

CATHSSETA NEWS

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Editor's Note

Reflecting on progress, partnerships, and purpose

As we bring you this edition of the CATHSSETA newsletter, it is with immense pride and reflection that we highlight the significant strides made in the areas of youth empowerment, sectoral skills development, digital transformation, and organisational wellness.

Our lead feature shines a spotlight on the recent Occupational Chef Qualification Programme graduation - a groundbreaking initiative aimed at addressing youth unemployment through industry-relevant and hands-on training in the country's dynamic hospitality sub-sector. The Occupational Chef Qualification Graduations were held in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng and received amazing media coverage.

In the same breath, we draw your attention to the Sondela Academy's 2025 Close-out Function. These two (2) events are a powerful reminder of what is possible when strategic investment meets learner commitment. Hosted in the heart of Limpopo, the event celebrated the achievements of learners who completed various CATHSSETA-funded programmes. The mood for the recent graduation ceremonies was one of celebration and promise, not only because certificates were awarded, but because some learners had already secured employment, either locally or abroad, even before completing their qualifications.

This is the kind of tangible impact we strive for - enabling young South Africans to participate actively and meaningfully in the economy through skills that are relevant, practical, and responsive to market needs.

Equally inspiring is our *Get To Know Feature*, where we interview Mr Kgaolo Donald Seshoka, our in-house Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Developer and an unsung hero behind many of the information systems that enable CATHSSETA to function efficiently, effectively and transparently. His contributions to the development of our Learner Portal and Content Management System represent more than just technological upgrades but also reflect a deep understanding of how digital innovation can improve stakeholder experience, streamline operations, and enhance service delivery. Mr Seshoka's story is not just about code and servers, but about purpose-driven work that supports and strengthens our legislative mandate.

This issue also previews our continued presence at key industry events such as Africa's Travel Indaba and the Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market, where we remain an active voice in shaping



the skills development narrative. These platforms allow us to engage directly with our partners and stakeholders, ensuring that our interventions remain responsive and forward-looking.

We also pause to reflect on the importance of internal well-being. Our Employee Wellness Day initiative reminded us that the health of an organisation begins with the health of its people. Through medical screenings, wellness activities, and moments of collective joy, our staff were reminded that productivity and well-being are not mutually exclusive but are deeply interconnected.

In honour of Youth Month, CATHSSETA actively participated in a series of impactful career exhibitions across rural and urban communities, reaffirming our commitment to reaching youth in all corners of South Africa. In addition, we successfully hosted sector-specific cooperatives (co-op) workshops at a national level, providing targeted support and guidance to young people exploring careers within our sectors. These cooperatives served to connect learners and communities with real opportunities, insights, and pathways for skills development and employment.

We trust that you will find inspiration, insight, and a renewed sense of shared purpose in the pages that follow. Thank you for your continued support, partnership, and belief in the transformative power of skills.

Happy Reading
Poshy

Africa's Travel Indaba 2025: Showcasing the best of African Tourism in Durban

The month of May is always a special time for the province of KwaZulu-Natal, as it welcomes thousands of visitors and industry leaders to one of the continent's premier travel events, Africa's Travel Indaba. Held from 13 to 15 May 2025, at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, this world-renowned trade show once again proved to be a dynamic platform for showcasing Africa's rich tourism offerings.

Recognised as one of the largest and most influential travel trade shows on the African continent, it draws delegates from across the globe. The event provides an opportunity for African tourism stakeholders to connect with international buyers, share insights, forge partnerships, and promote the diverse travel experiences the continent has to offer.

CATHSSETA is proud to have been one of the exhibitors at this year's Travel Indaba, as an important stakeholder in the development of skills within the tourism and hospitality sectors, our presence underscored our commitment to supporting the growth and sustainability of the industry. We used the platform to engage with partners, stakeholders, and potential beneficiaries, highlighting opportunities for skills development and sector transformation. We also used this opportunity to share pertinent information about the accreditation process, which was one of the topical issues raised by stakeholders who visited our stand.

Another area of interest was our funding and partnership opportunities, such as the strategic and high-impact projects.

As a key partner of the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE), CATHSSETA also took part in the NTCE Business Networking Event where our CEO, Mr Marks Thibela, gave an address with a specific focus on the issue of demand and supply of skills within the Tourism and Travel Services sub-sector. The event was attended by key stakeholders from both the private and public sectors.



At the same event, there was a panel discussion on demand-led skills development where some speakers spoke on demand vs those who spoke on supply. The various speakers came from organisations such as the South African Public Colleges Organisation (SAPCO), Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA), Southern Africa Tourism Services Association (SATSA), Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), Harambee, Vaal University of Technology (VUT) and Yes4Youth. On the last day of the Travel Indaba, we hosted our own information-sharing stakeholder engagement workshop, which was well attended by KwaZulu-Natal stakeholders and those stakeholders who were part of the Travel Indaba. There was fruitful



CATHSSETA CEO, Mr Marks Thibela, with a stakeholder at Africa's Travel Indaba 2025.

engagement between our stakeholders and our team, where our KwaZulu-Natal and Free State Regional Manager, Ms Lungile Dlamini, walked the stakeholders through the Discretionary and Mandatory Grant processes and updates. Similarly, our Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) Manager, Ms Neo Lesaoane, provided our stakeholders with an update on legacy

qualifications, registered qualifications, as well as the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) accreditation process.

Our CEO, Mr Marks Thibela and our Executive Manager: Learning Programmes, Ms Lebo Mpye also attended the event.



Africa's Travel Indaba – where great minds meet and impactful partnerships begin.



Ms Poshy Damane, Communications and Branding Manager engaging with a stakeholder during Africa's Travel Indaba 2025.



The CATHSSETA stand at the Indaba in all its glory attracting national and international stakeholders.



CATHSSETA team representing the organisation at Africa's Travel Indaba.

Pinch of Pride:

Young Chefs season their future with success

In May, the air was rich with celebration as young individuals graduated from the Occupational Chef Qualification Programme, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at addressing youth unemployment through industry-relevant and hands-on training in the country's dynamic hospitality sector.

These graduates represent the first cohort to complete CATHSSETA's Chef Artisan Programme, a landmark development aligned with the Department of Higher Education and Training's Decade of the Artisan campaign - a Ministerial flagship programme launched to promote artisanry as a critical driver of economic development.

At the infancy of this programme in 2020, the entire world was brought to its knees by a global crisis known as COVID-19. This pandemic brought with it strict lockdowns, widespread uncertainty, and heartbreaking loss of life. Yet, even in the face of these overwhelming challenges, our young men and women refused to let their dreams fade or be derailed.

Despite everything, they remained committed and pressed on, determined to reach their goals. They adapted, persevered, and pushed through every obstacle, and as the pressure intensified, something remarkable happened, it ignited hidden talents and sparked a deeper hunger to learn and grow beyond the classroom.

As a result of their hard work and determination, some of our learners secured the incredible opportunity to work at the 2022 FIFA Soccer World Cup in Qatar - a remarkable milestone that speaks volumes about their commitment and the quality of training they received.

However, the programme faced a major challenge of funding. The initial contract budget was limited and not fully secured, putting several critical elements of the learning journey, particularly the trade test, in jeopardy.

The trade test is more than just a final assessment. It serves as a vital gateway to formal qualification and professional recognition. Without it, learners would not be able to validate their skills, limiting their ability to access employment or start their own businesses in the industry.



Ms Lungile Dlamini, CATHSSETA Regional Manager for KwaZulu-Natal and Free State, inspiring graduates with words of encouragement.

Recognising the importance of this step, our CEO took decisive action to ensure that trade test fees were fully covered. This strategic intervention ensured that no learner was excluded, due to financial barriers. It also preserved the integrity of the programme and underscored our shared commitment to meaningful, inclusive empowerment. This was more than just a training course - it was a launchpad for their future.

Hailing from KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape, Limpopo, and North West Provinces, the learners brought diverse backgrounds and shared a common goal: to transform their futures and uplift their communities. Their first graduation ceremony took place in Durban on 16 May 2025, followed by a vibrant celebration in Sandton on 28 May 2025 where the learners were formally recognised as skilled culinary artisans.

Over the span of three intensive years, these aspiring chefs honed their craft through a blend of theoretical instruction, practical training, industry placements, and professional mentorship. Their development encompassed a range of culinary competencies from classical techniques and international cuisine to innovation with local flavours and sustainable food practices.

Speaking at the graduation, Mr Thibela, said, "This graduation is more than a ceremony, it is a beacon of hope and a testament to the



Our CEO, Mr Marks Thibela with Chef programme beneficiary, Ms Tebatso Mamabolo at the SABC studios for the live interview with news anchor, Mr Thulasizwe Simelane on the The Week ahead programme.

determination of these young men and women. They have demonstrated what is possible when talent is nurtured and supported through opportunity.”

These graduates leave the programme with leadership potential, real-world experience, and the confidence to make a lasting impact in the culinary world.”

As part of the broader *Decade of the Artisan* initiative, which began in 2014, the programme underscores government efforts to position artisanry as a viable and attractive career path. By developing artisans who are technically skilled, innovative, and ready to contribute to strategic infrastructure projects, we are playing a crucial role in shaping a skilled workforce for the future.

Their success serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that quality vocational education could have, not only in transforming individual lives but also in driving meaningful community upliftment and economic development. These graduates had become well-equipped to make their mark, armed with practical skills, entrepreneurial spirit, and a deep passion for their craft.

We asked two graduates to share their inspiring stories of success.

Ms Tebatso Mamabolo thrived as a Chef Pastry Commis at the renowned 5-star Kloofzicht Lodge and Spa in Muldersdrift. Ms Mamabolo emphasised the importance of professionalism, saying,



“It’s how you do the job in the industry in order to be remembered when you leave.”

Ms Thandeka Shange, another programme graduate, took her culinary skills to new heights, working in Austria. Shange encouraged others to be bold and take risks, advising, “Don’t be afraid to go out of your country and experience another life.”

Their stories stood as a testament to the programme’s ability to empower young chefs and open doors to exciting opportunities. They shared their journey live on ‘The Weekend Ahead,’ which is aired on SABC News Channel on DStv 404.

This momentous achievement is a testament to our ongoing commitment to developing sector-relevant skills, creating pathways to employment, and supporting the national agenda of inclusive economic participation.

The future for these young chefs is not just promising, it is rich with flavour, opportunity, and possibility. With each dish they prepare, they carry the legacy of their journey, the power of education, and a pinch of well-earned pride.



Ms Lebogang Mpye - Executive Manager: Learning Programmes congratulating and encouraging the graduates.



A moment of pride with our newly qualified chefs — skills sharpened, futures bright.



A proud moment capturing, CATHSSETA CEO, Mr Marks Thibela with Chef Rewaldo Lottering.



Celebrating the next generation of culinary professionals.

Prioritising health

with a fun-filled Wellness Day



On 9 May 2025, we turned our head office into a hub of health and vitality, as staff from both the head office and regional offices came together to take part in a much-anticipated Wellness Day.

Dressed in comfortable active wear and ready for action, staff were treated to a jam-packed schedule of activities and wellness services, designed to promote healthy lifestyles. The day offered a wide range of free health screenings, including BMI checks, blood pressure monitoring, glucose testing, cholesterol and TB screening, HIV testing, and eye examinations.

These services provided staff with valuable insights into their health status and a few wake-up calls!

The event also featured wellness talks from our service provider, ASI (Pty) Ltd, delivering practical advice and information on everything from nutrition and chronic disease management to mental health awareness. One of the highlights was the IV drips station, where staff could receive a boost of hydration and nutrients to re-energise.

However, it was not all needles and numbers, there was plenty of movement too! The day ended on a high (and slightly breathless) note with a fun and lively



Prioritising health and well-being — Ms Nthabi Maluleka gets her ears checked by an audiologist.



Ms Noxolo Xhalabile with a gym instructor from Virgin Active.

aerobics session with Virgin Active, which brought out everyone’s inner athlete or at least revealed who needs to spend a little more time stretching! It was all in good spirit, and laughter echoed through the venue as colleagues encouraged one another through the final set of lunges and squats.

Our Wellness Day was a great reminder that taking care of our health should always be a priority. With a perfect mix of education, preventative care, and fitness fun, it was a day well spent and a strong step towards a healthier workforce.



Embracing wellness—Mr Lehlohonolo Paleli connects with our Virgin Active service provider to kickstart a healthier journey.



Mr Thabang Motlatla feeling so fresh and so clean.

Joining Africa's Maritime Movement at the Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market

In April this year, we participated in the Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market 2025, which was held at the Feather Market Centre in Nelson Mandela Bay, Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape Province.

This inaugural event, graced by the Minister of Tourism, Honourable Ms Patricia De Lille, brought together industry leaders, exhibitors, buyers and visitors from across the continent and beyond, with a shared focus on the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism.

We are proud to have been part of this initiative, exhibiting alongside key players in the sector and contributing to the collective momentum behind a flourishing blue economy. The event featured exhibitions, presentations by various industry leaders, panel discussions, networking opportunities, and business matchmaking sessions, serving as a dynamic platform to showcase innovative tourism initiatives, marine conservation strategies, and environmentally responsible travel experiences.

Our exhibition stand became a vibrant hub for engagement and knowledge-sharing, offering insights into the organisation's various programmes and initiatives. As a first-time exhibitor, we seized the opportunity to forge strategic partnerships and emphasise the importance of education and accredited training in driving sustainability and inclusivity throughout the coastal tourism value chain.

Based on the number of enquiries received, we also realised how much more work needs to be done to empower and capacitate our stakeholders in Gqeberha, as a result, CATHSSETA will revisit Gqeberha to conduct an information-sharing workshop.



High school learners visiting the CATHSSETA stand to gain information about various CATHSSETA offerings suited for their needs.



Explaining what CATHSSETA is about to stakeholders who visited the CATHSSETA stand.



Ms Priscilla Mahlangu attending to stakeholder queries.

Newly revamped website

elevates digital experience for stakeholders

In April 2025, we proudly unveiled our newly redesigned website - a bold and strategic move to transform the way stakeholders engage with the organisation online. The launch signalled a major milestone in its digital transformation journey, driven by a vision to create a more connected, efficient, and user-centric digital environment.

The revamped website was not just a cosmetic overhaul, it was a fundamental redesign focused on functionality, accessibility, and performance. Built with the needs of stakeholders, learners, employers, training providers, and industry partners in mind, the platform introduced a host of new features designed to make every online interaction simpler, faster, and more productive.

Key enhancements included:

- Fresh, modern, and intuitive user interface that aligned with current digital trends;
- Easier and quicker access to key resources, such as funding applications, learning programmes, and compliance information;
- Fully responsive mobile design, allowing users to access information anytime, anywhere;
- Improved navigation structure, enabling users to find what they need with minimal effort;
- The launch of CATHy – the AI-powered chatbot, offering instant assistance and guidance on frequently asked questions;
- Advanced automation tools that reduced manual processes and turnaround times; and
- Powerful, upgraded Content Management System (CMS), allowing for timely updates, improved content quality, and enhanced user engagement.

The redesign also supported enhanced accessibility features, making the site more inclusive for users with visual or physical impairments.

Behind the scenes, the website was built with robust security and scalability in mind, ensuring the platform could grow and adapt to the changing needs of the organisation.

This upgrade formed part of a broader digital innovation strategy aimed at strengthening stakeholder communication, streamlining service delivery, and promoting transparency and accountability. It aligned directly with our strategic goals to modernise operations, improve stakeholder satisfaction, and increase overall organisational efficiency.

As we continue to innovate and lead within the skills development landscape, the website stands as a powerful symbol of its ongoing commitment to service excellence, stakeholder empowerment, and digital transformation.

We thank all stakeholders who contributed their feedback towards our newly revamped website.



Meet Donald Seshoka

Tech maestro behind the scenes



Behind every seamless system and digital upgrade at CATHSSETA, there's a sharp mind making it all happen - and that mind belongs to Mr Donald Seshoka, our Application and Systems Developer. As part of the ICT Infrastructure and Business Support team, Donald plays a pivotal role in ensuring our technology runs smoothly and supports the organisation's goals. Let's take a moment to get to know Donald.

1. What's the most exciting project you've worked on at CATHSSETA, and what made it stand out?

One of the most exciting and impactful projects I've led here, involved the development and enhancement of two critical systems - developing the website and Content Management System (CMS) and the Learner Portal.

For the CMS, I played a key role in enabling non-technical users to create, update, and publish content such as news, announcements, and public documents with ease. This empowered departments to manage their own content, improved stakeholder communication, and supported our commitment to organisational transparency, while reducing reliance on ICT resources.

The Learner Portal was equally transformative. It centralised key learner-facing services, such as application submissions, document uploads, and real-time status tracking, into a single, structured platform. One of its standout features is the ability for learners to build and manage their personal profiles, making them visible to potential employers. The platform also provides employers with access to a pool of qualified learners, helping bridge the gap between education and employment.

I developed, designed, and implemented essential features, including:

- Learner profile creation and management;
- Employer access to learner database for recruitment;
- Real-time application tracking;
- Role-based access control;
- Audit trails for accountability; and
- Reporting dashboards for performance and compliance monitoring.

Developed and supported entirely in-house by the ICT team, both systems showcased my technical capabilities and delivered measurable improvements in operational efficiency, transparency, and user satisfaction.

As a result of this contribution, I was honoured to be named Employee of the Year, a recognition that reflects not only the technical success of these projects but also the value to the whole organisation.

2. If your job had a superhero name, what would it be — and what would your special power be?

If my job had a superhero name, I'd proudly go by 'The Compilerstorm' (I don't just write code, I unleash storms of perfection), a title that captures my focus on application and systems development. But around here, I've also earned the nickname 'Our ICT Guru,' as our CEO likes to say, which I take as a huge compliment.

My special power would be the ability to bridge business needs and technology effortlessly, whether it's designing smart internal systems, enhancing our content platforms, or resolving complex ICT challenges before they escalate. In short, I make tech work for people.

3. What's one piece of tech or clever trick you couldn't do without — and why?

I've always loved solving puzzles, and coding felt like the biggest puzzle of all. When I write code, it's like building a story, each line is a sentence, and together they create something useful and meaningful.

Some days, it's frustrating when things don't work as expected, but that's part of the adventure. Every bug is like a mystery to solve, and every feature I build feels like bringing an idea to life.

What I enjoy most is seeing how the tools I create help others, whether it's making someone's job easier or helping people connect and communicate better. Knowing that my work has a real impact keeps me motivated.

At the end of the day, being a developer means being a problem-solver and a creator, always learning, adapting, and growing.

4. How do you keep up with the fast-paced world of technology, and which trend do you think will shape the future of ICT?

I stay current with the fast-paced world of technology by actively engaging with online developer communities, reading industry blogs, exploring new tools through hands-on projects, and continuously upskilling through platforms like Laracasts, GitHub, and tech webinars. I also keep an eye on open-source trends and follow key contributors in the PHP frameworks and DevOps space.

One trend I believe will shape the future of ICT is the continued rise of AI-powered automation, especially in IT service management and business processes. From intelligent chatbots to self-healing systems and predictive analytics, AI is transforming how we manage infrastructure, support users, and make decisions. Organisations that embrace this shift early will see major improvements in efficiency, scalability, and user experience.

5. What's something people might be surprised to learn about your role or the work you do behind the scenes?

People are often surprised to learn just how much happens behind the scenes in my role. Most assume I just 'manage the website,' but I'm responsible for a wide range of critical ICT functions. This includes developing and maintaining custom internal systems, covering everything from systems analysis and design to documentation, coding, testing, and deployment using various software development life cycles.

I work extensively with tools like Visual Studio Code, Notepad++, XAMPP, Apache Tomcat, SQL, IIS, SSL, GitHub, Git Bash, and other web-related technologies to ensure secure, stable, and reliable operations across the organisation.

A lot of my work goes unnoticed when it's functioning correctly, and that's exactly the goal. Whether I'm resolving system bugs before they impact users, optimising backend performance, or building tools that streamline service delivery, I'm constantly working in the background to keep things running smoothly.

6. If you could automate one everyday task, at work or in your personal life, what would it be?

If I could automate one everyday task at work, it would be the manual processes around internal forms and approvals especially things like trench forms and contract management. These tasks often involve back-and-forth communication, document tracking, and manual data entry, which can be time-consuming and prone to delays.

In fact, I've already started working on this: I'm currently embarking on a project to automate our Contract Management System, with plans to also streamline the trench form process. The goal is to reduce paperwork, improve traceability, and ensure faster turnaround times through digital workflows, notifications, and centralised tracking. Automating these areas not only saves time but also improves compliance and accountability across departments.

7. When you're not tackling tech challenges, how do you like to spend your free time?

When I'm not tackling tech challenges, I enjoy spending my free time unwinding with music, exploring new tech tutorials, and occasionally gaming to clear my mind. I also like to stay updated with the latest trends in development through YouTube, podcasts, and forums, it's both relaxing and enriching.

Outside of the screen, I value quality time with family and friends, and I enjoy moments of quiet reflection or a good walk to recharge. It helps me come back to work refreshed and ready to solve the next big problem. Though I must admit, I often catch myself bragging about my projects and the work I do. When you're passionate about what you do, it's hard not to share it.

8. If you could switch jobs with anyone for a day, just for a bit of fun, who would it be and why?

If I could switch jobs with anyone for a day, it would be Mr. Kagiso Gaelesiwe, affectionally known as KG, Senior Systems Engineer working with Microsoft Azure, Cisco infrastructure, enterprise servers, and telecoms. I'd love to immerse myself in the architecture, monitoring, and troubleshooting of large-scale networks and cloud environments, especially in high-availability and mission-critical settings.

It would be fascinating to see how they handle real-time systems, VoIP, security protocols, and global infrastructure, and I know I'd come back with deeper insight into improving our own ICT setup and future-proofing our internal systems.



Solving complex problems, one relaxed moment at a time.

Celebrating skills for a changing world: Sondela Academy's 2025 Close-out Function



As South Africa commemorated 'June 16' during Youth Month, under the theme "Skills for the Changing World - Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation", Sondela Academy was putting the final touches on its Close-out Function, held on Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at Piccinini's Hall, Sondela Nature Reserve & Spa. The event marked the successful completion of several CATHSSETA-funded programmes and honoured the achievements of young learners, who had gained valuable, industry-relevant skills, empowering them to participate meaningfully in the economy.

Dressed in their official Sondela Academy attire, each representing their respective programmes, the learners filled the hall with anticipation and excitement for what promised to be a truly memorable day of celebration. The atmosphere was electric, with every seat occupied by proud learners and lecturers, all united in recognition of the dedication and hard work that had led to this milestone. Our representatives were seated in the front row, bearing witness to the tangible outcomes of their investment in youth development.

A few seats remained unfilled—not due to absence or disinterest, but because several learners had already secured employment and were unable to attend the function to receive their certificates.

In his opening address, Mr Jeanne Scheepers, Principal of Sondela Academy, acknowledged this noteworthy development, stating, "Some of the recipients are already employed and therefore couldn't attend the close-out event to receive their certificates." His words underscored the real-world impact of the programmes and stood as a powerful testament to their success in preparing learners for the job market.

Following the Principal's address, Mr Ian Jansen van Rensburg, Managing Director of Sondela Academy, took to the podium to deliver an inspiring message to the graduates. He encouraged the learners to apply the knowledge and values instilled in them during their time at the academy, particularly the importance of exceptional customer service.

He reminded them that, as they enter the world of work, they will encounter clients and colleagues from diverse backgrounds, some of whom may be challenging to work with. However, he emphasised that professionalism, patience, and a positive attitude would set them apart in the workplace.

"Go out there and market yourselves," he urged. "Let your skills, your conduct, and your service speak for you. Always remember that how you treat people reflects not only on you but on the quality of the training you received here. Carry the Sondela name with pride."

Speaking on behalf of the learners, Mr Kgothatso Kutumela expressed his heartfelt gratitude to CATHSSETA for its pivotal role in advancing skills development across South Africa. He also extended sincere thanks to the executive management and lecturers of Sondela Academy for their unwavering support and guidance throughout the programme.

Reflecting on the journey, he remarked, *“This year has truly been unforgettable. One of the greatest lessons I’ve learned is that growth begins where your comfort zone ends. Step beyond what feels familiar - that’s where real development takes place.”*

As the day’s programme unfolded with insightful reflections and motivating words from fellow learners and lecturers, it acknowledged and celebrated the dedication of individuals who had excelled in their respective programmes.

The programmes delivered by Sondela Academy, with our support, are closely aligned with our vision: *“Skills needs met in each sub-sector to drive economic growth by 2030.”* Through this collaboration, learners are equipped with practical, sector-relevant skills that contribute meaningfully to South Africa’s economic development.

Recognising Learner Achievements

During the Close-out Function, Sondela Academy celebrated the successful conclusion of the following skills programmes and awarded learners with certificates for the following programmes:

- Food Handler;
- Food Service Assistant;
- Nature Site Guide;
- Field Ranger;
- Assistant Housekeeper;
- Hospitality Reception; and
- Sport Club Administration.

In addition, the event honoured learners who completed their full qualifications by awarding them with certificates and trophies for:

- Certificate in Accommodation Services;
- Certificate in Food and Beverage Services; and
- Occupational Certificate in Chef.

These programmes had a tangible impact on the learners’ lives, equipping them with not only technical knowledge and workplace experience but also personal confidence and a sense of direction.



Our Regional Manager for Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West encouraging the graduates.



Mr Kgothatso Kutumela, Food and Beverage learner, shares words of gratitude with lecturers and peers at Sondela Academy.



Mr Ian Jansen van Rensburg, Managing Director of Sondela Academy, shares insights on the world of work with learner.

Our Regional Manager for Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo, Mrs Zandile Ntshangase, warmly congratulated the learners on their remarkable achievements. She recognised the unwavering dedication, perseverance, and many sleepless nights that paved the way to this significant milestone.

In her address, she shared an inspiring message, *“You have officially joined a community of professionals whose mission is to serve, create, and inspire.”*

Mrs Ntshangase encouraged the graduates to embrace this new chapter with confidence and purpose, reminding them that their journey has only just begun. With the skills and knowledge they have acquired, they are well-positioned to contribute meaningfully to their industries and uplift the communities they serve.

The close-out function served as a celebration of progress, perseverance, and partnership. It reminded all in attendance that through quality training and collaboration, South Africa’s youth could be positioned as powerful agents of economic and social change.



Celebrating success with Ms Thokozile Kgasoane (CATHSSETA), alongside a mentor and graduate.



Sondela Academy staff, Ms Zandile Ntshangase with the graduates as they show off their certificates.


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