



## SSP E-NEWSLETTER

### 2010 Message from Kim Robinson, Executive Director of SSP



"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind, have been convinced that the fate of Empires depends on the education of youth" - Aristotle

This is the year that Student Sponsorship Programme (SSP) celebrates 10 years of success.

For a social enterprise to operate for a decade is an achievement in and of itself. Indeed, we are excited about being around for 10 years. More than that, we are proud of our impressive accomplishments.

Since placing our first class of 25 scholars in 2000, we have awarded more than 500 scholarships. We boast a 94% graduation rate for those entering the programme. Of our alumni, 91% attended tertiary level institutions, compared to only 15% that qualify to attend university nationwide.

Our success is not limited to the classroom. SSP Scholars hold numerous leadership positions at their schools. They also participate in a variety of international and competitive programmes such as the Leadership Education and Development Global Programme (LEAD) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, Hotchkiss Summer Portals, and Impact Young Lives.

Though we have reached and surpassed many goals, we face challenges. In the current economic environment, fundraising has been challenging. Mentorship is also a critical component of SSP. Yet, we still have scholars without mentors. The quality of mathematics teaching is declining in many primary schools. This burdens our scholars when they enter high school.

SSP is addressing these challenges head-on. First, we have a renewed mentorship drive. Second, our Bridging Programme for seventh grade students provides nine months of academic work in maths, science, and English to prepare our scholars for the rigorous curricula at our partner schools.

Our success hinges on SSP's ability to engage the entire community. To mark the milestone of 10 years of success, we have planned several events to recognise and celebrate those of you that have made Student Sponsorship Programme possible. I am particularly excited about our New York City and South African galas, scheduled for September 2010 and February 2011 respectively. I hope to you will join us. Information about our other events, including our alumni reunion and stakeholder cocktail evening will be available on our website shortly.

Your generous support has made our decade of success possible. Thank you for enabling us to build South Africa's next generation of leaders.

### SSP in Johannesburg welcomes new staff

*By Laurence Corner, SSP Deputy Director*

It is our pleasure to welcome a number of new people to our team in Johannesburg. We trust and know that through their experience and skills we will be able to take care of all of our stakeholders.

At the same time we hope that the dynamic team and skills in our organisation will add to their development and that in SSP they will find a home away from home.

**Busisiwe Maile** joined us at the start of April in the role of Recruitment Officer. She will manage the application process of grade six students into our Bridging Programme as well as be the main contact with media and our feeder schools. We look forward to learning from her and reaping the benefit of her great marketing experience.

**Jennifer Lahoud** joined SSP as the assistant to Executive Director, Kim Robinson. Jenny has extensive experience in administration and her organisational skills are definitely welcome in the SSP office.

**Lillian Said** joined us as a Student Programme Officer tasked with the academic monitoring and care of some of our scholars at our various partner schools. Lillian's experience in community and development programmes will undoubtedly add value to this portfolio. She is also an avid reader and poet and has had some of her poems published over the last few years.

We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial journey with the new SSP team members.

### Amherst and Dartmouth College presentations

By Kgaogelo Seemola, Student Programme Officer

On 8 May 2010, SSP in Johannesburg hosted two international guests from Amherst and Dartmouth colleges in the United States.

Caitlin Brome, Assistant Dean of Admission from Amherst College, spoke to SSP students from grade 11 and grade 12 about the various opportunities available to them and how they could apply to the college.

Benjamin Schwartz, Assistant Director of Admissions from Dartmouth College, also made a presentation to the students and encouraged them to apply to this highly regarded institution.

Both parents and students were impressed with the quality and content of the presentations by both these guests. There was a lot of enthusiasm among parents and students alike in respect of the application procedures and the extent of the scholarship.

Students who are interested in applying can go to the [Amherst](#) or [Dartmouth](#) websites.

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## Hotchkiss Summer Portals

By Lillian Said, Student Programme Officer



Hotchkiss Summer Portals is all about learning through doing. Situated in the beautiful hills of north-western Connecticut, it is the ultimate centre sowing knowledge in young minds. Participants learn from and live with teachers and students from around the world. **Robert J. Barker**, Dean of Summer Programmes, and **Christiana Gurney Rawlings**, Director of Admission and Residential, form part of this distinguished faculty which is supplemented by visiting speakers, guest scientists, guest performers, resident musicians and graduate students.

Classes revolve around action—playing in ensembles, practicing pieces, discussing topics and assignments, conducting labs, travelling on field trips and exploring nearby ecosystems.

Two SSP scholars, Naledi Legodi and Sbusisiwe Sibeko, who were fortunate to attend the Hotchkiss Summer Portals in 2009, were both invited back in 2010. SSP is very proud of the two young ladies and very grateful to Hotchkiss Summer Portals for their interest in SSP students and their valued contribution over the years.

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## Parent's Forum

By Meriam Mahlatsi, Programme Officer

**"The school will teach children how to read, but the environment of the home must teach them what to read. The school can teach them how to think, but the home must teach them what to believe." - Charles A. Wells**

Most parents struggle when it comes to helping their children with their school work. With guidance offered at the SSP parents' workshops, parents are now better able to assist their children in home learning activities and will find themselves with opportunities to be more involved in their children's schooling. In that way, parents are empowered to become role models to their children and are in a position to offer their children the guidance they need.

A parents' committee was formed because SSP believes that a parent's involvement in their child's education is very crucial. The Parent Committee is scheduled to meet on 5 June 2010. The aim of the committee is tasked with identifying developmental areas for parents and to equip them with the tools that they can use when raising teenagers. The committee will also highlight the roles parents have to play in their children's education. The committee is made up of parent representatives from SSP's various partner schools who have volunteered to disseminate the information that they gather at the committee to other parents.

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## Corporate Involvement - ABSA Capital Sponsors SSP with 32 Mentors

By Meriam Mahlatsi, Programme Officer



What does one expect to find in the skyscrapers of Sandton City on a Saturday morning? On 8 May 2010 in their school uniform, our students came with their parents to meet with their mentors for the first time.

## SSP Alumni Spotlight - Sibusiso Mbandazaya (19), First Year Rhodes University

By Busisiwe Maile, Student Recruitment Office

"Pull up your socks" is not just a worn-out expression used by exasperated educators, but one that Sibusiso Mbandazaya took to heart.

Sibusiso, an SSP Alumni at Rhodes University joined SSP in 2007 towards the end of his grade 10 year. He was initially sponsored by FOSAS, a learner sponsorship organisation similar to SSP which merged with SSP Eastern

Absa Capital employees volunteered their time and shared experiences with some of our young people from the various partner schools. Thandiwe Msibi from Absa Capital CSI initiated the 32 mentors that were recruited for SSP students. "Absa Capital believes that mentoring has a direct impact on youth development," she says. As a mentor herself to one of the SSP students, Thandiwe finds the relationship very fulfilling.

The new mentors were tangibly excited about their new roles. As for the students, the excitement was all over the venue.

A big thank you goes out to Absa Capital and a warm welcome to the new members of the SSP family.

## My Mentor

By Laurence Corner, SSP Deputy Director



I have always had many role models who I looked up to and who I used to motivate my own path through life. Most of these people did not even know that I watched their development and achievements and the impact that they had on me.

It was at the start of my professional career that I often thought how useful it would have been to have someone as a sounding board, almost a buoy in this ocean of probabilities and possibilities - someone who could help me navigate through the decisions and choices one has to make in life.

Well more than 10 years ago, I met such a person. Pastor John Creamer is the type of man who has a presence in any conversation, not because he wants to dominate, but because he listens closer and deeper than most people to what others have to say. That was exactly what I needed, someone who would listen and ask the questions I didn't want to ask myself or even think of - someone who could wade through all the unimportant stuff and get right to the heart of the issue.

From the time I met him I admired his steadfastness and focus. Our official mentor relationship however started in 2008. Mentoring me was not a task he accepted lightly or without knowing what it involved, in fact our first conversation was about expectations and boundaries - how we would tackle situations and how we could both benefit from this relationship.

I have the confidence that when I need to discuss something with him I can trust him to give me nothing but the truth and that whatever he says is for my benefit. This is not always easy to accept, but knowing that he only wants what is best for me and my family makes it so much more worthwhile to ask his input.

The one thing he is clear about is that he will lead me to the water, but whether I drink or not is up to me. This is not a relationship I hope to end soon, even at my age I always need that guidance and person to point me in the direction of reality.

## Mentoring Insight - How to Begin

By Meriam Mahlatsi, Programme Officer



You have been given a child to mentor, "now what?" you wonder....

What does your mentee need to learn, even master, in order for them to reach their personal best? Early in your relationship, start to explore what areas your mentee needs to develop. If they aren't sure, help with the exploration process by brainstorming several competencies.

Cape.

Before SSP, Sibusiso admits that his academic performance was nothing to write home about, especially his math. "When SSP came into the picture, it was a most welcome intervention."

Sibusiso's grades, to his and his parents' delight improved drastically. Sibusiso says that it finally dawned on him in grade 11 that his "laid back" approach to his academic work would eventually rob him of his true potential. The role that SSP played during that year had a lot to do with his new-found perspective.

Sibusiso says that SSP offered far more than just financial support. He found SSP to be more involved and structured in its approach towards its scholars. "Workshops were given on a regular basis to help scholars stay on track with their school work, and they also had activities which offered us an opportunity to interact with one another as scholars. This interaction gave us a sense of community, an 'SSP Community'."

In 2009, Sibusiso was extremely pleased with his matric results. His hard work had finally paid off. He scored a B+ in pure-math and his results allowed him to gain acceptance into Rhodes University where he is doing his first year in BCom Economics. It is still early days for Sibusiso at varsity but he can't wait to take on the challenges that await him while enjoying the journey ahead.

## Mentor-Student Spotlight

By Kolisa Siquko, SSP Regional Director - Eastern Cape



Meet **Miselo Yeko** and **Andile Khwakweni**

At first glance, Miselo Yeko and Andile Khwakweni are worlds apart. Andile is a young professional and an avid Christian while Miselo is a 14-year adolescent on the road to self discovery. It makes you wonder then what could a 30-something man possibly have in common with a teenage boy?

Thanks to the SSP mentorship programme, their worlds were brought together and their paths crossed in an unimaginable way.

Andile, a Knowledge Manager at Buffalo City Municipality, owes all credit to a friend who introduced him to SSP.

When he was invited to his first meeting with his mentee at Selborne College in

Here's what one mentor / mentee pair identified as possibilities for the mentee to tackle first:

**Skills:** Make more dynamic oral presentations, think strategically, balance work and personal demands, leading cross-functional teams.

**Knowledge:** Lessons your mentor has learned and ways to advance in this field, unwritten rules for success, typical risks a mentee faces.

**Attitudes:** Be more assertive and less anxious about presenting your own ideas.

The list of possible competencies is endless, so don't spend more than a couple of meetings deciding on one or more for your mentee to tackle first.

## Sponsor Spotlight - Trudon



**Trudon Pty (Ltd)** is an avid SSP supporter. The company sponsors 10 students to St. Mary's, Kingsmead, St. Martin's, Redhill and St Stithians Boys.

Trudon (Pty) Ltd (formerly TDS Directory Operations (Pty) Ltd) is the market leading company in local commercial search in Southern Africa. They own and publish the Yellow Pages, the Phone Book, Trudon Mobile as well as the operator assisted 10-11-8 business enquiries. The information is also published online at <http://www.yellowpages.co.za/> where you can access maps, directions and a city search.

The Students sponsored by Trudon are Stephanie Naidoo, Buhle Mlingwana, Glenda Aphane, Kina Mkize, Kutlwano Khobokoane, Naziphi Mbedla, Rivonigo Keith Mhlari, Sibusiso Skefu, Setjhaba Mosebi and Kelvin Kajuna.

The SSP community would like to thank Trudon for their commitment to SSP's vision of providing excellent education that will in turn produce South Africa's leaders.

April 2009, his first impression was: "This is a "just in time" intervention for a beneficiary like Miselo." His mentee struck him as being too shy and too quiet.

Later on, he discovered a whole new person in Miselo - a young boy who made the A-team squad for Rugby under-14 in just under a year at a new school. Miselo managed to achieve an overall 80 percent aggregate in his first term in grade 9. He also plays chess like it is going out of fashion.

Through Miselo's encouragement, Andile is now an aspiring chess player. Andile has also been very influential to Miselo... in more ways than one. During the initial stages of the relationship Miselo confessed to being an observer and waited in the wings to see how the relationship would develop. Andile believes much of the shyness in Miselo has disappeared thanks to the frequent meetings that they had in the first six months of their relationship.

The fact that Andile took an interest in Miselo's family also helped a lot. He was invited on special occasions such as when Miselo's brother, who works in Durban, visited the family. Miselo's eyes lit up when he talks about the experience of co-facilitating a session with Andile at church. Andile was amazed when during the presentation Miselo stood up and shared his personal life story.

These two have each gone the extra mile to ensure that their mentor/mentee relationship succeeds. Andile describes the experience of being a mentor at SSP this way: "The fact that SSP invests in the personal development of academically excellent young boys and girls with no strings attached resonates with me big time."

Andile feels he will get involved in this type of commitment all over again after five years.

## School Spotlight - St Martin's School: The School with a Difference

*By Lillian Said, Student Programme Officer*



St Martin's was founded in 1958 and is situated in Rosettenville, Gauteng. As an independent, non-racial, co-educational boarding school, St Martin's is especially valued by parents who seek an academic environment for their children wherein Christian standards are reflected. Students of all faiths and denominations are admitted. Regular worship in the school chapel is an important part of the school ethos. The Chaplain spends time with every class during the week and students who wish to do so may ask to be prepared for Confirmation.

The High School and Preparatory/Pre-Prep Schools are on separate campuses. Currently our SSP scholars find themselves in the Senior Prep phase where children are introduced to specialist subject teaching. The staff is passionate about the subjects they teach and make sure that lessons are stimulating and fun. They constantly work towards high academic standards and suitably challenging targets that are far beyond the normal curriculum. Students are expected to take increasing responsibility as they progress through the school.

There are opportunities for service and leadership within the house and prefect systems. Headmaster, Mr. JB Welsh, enjoys his Wednesday tea time break with the prefects at the school. It is not often that one sees scholars very cheerful and excited to go to the principal's office, but after hearing about their tea time 'date' in the principal's office, I could understand why.

Currently the school is looking at upgrading their website database to the extent that scholars, stakeholders and parents alike can access individual student information such as exam results and academic performance reports.

St Martin's School is committed to instilling a thirst for learning in its learners. Values such as commitment to hard work and a passion for excellence are held in high esteem by the school.

SSP is proud to be affiliated to a school of St Martin's calibre and has been celebrating many success stories with 'the school with a difference' as SSP students excel both academically and on the sporting field.

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## Student Spotlight - Sheldon Grieb, Grade 10 Student at Selborne College, East London

By Sibongile S. Khumalo, Operations Manager - Eastern Cape



The only SSP tenth grader in the Eastern Cape, Sheldon Grieb, has become a master at maintaining a meticulous balancing act between his academic performance and his extracurricular involvement.

Sheldon has managed to fully immerse himself in the numerous sporting and cultural activities offered at Selborne College in East London. As a reserved and highly conscientious scholar, Sheldon has made an impression on both SSP and his school.

Following his number one commitment, his studies, the traditional game of Chess commands a large portion of Sheldon's time and dedication. Aside from endless gratitude, his periodic letters to SSP are riddled with evidence of a deep love for the game.

Sheldon has represented Border Chess at a number of league tournaments since his first year at Selborne College and is now hopeful of a place in the national team in the 2010/2011 season.

In 2009, he walked away with the East London championship, scooping the gold medal and certificate in the under-16 section. Sheldon admits that games are getting a lot more stressful and demanding due to competitiveness, but this is a challenge he is prepared to confront.

Sheldon also participates in time-consuming Waterpolo and Rugby games which are played in the summer and winter seasons respectively. He has demonstrated great time management skills and admits that it involved cutting out things that were not necessary -such as television - in order to stay focused.

He wants fellow SSP scholars to understand that a low standard of work is largely attributed to complacency and laziness. Sheldon lives by the motto "you are what you want to be, and the choices you make today, determine who you will become tomorrow".

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## Scholars' Views on Youth Day, June 16

By Busisiwe Maile, Student Recruitment Officer

June 16, also known as Youth Day, is a national public holiday in South Africa. The entire month of June has also been dubbed Youth Month to display the significance that this particular day holds in our country's history.

On 16 June 1976, students in their hundreds took to the streets of Soweto and marched in a protest against the inequalities of the education system. What was meant to be a peaceful demonstration against Apartheid and Bantu education, quickly turned into violent mayhem as the police fired live bullets and teargas at students. We remember June 16 today as a commemoration to students who lost their lives on that day.

Five SSP scholars were asked to share their views of Youth Day and its significance.

### ***Thando from Brescia House High School***

"June 16 is significant because it is about youth standing up for their rights. Today everyone has equal access to education because of that day."

### ***Bradley from St Johns High School***

"I think that it is a day that is exciting and a day that youth should look forward to. I am not sure whether the youth really understands the significance of that day and the fact that young people died for the opportunities we have today. I think that the day should be embraced and celebrated with respect."

### ***Glenda from Kingsmead High School***

"June 16 is about children in Soweto who fought for their freedom like Hector Peterson who died on that day. Because of what happened on June 16, we all have more opportunities to excel and become successful."

### ***Reneilwe from Brescia House High School***

"It's a day where we can be reminded about our history and what our forefathers fought for. The youth of today interpret it in a different way, instead, it has become about partying and having a good time."

### ***Mpho from St Davids High School***

"It is a time to remember our fellow students of that time and the struggles they had to go through. When learners wear their

school uniform, they should wear it with pride, as a sign of victory."

## Student Letter - Willie Morgan, grade 11 student at St John's College

In 2007 I was awarded a scholarship by SSP to St John's High School. This was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.

I love sport, but by far I have to say that rowing is where my passion lies. In March after the school rowing season had ended, I decided to go for rowing trials and made it through as the best coxswain in the province. I have been in the Gauteng U19 provincial team for the last two months, training six days a week; sometimes seven days. Time management has been the key principle. I realise that my rowing success must never be achieved at the cost of my academics and that's why it is important to have a balance.

On 7 and 8 May this year, I was honoured to represent St John's College and I raced against KwaZulu Natal, Eastern and Western Cape in Pretoria and made the U19 Junior National Squad to represent South Africa at Junior Worlds Championships in Czech Republic in August this year!

Looking back at my background, I have been living a dream these past three years and a bit. I would like to thank SSP as a whole for the infinite amount of opportunities they have blessed me with. Picking me up and exposing me to such a world I had never met before is truly amazing. Thank you!

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