

## Phelo gets a Job!



Meet Phelokazi Tshemese, a resilient young woman who has come through Mamelani's programme and who recently realised her dream of getting a job as an Auxilliary Social Worker, despite going through difficult times before getting there.

Born and bred in the Lower Cross Roads suburb of Khayelitsha, Phelo always dreamt of working as an Auxiliary Social Worker. Phelo said that when she first came to Mamelani, she was feeling down and out because of the physical abuse and neglect that she was going through at that time. However, through walking her journey with Mamelani, the once young and discouraged Phelo has risen to the challenges in her life and is slowly realising her dreams.

***We recently asked Phelo to reflect on her journey and here are some highlights from our conversation***

**Q: In a few words, how would you describe yourself?**

**A:** I would say I am a hard worker; a role model and someone who likes to encourage and motivate others.

**Q: What made you want to study Social Work?**

**A:** I wanted to study social work because I know how it feels to have responsibilities that are more than you can handle as a child. I wish to make a difference in children's lives to give them hope and encourage them to carry on with education as it the only answer through our obstacles. I want to inspire young people from my community, people that I've grown up with and those who know my history. I want to show them that scars can be turned into stars. I wish to be a light to those children who had no hope for their future.

**Q: Tell us about your experience with Mamelani?**

**A:** Mamelani exposed me to many opportunities - if it wasn't for all the help and support I got from

Mamelani I think I wouldn't be where I am today. Mamelani supported me financially and emotionally to further my studies. After I completed my training as an Auxiliary Social Worker, Mamelani allowed me to volunteer as an Intern. After my internship with them, Mamelani assisted me in getting another internship at Beautiful Gate. During my time there I learnt about how to behave in the workplace, as well as how to deal and work with different people. I am grateful for the internship opportunities because I got a lot of experience from them and they helped to prepare me for my social work career as I got to learn to listen to people's problems and to help them solve those problems.

**Q: What role has Mamelani played in your life?**

**A:** The Mamelani has supported me through thick and thin and through it all I managed to complete my education and look at me now - I am doing what I have always loved to do. They played a very big role in my life – a role my family couldn't play. Even though I had no family to support me, Mamelani has always felt like home. They are like family to me because they are all very supportive. I would say they each and every one of them played a pivotal role in my journey towards becoming a confident and resilient young adult. I know I can count on them and I can always pop in their offices if I need anything or when I need someone to talk to, they always there to listen and guide me. I am very thankful for that and even when I grow older; I want to continue my relationship with Mamelani. I want to carry it forward by supporting other children also and bring a ray of hope for them just like Mamelani did for me.

**Q: Where do you see yourself in a few years' time?**

**A:** I would like to study further and I want to enrol for a degree in Social Work. I hope to become a qualified social worker in a few years' time. I also hope to have my own happy family. My background as a victim of abuse is what has ultimately inspired me to become a social worker and help children suffering from abuse, because I know how it feels to be there, so I want to use my success story to motivate other young people not lose hope

**Q: What message do you have for other young people who are currently working with Mamelani?**

**A:** To the young Mamelanians I want to say they need to work hard because Mamelani is there to support them and expose them and teach them to be independent. I want to encourage them to be determined and to keep pushing until they reach their goals.