

Building role models at Diepsloot Safe-Hub

Joining the Safe-Hub programme in Diepsloot set Elizabeth Mabusela on a path of both learning and teaching, but most importantly, on becoming a positive role model in the community where she has grown up. She started as a PlayMaker in 2016, and in 2017 was appointed Programme Officer, responsible for planning and implementing the EduFootball activities and the overall delivery of the programme with the more than 600 participating learners.

The key for Elizabeth has always been learning. "The greatest lesson I have learned at the Safe-Hub is the value of being willing to learn. If I had not been open to learning, I would not have discovered that through sport we can teach so many life lessons and contribute so much to kids' lives."

The Diepsloot Safe-Hub programme operates from Muzomuhle Primary School in Diepsloot, providing children from grades R to matric access to a safe environment for facilitated sports, arts, life skills lessons, and personal development. It is run by AMANDLA EduFootball through a funding partnership with Montecasino over three years, and has been operating since February 2016.

The PlayMaker Learnership at the Safe-Hub is a one-year accredited programme for young people from Diepsloot who are committed to changing their communities and being positive role models. The PlayMakers implement the EduFootball programme and gain valuable work experience and training. Their learnership includes NQF level 4 in Sports Administration, training in First Aid Level 1, a SAFA Referee course and a SAFA coaching D-Licence course, the EduFootball Programme concept and tools, values integration & culture, child protection, and health, safety & security courses, basic computer literacy, as well as AMANDLA #MakeYourPlay workshops that cover valuable life skills and work readiness workshops.

Elizabeth (22), matriculated in 2015. With no access to funds for tertiary education, she was job-seeking in early 2016 when she was encouraged to apply to the Safe-Hub to be a PlayMaker. She was dubious as she didn't have a particular passion for sports. "I knew nothing about sports, but that all changed when I joined the programme and I started understanding sports, specifically football, and the wonderful role it can play in uplifting disadvantaged children's lives, and in instilling values that encourage good decision-making. Sport is not just about running around, but it is a tool that can teach discipline, respect, taking responsibility for your actions, and it brings communities together."

Apart from the training that Elizabeth and her fellow PlayMakers were given, their responsibilities included applying their learnings in a well-managed workplace and ensuring positive experiences for the participating learners, building strong and caring relationships with the learners, and being brand ambassadors and role models in their community.

Nomawethu Sokoyi, the Diepsloot Safe-Hub Head of Facility, says, "What made Elizabeth stand out was her level of resilience, her strong desire to positively impact the lives of young people in her community, her eagerness to teach and be taught, and to find ways to use the knowledge she gained to improve her personal and professional life."

On graduating from the PlayMaker programme, Elizabeth applied for the Programme Officer position. She believes that her discipline, her leadership skills, her strong work ethic, her love of learning, and her passion for working with young children and impacting their lives contributed to her appointment in the position. "I think the AMANDLA Safe-Hub saw talent in me that they didn't want to lose because I was living the organisation's values every day of my life." Her responsibilities include planning and implementing EduFootball's 'Get in the game' activities, supporting the overall programme delivery, implementing the registration process and daily sign-in, the family committee and other

family/parents engagement activities, and the girls programme, and producing the Safe-Hub's newsletter for funders and stakeholders.

Since completing her PlayMaker Learnership and having discovered in herself an appreciation of sport as a tool for improving lives, Elizabeth is this year continuing her tertiary education, studying online for a two-year National Diploma in Coaching Science through ETA College. "I love coaching and I can see myself one day coaching one of our national women's soccer teams."

Her message to the children of Diepsloot is to remember that, "anything is possible if you put your mind to it - and never think you are alone in the journey because there is support you can get from your community."

Mike Page, GM of Montecasino, says the precinct is proud of what Elizabeth is achieving. "Elizabeth is an excellent example of what the Safe-Hub programme aims to achieve for youngsters living in disadvantaged circumstances in Diepsloot. She is committed to hard work and to uplifting the children of the community, which is closely aligned to Montecasino's (<<https://www.tsogosun.com/montecasino>> <https://www.tsogosun.com/montecasino>) CSI mission. We wish her, and every PlayMaker, member of staff, and participant in the Diepsloot Safe-Hub programme every success for a bright future."