

The only time you should ever look back, is to see how far you've come.

Indeed, taking stock of 2022 Ukuwela can see how far the program and its participants have come. We can further deduct that 4 seems to be our lucky number! This week, our 40th Ukuwela candidate will be starting employment, we've had 114 attendances of learners at work exposure opportunities and we've crossed the 400 mark with followers on Facebook! Let's have a closer look at what happened during this extra-ordinary year.



## **SHANNON LEE (LEFT) AND SENIOR CARPE DIEM LEARNERS ENJOYING A WORK EXPOSURE OPPORTUNITY AT HEIHAN HYDROPONICS FARM**

Over the course of four terms, Ukuwela enabled senior learners from Carpe Diem school to visit 6 different sites where they participated in work exposure opportunities. Thank you to Heatherpark SuperSpar, Spur, Heihan Boerdery, Game Car Wash, McDonald's as well as the Van Greunen Dairy Farm. Work exposure at these different industries give learners the opportunity to experience the world of work first hand and enables them to hone their skills and make informed decisions about their future. We concluded our work exposure at Heihan Boerdery during the fourth term. It was our first time at a hydroponics farm and what a glorious experience! One of our Ukuwela candidates, Shannon-Lee Pikaan, joined our senior learners at Heihan and it was a mere two weeks before he was offered employment at the farm. Congratulations Shannon-Lee!

### **Skills training**

Ukuwela is very excited about the possibilities that skills training pose for our learners. This year, for the very first time, we stepped out and supported two of our learners, Alex and Libhongo to participate in Barista training. This laid the foundation for Libhongo who was subsequently employed by Protea Hotel by Marriott King George!

Alex went on to hone his skills at Heatherpark SuperSpar under the watchful eye of Asisipho and Wanda (our favourite Barista this side of the equator!). One thing lead to another and Alex will be employed on a casual basis during the festive season as Wanda's right hand at Heatherpark SuperSpar!

Michelangelo Hair Salon and Dry Bar share our vision when it comes to skills training. They presented a one-week workshop for approximately 60 our girls focusing on hair, nails and beauty skills. This workshop was also a first for us and we look forward to building on interventions during 2023 that link curriculum skills with the industry.



**ALEX DOING HIS MAGIC AT HEATHERPARK SUPERSPAR**

### **The Year of Records**

Ladies and Gentleman, it's the year of records! Ukuwela's ultimate outcome will always be the employment of our learners. Over the past 13 months, 13 Ukuwela candidates have accessed employment in the open labour market! Numbers can be impressive and believe us, we are impressed! But at the heart of Ukuwela is the difference it makes for our candidates and their families.

One of the father's of our candidates recently commented in a WhatsApp message:

*'Since the news that he (our son) would be different to other kids about 18 years ago we have been praying for him to come into contact with people who would value his contribution to society. May your work be blessed for many more such experiences.'*

Two Ukuwela candidates who have been blessed with new opportunities are Daniel Baleseng and Maria Maarten. They officially became the 39th and 40th Ukuwela candidates to access employment when they started at McDonald's on the 12th of December 2022. Good luck guys! This is the busiest time of year to start, but with the support of the McD's team, Ukuwela and your families we believe you are going to ROCK! Shoutout also to JobAbled who initiated the McDonald's job shadowing opportunity for our learners! We look forward to continuing this partnership.



**MARIA (FAR LEFT) AND DANIEL (RIGHT) ON THEIR FIRST DAY AT MCDONALD'S.  
TWO WORDS OF ADVICE: 'GOOI MIELIES'!!**

Congratulations to Brandon-Lee Plaatjies from Groot Brak who started his new job at De Dekke Spar on the 25th of October 2022! Brandon-Lee is a wheelchair user and is responsible for weighing of fruit and vegetables as well as assisting with management of stock in this department. Brandon-Lee is the epitome of service with a smile! You won't find a friendlier grocer in the whole of the Garden Route! Thank you to Wikus and his amazing team for the exceptional way in which they welcomed Brandon-Lee to their store!

**BRANDON-LEE (RIGHT): SERVICE WITH A SMILE AT DE DEKKE SPAR!**



Congratulations are also in order for Rohan van der Berg and Aisha Lee Gentle who both received their Vasbyt rewards for being in their employment for 12 months and counting! It feels like yesterday when Rohan starting his first day at TCS Wi-fi George and Aisha at Checkers, York Street. Ukuwela wishes you both long and happy careers!



**ROHAN (LEFT) AND AISHA (RIGHT) WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE "VASBYT" AWARDS**

**Social media**

It is worth mentioning that our Facebook circle has grown during the year and one of our posts reached 3907 people! This means that more people are reached with the message that people with disabilities can and want to work and deserves a chance! If you have not visited our page on Facebook, consider yourself invited! Become part of our journey by liking, sharing and following our happenings. Our handle is: @ukuwelaprogram

**The cause**

Ukuwela is deeply indebted to everyone who advocates the cause and help us make it happen. Ukuwela team members Asisipho, Cornel, Herma and Suzanne - you live the cause! Our funders during 2022: Securitas Lifeplanners, Garden Route Mall and Miller's Attorneys - thank you for supporting the cause. The Carpe Diem learners - you are the cause. Keep pushing forward!

Ukuwela is right there with George Burns when he said:

'I look to the future, because that is where I'm going to spend the rest of my life'.

What a great year to build on! May your festive season be blessed with all good things past, present and future.

Until 2023,

  
*The Ukuwela Team*