she highlighted. Florence attributed her inspiration to her parents, teachers, family and friends who believed so much in her. She went on to say for her it was more than liking to excel and being in the spotlight as she realised how far that could take her because of a top achiever like Palesa Bakari, a 2017 top achiever who happens to be her cousin. "I remember telling her that I will join her soon, I guess it is just the power of the tongue," she said. When asked to share her winning formula, Florence who is not new to the Excellence Awards said, "I have been asked this question hundreds and hundreds of times, mostly by aspiring students and that makes me even more proud of myself because now I am someone people can look up to for advice." She said for her, the only way was having purpose and putting in the smart work possibly hard work as well.

The Tonota based school is not taking their entry onto the Excellence Awards stage for granted. The Shashe River School Head Mr. Mpaladzi Majingo said he is very happy to have surprised many with their success. "We are glad to have produced Top Achievers almost from nowhere, especially that the school has not been doing well," he said. Majingo said the community was shunning the school and taking good students away which made it difficult for them to excel. He said now they have changed the perception and they are hoping to maintain good performance as parents are currently taking their good students to other schools. His second in command Mr. George Showa reiterated that indeed they are happy their tactics have delivered them to the promised land. "We put in place deliberate programmes to react to the challenges we face" he said. Showa promised that their school will be a permanent feature in the Top Achievers Magazine. Shashe River School also has an initiative where they

track performance from PSLE and JCE to identify their potential Top Achievers, this was revealed by Ms. Lenah Lekgetho who also said they track students' monthly performance. "We conducted workshops to equip students with skills on how to learn effectively," she said. Lekgetho labelled Florence 'a go getter', a focused fighter. If there is one person who had faith that Florence will make it to the 2021 BGCSE cohort top ten is her Class teacher Ms. Golebaone Themba. "She had a fighting spirit and never gave up even when she was outperformed by other students," she praised.

A child who is serious about school work and not into wayward ways is every parent's pride, so is Florence to her father Mr. Stephen Pillar, who comes across as a man of few words, speaks highly of her daughter, you could tell this is his proudest moment. "She has a dream to achieve and I trust her to do just that," he said. He advised her daughter to be more strict on herself now that she is staying away from the guidance of her parents. Sitting just next to her husband Ms. Ontlametse Pillar is all smiles and just cannot wait for her moment to talk about her daughter. Ms. Pillar shared light moments she misses about her daughter's days in her house. "She doesn't like disturbance and she would often leave her mother notes to remind her of her study schedule," she chuckles as she reveals their secret. The proud mother advises that parents must foster close relationships with their children so that they can be open with them. A parent who has always been interested in her child's education still remembers majority of her teachers to whom she paid gratitude. "Mma Balopi was Florence's Pre School Teacher, Mr. Rakhabi at Primary School, Mr. Molefhi for debate at Junior Secondary and her teachers at Shashe Ms. Dineo Mosojane, Mr. Mfakosi, and Mr. Richard are some of Florence's teachers that come to mind" she said. Thank you teachers and well done.

The Tonota born young lady was not stingy with disclosing information, she had a handful to share with so much fluidity. She gave us an insight in her future. "I have chosen a much different path from many top achievers in Botswana. I am doing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme because I wanted a challenge and I must say I got the challenge," she said with a smile and reassuring confidence. Florence went on to say her latest challenge empowers her spirit every day since she started her course. Upon completing her IBDP she will aspire to pursue her purpose in a prestigious and good university. "My mind is still not set on where exactly, but I know I want to do medicine. My mother tells me that she knows that if I want something I make sure to get it every time and that is just what I will do."



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1. The School Head, Mr. Mpaladzi Majingo is happy for their debut.
2. Deputy School Head, Mr. George Showa promised the school will be consistent contributor to the Top Achiver's list.
3. Ms. Lenah Lekgetho is happy her House produced a 'go-getter'.
4. Florence impressed her Class Teacher Ms. Golebaone Themba with her fighting spirit.
5. Florence parents pictured with some of her accolades accumulated over the years.

No Room for Dissapointment

This was a year of debutants, Mahalapye's Madiba Senior Secondary School also finally had a bite at the cherry courtesy of **Kato Kose**.

This is yet another beautiful under dog story. Two years ago, when he finished his JCE one would not have put him anywhere near the BGCSE Top Ten or at least in the list of Top Achievers. This would not have been out of undermining him or disrespect, his grades were not in his favour: but if you have read any of the previous editions of the magazine you would know it has become a common trend to see JCE Second Class students make it through on the BGCSE with some even going all the way to become Golden Stars. The Maape born native only got to hear of the Top Achievers Programme and Excellence Awards when he got to senior secondary school and thought he should give it a shot. Some laughed at him and bluntly told him to his face that he was too late for the part, nonetheless he fancied his chances. "I was not discouraged but rather, I embraced the challenge" the now Top Achiever and Excellence Award recipient said. Posing a tiny figure, his speech is parallel to his body structure, a typical example of a dynamite.

Kato said BGCSE was a now or never moment for him and he knew he had to make a clinical finish. "I did not want to disappoint my mother, she has all her hopes on me" he said. His goal was to do it for himself, but as you would bet, when his school realised there have a potential winning card, they also pinned their hopes on him to be the first Madiba SSS to finish in the Top Ten. Kose lived up to that expectation and delivered a Top Ten spot; now Madiba SSS will be counted amongst those schools that ever produced a BEC Annual Excellence Award recipient. The School Head Ms. Masego Gaorengwe sees this as a big achievement that will motivate and inspire both students and teachers at her school. "We are on a turn around strategy, and it is not easy to uproot bad habits, so this will help our case," she said. She commended the PTA for always coming through for the school and said the students and teachers' attitude has also improved which gives them hope for better days. Although she is new to the school, she has interacted with their shining example. "He has a vision and a positive mindset," she applauded. Gaorengwe took the opportunity to also give feedback on the BEC Excellence Awards. "This initiative shows that BEC is not only an assessment body, it shows that they also care and are making an effort to motivate students to pass," as she gave BEC its flowers. A cool guy but very inquisitive, that is how the school Deputy Mr. Omphemetse Maitshoko will always remember the man who

changed their fortunes. He hailed Kato for not being selfish as he also wanted other students to do well. "He would identify his peers' short comings and asked his teachers to help them," he said. Although the school's overall performance was not as good, Maitshoko applauded Kato for his contribution in helping them get a quality pass.

A student who complied to rules and regulations to the T. Kato's house at school was blessed to have him as one of their own. Not only did he make them proud, but he also tried to have his house students ride on his wave of success. "Him and his other colleagues went around classes during morning studies to offer remedial lessons," revealed the Head of House Mr. David Mathengwane. For his Class Teacher Ms. Neonyana Kenosi, having Kato as her student was nothing but a beautiful time. "As soon as I realised that he had a positive motive I looked forward to working with him," she said. One thing that impressed the Class Teacher was leaning that her star student did not have a mobile phone. The Biology teacher Mr. Gasefete touched Kato's life in a way he will never forget. He said Gasefete had an admirable fashion sense and he was just a gentleman. "The way he dressed and conducted himself was just inspirational," he commented. Gasefete often gave his students pep talk and Kato said he tapped on this fountain of wisdom. The Star further advised that humility is particularly important. "I never saw anyone as a minor, I was helped by many people along this journey," he said.

Ms. Monkgori Kose who is the Top Achiever's mother said when she saw a series of stars on her mobile phone screen when she received the results SMS, she was amazed so much that she could not even say a word. Though this interview was conducted few months after the 2021 BGCSE results were released, she was still not yet alive to the reality. "Twice I tried to get him a tutor and he turned my offer down, insisting that he would cope on his own," she said. She paused for a moment shaking her head as she giggled. "This boy has been writing his name as Dr. Kato Kose since his junior school," she shared. He is said to have justified this by saying he will be a doctor one day.

Kato grew up asthmatic and it was not nice to him to suffer like that, but he the admired the care doctors always gave him and that has inspired him to become a doctor so that he can also help others. He is currently doing A Levels in Maru A Pula School.



1. Kato has given his School Head Ms. Masego Gaorengwe hope that their fortunes will change for the better.
2. Nothing but admiration by the School Deputy Mr. Omphemetse Maitshoko.
3. Mr. David Mathengwane hailed their Top Student for being a team player.
4. Class teacher Ms. Neonyana Kenosi will miss working with Kato.
5. Kato's family posing with his certificates.

Go For Broke



Thabo John of Masunga Senior Secondary School never had competition in his mind he just focused on running his race.

The Sebina born young man is a first time winner of an Excellence Award after getting motivated by former colleague Hakim Mokwena who featured in the last edition of Top Ten finishers. Thabo John said he only learnt of the Top Achievers programme after completing his JCE and that it became his target when he started his BGCSE journey. The Top Achiever credited discipline for the crucial role it played in ushering him to victory. "The discipline instilled at school was very helpful," he said.

Some decry the COVID-19 pandemic, but for Thabo it presented him with the much needed sunshine to make hay. "The lockdown gave me a chance to finish the syllabus," he said. Though discipline headlines his success story, his teachers and parents had a good account of him. They described him as a well mannered child who even gave his peers guidance. Ms. Nzwadzi Bakani Tabona, Thabo's elder sister said his brother was a hard worker and humble person. "He has always called his friends to order and advised them to aim to be Top Achievers," she said. This narrative was given weight by the young man's mother Ms. Ndina John Bakani Tabona as she labelled him a respectful child. Ms. Tabona reckons this was due to proper parental guidance as she always advised him to choose friends wisely.

According to Thabo's mother the young man never attended pre-school but within two weeks in Standard One (1) he was already showing signs of intelligence and he never dropped the ball. "He has always been a Top Performer and was the only A student at his junior school when JCE results came out", she said. Ms. Tabona is all smiles as she paints the picture of their journey. "I never even worried about buying him a laptop as he won many because of his continuous outstanding performance," she said. A simple ordinary child who walked to school never mind that his parents had cars, Thabo also did house chores and loves cooking but going to the cattle post is just not his thing. Though she is the older sibling Nzwadzi sees her brother as an inspiration to her and she vowed to give it her all to pass at university. "He likes reading a lot, I should copy him going forward," she said.

Not a very popular face amongst teachers but his results made his name a household name. "Socially he was not a very interactive person, I often gave him topics to present in class and eventually he gained confidence to even present at House level," said Mr. Tapsen Patane who was

Thabo's Head of House at Masunga SSS. He said their student was a gem who always gave above expectations performance. Patane who also Thabo's Biology teacher, was full of praises of his Top Achiever as he went on to make a bold statement that the young man is amongst the best three he has ever taught in his lengthy career. "If you went to class unprepared he would embarrass you, he even taught Form 4 students better than some teachers", praised Patane. Mr. Kumbudzanani Pheko was the gemstone's Class Teacher and taught him Agriculture. He sang the same song of praise as his colleague Patane. "From a distance he is a bit reserved and didn't come across as a brilliant student," he said. He piled accolades to their outstanding performer saying that he is a rare, unique student who easily understood difficult concepts, with a burning desire to learn. "I planned some lessons with him, he was very analytical," praised Pheko. The school hierarchy is even more grateful as the Top Achiever's quality pass was more than a drop in the ocean as the school's overall performance saw them finishing top of the log standings of Senior Secondary Schools in Botswana. The Deputy School Head Mr. Reuben Lerothodi thanked their former student for showing composure and showing that he knew what his business in school was. "The young man was a diligent worker, I would often see him around school helping his peers," he said. Lerothodi went on to pay gratitude to his team saying they have determined teachers that sacrifice for the students. He also said the village leadership was hands on, especially with issues of discipline. The school also enjoys annual sponsorship from Mr. Tebogo Eric through the adopt a school initiative. Senior Teacher I Guidance and Counselling Mr. Nsununguli James who mentored the Top Achiever said he was an asset to the school. He added that they mentored him and in turn Thabo would motivate other students.

The much-praised Top Achiever said he learnt better by helping others. Studying with other Top Achievers like Phemo Chaba was also one of his strategies to get the most out of his potential. He also said he spent sleepless nights studying. "I was not in competition, I just wanted to maximise on marks," he said. he also advised that students should use various sources to beef up their knowledge and information. Thabo reserved special mention to his teachers Ms. Mogotsi, Mr. Patane and Mr. Pheko.

The Maru A Pula A Level student aspires to study Neurology to help alleviate suffering. "I am a sensitive person I do not like to see people suffering," he said.



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1. Deputy School Head, Mr. Reuben Lerothodi paid gratitude to the commitment of his school teachers.
2. Mr. Tapsen Patane went over board to make sure their Top Achiver gets the best he could.
3. Senior Teacher I, Guidance and Couselling Mr. Nsununguli James helped Thabo with his confidence.
4. Mr. Kumbudzani Pheko was Thabo's Class Teacher and sometimes prepared for their Agriculture lessons.
5. Theo's Mother, Botsala Ramogonono said her daughter has always been consistent in her performance over the years.

From the ground up

Born in Mogojogojo nineteen years ago **Tsholofelo Modome** only has blurry pictures of how the world looks like as she suffers from a partially impaired vision. Similarly, she has never had a clear picture of a BEC Excellence Award accolade but that did not stop her of dreaming about getting herself one.

The Mogojogojo young lady lost her mother when she was only eight and was left in the good care of her grandparents. Tsholofelo credits her grandparents with having raised her well by instilling good values and a fighting spirit in her. "My grandparents are strict and always encouraged me to study hard," she said. her grandparents made sure her needs were always catered for and this motivated Tsholofelo to put more effort into her studies so that she could relief them of the burden of taking care of her and her siblings in future. "My young siblings have been my biggest motivation as one day I will need to take care of them," she said.

As much she had her eyes set on the big price, Tsholofelo was not immediately guaranteed success as she had doubts that it was within reach. "I have always had the desire to get this award, but my performance was just average," revealed the recipient. A confidence booster had to come from somewhere, and it was passing her JCE that gave her a shot in the arm, and she started to believe that her trophy cabinet will get decorated. "My JCE results surprised me and showed me that I have wait takes," she said. She further advised that education and learning need a positive mindset across all subjects. One other thing she attests worked for her is that she gave it her all and guarantees it is a working formula. "I have had days that I felt demoralised, but my teachers and peers always came through for me," said the 2021 Visual Impairment champion.

One of the people that always came through for Tsholofelo was her Class Teacher at Molefi Senior Secondary School Mr. Stephen Matswe, who saw potential in their Award Recipient and put in a good shift to help her cross the finishing line. "She had the passion you expect from a student, and I could see she was destined for success," he said. Matswe encouraged his students to take advantage of the school initiatives like morning study

and Tsholofelo saluted to this advice. Molefi Senior Secondary has been entrusted with the responsibility of producing the best out of the Visually Impaired students as it is the only senior secondary school in Botswana with SPED unit for visually impaired students. Mr. Khangelani Tshebo the School Headmaster said they do not take this responsibility for granted as they give both mainstream and SPED students equal commitment and a levelled ground of competition. Tshebo said students like Tsholofelo who bring a positive mindset to the school makes it easier for them to deliver on their tough task. "She is someone you can never complain about because she had her priorities right," he said. Tshebo went on to say such quality pass by one of their own is good point of reference for the school and hopes that they will tap on her glory to produce more students of her quality. Well behaved, very committed and dedicated are the attributes Ms Onalenna Mmutle attached to the young lady. "She always studied with high performing student and gave herself extra work," she said. Mmutle, was standing in for Senior Teacher I SPED.

At Mogojogojo Tsholofelo's grandparents are toasting to their success of seeing their granddaughter entering the gates of university and are optimistic she will bring home that degree. Ms. Virginia Sibanda, Tsholofelo's Grandmother struggles to find composure through the interview but eventually praised her darling grandchild. "How nice it is to see a child getting rewarded of her hard work and discipline," acknowledged the granny. Virginia hailed her shining star for being an obedient and respectful child. "She is a humble and quiet child, she said. Tsholofelo likes spending time in her bedroom, more so that she is allergic to firewood smoke which must always. Humility dominates the conversation with her grandparents as her grandfather Mr. Kadimo Tshwene also heaped praises on Tsholofelo's good behaviour. "She must continue with her right attitude, it will take her far," he said.

Tsholofelo has always dreamt of working on radio because she thinks it is fun and it gives one a chance to interact with different personalities. She is a first year Broadcasting and Journalism (BA Hons.) student at Limkokwing University.



1. Mr. Khangelani Tshebo heads one of the mixed schools in the country and is happy for the eye opening challenges.
2. Ms. Onalenna Mmutle giving an insight on the operations of the SPED Department.
3. Mr. Stephen Matswe who was Tsholofelo's Class teacher shedding light on his students.
4. Tsholofelo has made her Grandparents proud.

Unbroken



Precious Nonhlanhla Guluzwa could have long given up on school, her will power was strong enough to see her through her twelve years of basic education.

The Maposa young lady who was born with hearing impairment never had it easy as her early days of education were marred with delays due to lack of schools with Special Education classes in her area. Moreover, her mother struggled with getting her an assessment report that would have easily aided her enrolment in schools with SPED classes in Francistown which is the closest to her home village which is in the Nata Gweta constituency. Her mother Ms. Kenna Guluzwa is convinced she fought tooth and nail to give her daughter access to education but the obstacles she encountered almost made her give up, but she refused to give up. Precious was enrolled in a mainstream class for her PSLE, and she managed to complete her PSLE though her marks showed she had not harvested as much as she might have scored under favourable conditions. Her mother is relieved that her daughter finally got a fair chance to showcase what she was capable of but the sorrow in her voice and face could not be missed as she went down the memory lane. "I am very happy with her efforts, since Form One (1) she has been doing better than her peers," said the mother.

Precious did her Form One (1) and Form Two (2) at Nxakato Junior Secondary School in Sowa Township and she was eventually transferred to Tashatha Junior Secondary School in Tati Siding; one of the schools the government has deliberately earmarked to cater for students with special needs, particularly hearing impairment. The good news however, came with the condition that Precious would have to start her JCE from scratch, which proved to be the best thing to have ever happened to her. "It was only then that I learnt sign language and I started understanding what was being taught," she said. When she just thought her struggles were over and she could finally have something to show when she finished school, she was confronted with another ordeal of being bullied. Born without a silver spoon in her mouth,

Precious struggled with basic needs like proper uniform and toiletries as registering her to have a disability card under the Social and Community Development programmes proved futile. She gets teary as she recalls how other students made her social welfare comical. "I almost quit school because of these daily jokes they made about me," she revealed. Her guardian angel would come in the form of her Head of SPED at Maun Senior Secondary School where she did her BGCSE, Ms. Neo Mafunye who would from time to time sacrifice her money to help her meet her daily needs and transport fare to go home during school holidays.

With a broken heart she soldiered on armed with determination to pass well and enrol for nursing, so that she could get her family out of poverty. "I have always wanted to be a nurse, but I had doubts I could make it, but that confidence came back when I got to senior secondary school," she said. Her mother stands resolute that she will support her daughter to see her realise her dreams.

Ms. Neo Mafunye who taught her English revealed that although Precious was deaf she had a bit of speech. "She was proficient in speech and wrote very good compositions," she said. She described her as a sociable person who was always eager to help her colleagues. Mr. Kitsoentle Ramakoba a specialist in Hearing Impairment was privileged with being the Top Achiever's Class teacher. "She had a lot of interest in learning and took part in study groups," he said. Ramakoba described his student as neat and said she took part in extracurricular activities. Acting Deputy School Head Mr. Hureva Tjavanga said the school had programmes to uplift both mainstream and SPED students in their attainments. The school also holds performance clinics to elevate learning. "SPED teachers are pulling all the stops to make the SPED unit a fully-fledged unit," he said.

Precious is currently at home and hoping to get admitted to a Nursing School or any other tertiary institution to further her studies.



1. Maun SSS Deputy School Head Mr. Hureva Tjavanga had a mouthful of praises for their student.

2. Head of SPED Maun SSS Ms. Neo Mafunye taught Precious English and always came through her welfare issues.

3. Mr. Kitsoentle Ramakoba was privileged to be Precious Class Teacher.

4. Family bonds; Precious posing with her family.

**“Seeking excellence
means choosing to forge
your own sword to cut
through the limitations of
your life...”**

James A. Murphy

Stop Examinations Malpractice



Malpractice involves a deliberate act of wrongdoing, contrary to official examination rules, and is designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage.

DETECTION OF MALPRACTICE

School heads, chief invigilators, invigilators, supervisors and Examination Council officials provide much of the evidence for malpractice. Evidence is also provided by candidates, parents and the public who witness malpractice, and from others disillusioned by the failure of bribed officials to deliver the expected level of support.

Examinations malpractice is a serious offence punishable by law. Any person who commits an offence shall be liable on conviction to a fine not less than P200 000.00 but not more than P500 000.00 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

All enquiries and reports of examinations malpractice should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer Botswana Examinations Council either by form of writing or in person.



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