

Spec-Savers sponsors Umzi Wethu students

Two students from the Umzi Wethu hospitality training academy in Port Elizabeth can now 'see clearly' thanks to the sponsorship of Spec-Savers. Lifa Tshali and Lerato Tau received their glasses from Spec-Savers Greenacres franchisee, Antonie Wolmarans on Monday, 29 August 2011.



Spec-Savers Greenacres franchisee, Antonie Wolmarans with Umzi Wethu students, Lerato Tau and Lifa Tshali.

"These glasses are great," says Lerato Tau. "I can see so well now, and it helps me to study harder. I used to get really bad headaches which affected my concentration, and the nurse recommended that I have my eyes tested. When I got my glasses, my headaches stopped."

Lifa Tshali is happy to be able to see his study materials clearly, and has also noticed an increased ability to concentrate since receiving his new glasses. "I'm also glad that I don't have to sit right up at the front of the class to see the board anymore!"

Spec-Savers is a long-term sponsor of the Wilderness Foundation's Umzi Wethu skills development and job placement programme.

Free eye-testing and evaluation

"Thanks to the sponsorship, we are able to send all of the Umzi Wethu students for free testing and evaluation. Most of the students have never visited an optometrist before, and don't know that they have eye problems," says Umzi Wethu wellness coordinator, Heinrich Terblanche. "Spec-Savers then supplies the students with free eyewear. They continue to ensure that the students have essential eye care throughout the year."

Both Tshali and Tau are from Port Elizabeth and are part of the eleventh intake of students at the Umzi Wethu academy.

"The students from the Umzi Wethu academy are the kind of people that we love dealing with, and we want to assist them in any way possible to further their studies and achieve their goals in life," says Spec-Savers Greenacres franchisee, Antonie

Wolmarans. "We are privileged to work hand-in-hand with the Wilderness Foundation to build a future of well-educated individuals, who can now 'see the world more clearly'."

Prize-winning project

Headed up by the Wilderness Foundation of South Africa, Umzi Wethu is a one-year, social development and intervention programme for displaced and socially vulnerable youth (those who have lost one or both parents, are child headed households or live in households with no formal income).

According to director of social programmes for the Wilderness Foundation, Pinky Kondlo, "the goal of Umzi Wethu is to fulfil the employability potential of resilient, motivated youth who have been displaced by HIV/Aids and poverty."

Umzi Wethu is one of the most successful social intervention projects in South Africa and won the prestigious Rolex Award for Enterprise in 2008.

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