

Moreko Secondary School tops Sekhukhune in Matric Results

Moreko Secondary School from Phokwane Village, in Phokwane Circuit, is the best performing school in the entire Sekhukhune District. The school obtained a 100% pass rate in the 2019 matric results with all their 154 learners managing to complete grade 12.

The school achieved 100% matric pass rate for six consecutive years. They were awarded a certificate for being one of the best schools in the province during the provincial matric announcement ceremony held at the Ranch Hotel in Polokwane on Wednesday 8 January. The school achieved 84 distinctions, with 105 bachelors, 42 diplomas and only seven certificates. Nine distinctions were obtained in Sepedi, 5 in English, 12 in Life Orientation, 9 in Mathematics, 18 in Physical Sciences, 17 in Life Sciences, 2 in Agricultural Sciences, 3 in Geography, 8 in Accounting and 1 in Tourism which is an improvement compared to the previous years. Moreko Secondary School Principal, Marum

o Mashifane, told the Dispatch that the school achieved the results by working hand in hand with parents, SGB, teachers and learners. "Every quarter we meet with parents to discuss and analyze the performance of learners and find solutions to those who are struggling in class. Teachers and pupils' commitment, combined with hard work is our recipe of success," Mashifane said. The principal emphasized that the school pays special attention to pupils who are not doing well during the academic year. "We call parents of these learners and find the cause of the problem as some are domestic related. We ensure that the problem is resolved so that the children could focus on their studies and achieve good results when the year ends," he said.

He added that extra classes are contributing immensely in the good results of the school every academic year. "We usually start to get prepared at the beginning of the year. Our tradition includes morning and afternoon studies and we also have extra classes in weekends and in schools' holidays," he said. The principal indicated that the afternoon studies and extra



(From left to right) Sekhukhune District Municipality Council Speaker Maria Manamela, MEC for Education in Limpopo Polly Boshielo, Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality Stanley Ramaila and Moreko Secondary School Principal Marumo Mashifane during the schools re-opening day campaign at the school's premises in Phokwane.



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classes are starting in grade 8 where they are sharpening their learners for the class of matric in the next two years.

Mashifane said matric learners are urged to sign a pledge to commit themselves on record what they want to achieve at the end of the year. "This is working and motivating a lot. Some are achieving beyond the pledge which places the school in achieving good results and being recognized in the province," he said.

Mashifane said parents are given a task to monitor and supervise their children and encourage them to spend more times studying while at home. "Parents ensure that these children stay away from the streets and social media and put their studies first," he said. Department of Education MEC Polly Boshielo, accompanied by Sekhukhune District Municipality Mayor Stanley Ramaila, district municipality Speaker Maria Manamela and Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality Mayor Minah Bahula, paid a homage to the school on 15 January, during schools re-opening day for a back to school campaign.

Boshielo congratulated the school and encouraged learners to work hard and focus on their studies.

Left insert: The top ten matric achievers of Moreko Secondary School in Phokwane Village.

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Sekhukhune District Municipality pays R12 Million to fraudulent account

The Sekhukhune District Municipality has once again lost R12 Million to fraudsters. This is after officials in the municipality paid the money to wrong accounts instead of making the payment to the Department of Labour's Compensation Fund.

This money was meant to be a contribution, in terms of the Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, to the Compensation Fund, from which the workers who may get injured or contract diseases while at work could claim. The municipality is still in the process of recovering a portion of the stolen R5.4 Million that was also allegedly paid to wrong accounts instead of service providers in 2018. Following the wrongful payment, the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr Stanley Ramaila called an urgent special council meeting and press briefing at Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in Jane Furse recently. Ramaila said the money was stolen by fraudsters who pretended to be from Department of Labour seeking payment for the worker's Compensation Fund. "On 24 April 2018, the municipality received a letter, purportedly from

the Compensation Fund, reminding us of the R12 million owing to the Fund. That letter which was marked as "FINAL WARNING," gave the municipality 21 days to settle the amount or else the Fund would resort to the court. This letter had bank details, which payments had to be made into. Our municipality as a result made payments in twelve installments of about R1 million a month. It was only after payment of the last installment, twelve months later, that the official from the Compensation Fund, informally told our municipal official, when the two attended a workshop, that the municipality still owed the Fund R12 million and the debt had increased to R16 million as a result of cumulative interests," said Ramaila. The executive mayor said upon a subsequent formal enquiry, the Compensation Fund denied ever receiving the payments they had been making.

Ramaila emphasizes that the decision to inform the residents of Sekhukhune District Municipality and the general public is in accordance with the values of Batho Pele Principles, which are, Information, Openness and Transpar-

ency. "Batho Pele Principles also enjoin us as public representatives and officials to ensure public services are provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money," he said. He added that they are also obliged to report any form of malfeasance and corruption. "Fraud and corruption threaten our efforts to provide quality services to our communities," he said. Ramaila added that a case was reported at Groblersdal Police Station. "A proposition to appoint forensic investigators to recover the stolen money was made and hopefully those who are involved will be held accountable," he said. He said the municipality will also take actions against officials who failed to verify the account before the payment could be made. "This is negligence to some of our officials and steps will be taken against them for not making sure that the accounts were authentic," hinted Ramaila.

He said the municipality will intensify its internal system control to ensure avoiding future occurrences of this nature. "We are now aware that our system has been manipulated

by fraudsters as this has been happening for the second time now. The council has decided to beef-up the municipality's financial control system and to make alert our officials to verify transactions before they can make any payments," he said.

Ramaila said the case of the R5.4 Million that was stolen in 2018 is with the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the HAWKS. During the Special Council Meeting, Sekhukhune District Municipality Council has delegated the executive mayor to approach the premier's office and request for support in the performance of forensic audit.

The council resolved that the executive mayor shall request the Premier's Office to ask Provincial Treasury to provide a forensic audit capacity. The council stated that the premier should be requested to advise Minister of Labour and Employment, involving National Treasury, to institute forensic audit of the Compensation Fund/Compensation Commissioner in respect of this matter in question and the executive mayor should provide regular reports to council on any material progress.

Masakaneng residents protest over lack of public schools

The outraged community members of Masakaneng Settlement outside Groblersdal embarked on a protest, complaining about lack of public schools in the area. The unrest started on Thursday 2 January where a number of community members barricaded the N11

Road with rubble and burning tires demanding answers from the Limpopo Department of Education. Foreign owned shops were looted and two trucks were burned down by the angry community during the demonstration. Fearing for their lives, other motorists resorted to use

alternative routes as the busiest N11 Road was completely closed. The police were called and nine people were arrested and were later released on warning. According to a community member who did not want to be named, residents were protesting to demand a public primary and secondary school in the settlement. "All they have been fighting for is a school that was approved to be built in 2013, it is almost seven years now and nothing is happening. The municipality (Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality has allocated a portion of land where the school should be built a long time ago but nothing happened," he said. He added that the community convened meetings with the Department of Education where they were promised the school will be built soon. "We are very disappointed with the Groblersdal Circuit for not taking our issues seriously. Every time when we visit the circuit manager's office we are been pushed from pillar to post with no clear answers provided. Every official we have been speaking to says the matter will be sorted, it has been years," he said. He added that the area has a single private school to cater for the whole settlement but residents cannot afford the fees as most are farm workers. He indicated that residents are urged to send their children to attend schools in

nearby areas. "Our children have to be sent to nearby schools in Aquaville, Wagendrift and Schoeman Farms. The schools are many kilometres away from us and we rely on the single scholar transport provided by the government, which transports hundreds of children per day. Parents are worried that young children ranging from the age of 5 should wake up as early as 3am to be transported in the first load of the bus. We are worried because of the number of accidents involving scholar transport in the country, we want our own school. They should have built us a school instead of creating tenders for comrades and paying millions of rands for the scholar transport all these years," he said. Limpopo Department of Education Spokesperson Sam Makondo said the Department is currently experiencing a backlog in the building of new schools. "This is because the department is urged to direct funds to renovate vandalized schools that were destroyed during protests," he said. He said residents should follow proper procedure and come to their offices to complain instead of resorting to protests where they sometimes vandalize the same infrastructure needed in the community.

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The N11 Road was barricaded with burning tires when Masakaneng residents were protesting against the lack of schools.

Foreign owned shops were broken into and looted during a protest by Masakaneng community members when demanding schools from the government.



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The public hearing is to be held at Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf on 23 January 2020, at 10H00.

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Moutse residents protest to demand water and better health care

The community of Dennilton in Moutse says they are fed-up with poor service delivery in the area. Residents claim the area has been without water since the dawn of democracy and the government is giving them a cold shoulder, leaving them frustrated. Among other service delivery issues, the community is complaining about poor health care at Philadelphia Hospital which is a concern to residents. On Sunday 5 January, the community convened a meeting at OR Tambo Stadium to discuss the ongoing water shortages and poor health care issues. The community decided to take it to the streets in a form of protest to raise their concerns. The R25 Road was blocked with stones and burning tyres holding the traffic to a standstill. The angry community threatened to block the road until the office of the president or the premier come to hear their demands. The crowd was also chanting that Premier Stanley Mathabatha should fire MEC for Health Phophi Ramathuba, claiming that she is not taking Moutse residents seriously. The police were called and the angry crowd was dispersed after rubber bullets were fired at them. On Monday 6 January, more than hundred residents gathered at Philadelphia Hospital and temporary closed down the office of the CEO, Human Resources and administration offices. The crowd demanded that hospital employees, cleaners and general workers who are not from Sekhukhune District, vacate the hospital premises with immediate effect. The demonstrators were calmed down after meeting with senior health officials and operations were restored in the hospital. During an inspection by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) on Tuesday 7 January, it was discovered that four deceased patients spent more than two hours in the wards without being removed by the hospital's mortuary staff. The commission discovered that only one ambulance was used by the hospital and there was shortage of

medication. The hospital was been discovered to be understaffed and could not operate effectively with a vacancy rate of 47%. A Moutse Interim Committee Member, Ali Maloba, told the Dispatch that residents are tired of empty promises and demand proper health care. "Water shortage is a problem in Moutse and the district municipality is doing nothing to find a permanent solution in the matter. This is too much, we want answers now," he said. Maloba added that residents are also worried about the state of Philadelphia Hospital where people are losing lives as a result of negligence by the Health Department. "Many senior positions are occupied by acting personnel who are incompetent. There are irregular appointments whereby the current finance manager was working as a stock receiving clerk at St Rita's Hospital. The pharmaceutical manager was once CEO at Letaba Hospital and was demoted because of incompetence. We surprised that now he was appointed in this senior position without his post being advertised. The official knows nothing about pharmacy processes. This is a critical position needing a competent person qualified to run the department," he said. Maloba indicated that the community is concerned about shortage of ambulances and Planned Patients Transport. "Eight ambulances were since sent to be repaired in 2018 and they never came back, this is worrisome," he said. Sekhukhune District Municipality Communications Manager Moloko Moloto said the district municipality provides water tankers to residents of Moutse. "However, the supply is not adequate as the area is too big and we acknowledge that the supply is not enough," he said. Moloto said the municipality is in the process of supplying residents with water through the Groblersdal-Moutse Water Bulk Project, which will be a permanent solution to deal with water

crisis in the area. "The project is delaying due to internal dynamics we are having with the contractor and the Department of Water Affairs that is commissioning the project. The municipality will soon meet with residents to give a progress report on the project," he said. Limpopo Department of Health Spokesperson Neil Shikwambana said they were challenged by a breakdown of vehicles from time to time, which contributed to shortage of ambulances. "But we have just allocated an extra ambulance for the area during festive for relief while some of the vehicles were at merchandise," he said. Shikwambana added that there is no possibility that the hospital can experience a shortage of medication. "The deliveries are coming from the depot. We have enough stock and we are delivering medicines regularly to facilities on the basis of their needs," he said. He added that the hospital employed staff members to deal with understaffed personnel but they were chased away by the community. "We have just employed new staff at the hospital who unfortunately community members are blocking from entering the hospital. We have just advertised posts for EMS at Philadelphia, so the issue of staff is receiving maximum attention," he said.

DA concerned about water theft in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality

The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality is extremely concerned about alleged water theft in the municipality. According to the party, the theft of water, which is a basic need to residents, comes after Sekhukhune District Municipality opened a fire hydrant in Marble Hall Extension 6 to supply water to nearby villages. "The DA has personally visited the hydrant in question and it has been confirmed that 8 to 9 water trucks come to fill up water here daily. It is estimated that approximately 80 000 to 150 000 litres of water is being removed illegally from this specific hydrant every single day, despite not knowing where this water is heading to and without any supervision by the Municipality," said DA Councillor in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality Flip Jacobs. According to the councillor there is no meter to monitor usage and this allows people to exploit the municipality and abuse water, without paying for it.

"Furthermore, it has been alleged that a lot of this water is being transported to Jane Furse, which doesn't form part of the Ephraim Mogale Municipality, however the water consumption will be allocated to the Ephraim Mogale Municipality and will cause an additional burden on rates and tax payers in the area," Jacobs added. He indicated that the DA alerted the Sekhukhune District Municipality to unmarked trucks loading water from this hydrant in November 2019; however there has been no attempt by the district municipality to address their concerns or correct the problem. "We also asked various questions in relation to water being transported to another municipality with no cost to them. These questions remained unanswered," he said. Jacobs indicated that the party is concern about the waste of water in other parts of the province while there is shortage of water due to not enough rain in the previous years. "In the drought-stricken province of Limpopo, it is important that water be used sparingly and that our water resources be protected with day zero looming in various parts of the province. The DA calls on the municipality to intervene immediately and will continue to put pressure on the district municipality to prevent further water theft. We demand that those who allowed this to transpire to be held to account," explained Jacobs.

He said the DA cannot allow lawlessness to reign in the municipality and will continue to put the needs of the residents first. Sekhukhune District Municipality Communications Manager Moloko Moloto slammed claims that there were people who are stealing water from the fire hydrant in Marble Hall. "We as the district municipality have contracted a service provider who should provide water to Jane Furse Hospital on our behalf. The service provider was getting water from Ga-Nkwana and due to the public protest; the contractor could no longer collect water from that area. The municipality had to find an alternative whereby the service provider was urged to fetch water from Marble Hall because patients cannot be left without water," he said. He said it is impossible that people can steal water from this hydrant because it requires specific type of equipment in order to operate. "It is not true that we are over-billing residents of Marble Hall because they have meters and we are charging them as per metre readings," he said.

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Four Sekhukhune Secondary schools obtained 0% in the 2019 matric results

Despite the risen national pass rate of 81.3%, Sekhukhune based schools, Kanama Secondary in Burgersfort, Mokhulwane Secondary in Lefalane, Mahlaba secondary in Maboki and Matsebe Secondary in Ga-Mashabela, scored 0% in the 2019 matric results. According to MEC for Department of Education in Limpopo Polly Boshelo, the schools failed to register a single matric pass because of low enrolment in grade 12 classes. Mahlaba Secondary had 13 matric learners, Kanama Secondary had 5 matric pupils, Matsebe Secondary had 6 matric learners and Mokhulwane Secondary School had only 1 learner that sat to write the final matric examination. Boshelo added that the Department has previously proposed merging of schools which did not materialize after parents refused. "This academic year we are going to ensure that schools that have a few number of learners be merged with other schools. This will make our schools viable to deliver quality education and achieve good results at the end of the year," she said. Boshelo appealed to the community to work together with the department rather than fight the efforts of government whose intention is to ensure that learners at these schools get the best education. Boshelo said they welcome the 3.8 increase in the 2019 matric pass rate. "This shows that we are on our way to achieve the 80% pass rate as accordance to Limpopo Development Plan," she said. Limpopo Province obtained 73.2% in the 2019 matric results and finished ninth in the national results. Other schools that registered a 0% matric pass rate in Limpopo in the 2019 academic year are; Kgabedi Secondary School, Roedtan Combined School, Makobateng Secondary School, Manawe Senior School and Makama Secondary School. Sixty-five learners failed their matric in all the nine affected schools. The affected districts are Sekhukhune East, Sekhukhune South, Capricorn North and Mogalakwena.

Trevor Mashabela is the 2019 Matric top achiever of Sekhukhune

Trevor Mashabela from Rantobeng Secondary School at Diphagane Village outside Jane Furse in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, is one of the national top performers in the 2019 matric results. Trevor flew the flag of Sekhukhune high when he received an invitation from the Minister of Basic Education Ms Angie Motshega, to form part of the top 30 national top achievers who performed exceptionally well in the 2019 matric results. Trevor, from Sekhukhune South District, in Mmashadi Circuit, received the national award for scoring 300/300 in Life Sciences. The district's top achiever was accompanied by his parents and teachers to receive the award during the NCS matric announcement in Pretoria on Tuesday 7 January. He was also honoured with a provincial award from Limpopo MEC for Education Polly Boshelo for obtaining position 4 provincially, held at The Ranch Hotel in Polokwane on Wednesday 8 January. Trevor said he is happy that his hard work since he started school has earned him good results at the end. He said he is eyeing to pursue a civil engineering degree in the University of Pretoria as his passion lies with infrastructure development. Trevor indicated that he wants to see himself owning a construction company one day and contribute towards infrastructure development in his community and in the rest of the country. Rantobeng Secondary School, where Trevor completed his grade 12, managed to be among the best top 3 schools in Quantile 1-3, this category carries the most disadvantaged schools of them all, and they are required to record 65% pass or more. Rantobeng became position three in the category. Despite being home of to worst performing schools in the province that registered 0% in the grade 12 results, Sekhukhune District saw an improvement in the 2019 matric results. Sekhukhune South District moved from 66.8% in 2018 to 68.4% in 2019 and Sekhukhune East moved from 60% in 2018 to 63% in 2019. The province has registered a new record of 73.2% passes in the 2019 matric results, a move from 69.4% in 2018, an improvement of 3.8%.

Sekhukhune District Municipality 2019 matric top achiever, Trevor Mashabela (Wearing black jacket), celebrating with school mates after he was named the top learner in Sekhukhune District Municipality. The school was also honoured to be the best provincial school in Quantile 3.



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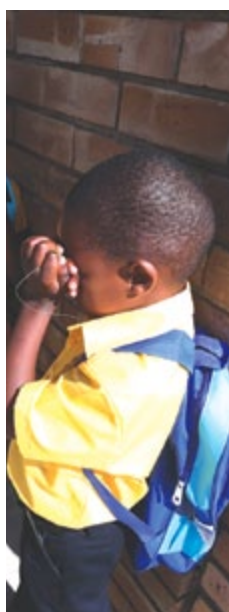
Joy and tears on first day at Kenneth Masekela Primary School

Attending school for the first time brought joy to many grade-R learners at Kenneth Masekela Primary School in Tafelkop during schools re-opening day on 15 January.

Most new learners seemed to be happy to experience the school for the first time and make new friends. The school opened in time and started normally with pupils dressed in full uniforms to commence the 2020 academic year. Some were accompanied by their parents who want to make sure that their kids are feeling comfortable while ushering them to new classes after they progressed in the previous academic year. Many were happy to leave the assembly point and were also enjoying the prospects of what the school has to offer while in the classroom. However, some seen the day terrifying as they have to leave home and experience the school environment for the first time. A teary and emotional scene in grade-R was when some started crying trying to go back home while their parents were looking through the windows.

But they were calmed after teachers comforted them and immediately started with lessons. A parent, Norma Mohlape, accompanied her 5-year-old daughter Bonolo who will be doing grade-R. "You can see she is free and happy to attend school for the first time. She prepared the school uniform herself yesterday," said Norma. She said Bonolo did not attend any pre-school but has a little knowledge of reading and writing. "I was teaching her how to read and write. I am happy she is brave enough on her first day of schooling," she said. The school's Deputy Principal, Ms Cate Nchabeleng said about 120 new pupils were registered since the school's registration period opened. "The learners occupy three classrooms divided in Isindebele and Sepedi. We are still expecting more parents to come and register their children. Probably the registration period will close end of this month. We know people relocate and

this will give enough time to parents who are from other villages and interested in registering their children with the school," she explained. Nchabeleng said parents should encourage children who use to cross the main road to always make use of the scholar patrol spot which is just a few metres from the school. "This will ensure the safety of learners at all times," she said. The deputy principal appealed to parents to make sure that their children wear a proper school uniform and their books are well covered. "Parents should release their children on time so that they don't arrive late at school. We encourage a good teacher, parent and learner relationship and attendance of parents or guardian during the meetings. This will help our school to run smoothly," she said.



Truck kills three boys at Diphagane

Three boys between the ages of 15 and 18 died after a truck ploughed into them at Diphagane Village outside Jane Furse. The tragic accident occurred on Wednesday 8 January at about 18:30. The victims were walking on the side of the road when the truck, that was allegedly avoiding a collision with a tractor, ran off the road and ran over seven boys. Three boys died, three of the victims are fighting for their lives in hospital and one escaped unharmed. The truck driver fled the scene and was later arrested. The boys were coming from a soccer training in the evening of the incident and it is alleged that the tractor and the truck had their head lights off when the accident occurred. According to the information, all the victims were learners at Rantobeng Secondary School in the village. Rantobeng Secondary School Principal William Moatshe said they are still shocked with what had happened. He said they are saddened because three of the boys were closely related and doing grades 9 and 10. "The fourth victim was just registered with our school to start this year," he said. Moatshe said they are very disappointed about the incident and the school has to cancel its celebrations to mourn the victims. "We were about to celebrate the school's victory for being awarded in the province but that will not happen now." Limpopo Police Provincial Spokesperson Brigadier Motlafela Mojapelo said the police were called after seven boys were knocked by a truck, killing three instantly. "The truck driver fled the scene and he was hunted and arrested shortly after the incident. A case of culpable homicide is under investigation. The driver will also be charged after failing to stop at the accident scene," he said. The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality Stanley Ramaila accompanied by Mayor of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality Minah Bahula visited the families of the victims to give necessary support. The entourage also visited families of the victims who were admitted in hospital after the accident.

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Way of Life

Twins FC wins the Annual Mpho Makola Football Tournament

Sephaku based Twins FC are the reigning champions of the Annual Mpho Makola Tournament. The team was crowned champions during the Christmas holidays after battling with 31 teams in the tournament. The tournament, that attracts thousands of spectators from Tafelkop and other surrounding villages, started on Thursday 19 December and the final match was played on Tuesday 24 December. The activity was organized at Tafelkop Stadium where football loving people including young and old came to show their love and support to their teams. The tournament is an initiative by Cape Town City FC player Mpho Makola with the aim of developing young soccer stars in his community of Tafelkop Village. The champions, Twins FC defeated Galatasaray FC 5-4 on penalty shootouts after the teams played a goalless draw. Twins walked away with R60 000 cash, a Puma soccer kit, a big trophy and gold medals. Second place winners, Letebejane Village's Galatasaray FC were awarded R30 000-00, a Puma soccer kit and silver medals. Tournament organizer Jeffrey Mtshweni said all the participating teams performed well and exceeded the expectations of spectators. "There was a huge improvement in the teams compared to the previous years. The performance was good and you could see that every team was determined to win the competition," he said. Mtshweni said the number of supporters was satisfactory compared to previously. "Remember we previously had 16 teams participating. We decided to double the number to make it 32 teams after a plea by some of the teams that were complaining that they are left out in the tournament. These are among other reasons we experienced a lot of support this year compared to the previous editions of the tournament. We are growing each and every year and we are happy," he said. He added that the tournament was not just about great prizes, but also opened doors for young talented football stars who are hoping to take the sport to greater heights through scouting of talent by bigger football teams in the country. "Among other programmes in the tournament we invited Vision 20/20 scouts to come and spot young talented soccer players so that they can have opportunities to join big teams in the country. We are happy that three to four boys were recognized, this shows that we are going somewhere," he said. However, Mtshweni said the scouting programme still needs proper administration where the scouts will have enough chance to spot more players from all participating teams. "Our aim is to have the scouts in each and every match so that all players will get equal opportunity. This will also encourage the teams, mainly individuals, to go all out when taking part in the tournament," he said. Mtshweni emphasized that local business owners also benefitted through the initiative. "Everything starting from drinks and food were available for spectators right on their door-step in the venue, sold by local business owners who also benefitted through the event," he said. Tournament founder Mpho Makola said the initiative was aiming to keep people away from immoral activities where many indulge themselves in alcohol. "This initiative was aiming to keep everyone busy during Festive Season and also to unleash talent to young football players," he said. He said they also encourage young people to focus on their future and live a positive lifestyle in order to achieve their dreams.



The Annual Mpho Makola Football Tournament winners Twins FC were crowned champions and walked away with R60 000 cash, a Puma soccer kit, a big trophy and gold medals.

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