

Muir pupil heading for space academy

By [Devon Koen](#)

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A Uitenhage teenager has been granted an all-expenses-paid trip to the US Space and Rocket Academy in March.



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Muir College prefect Matthew Arnold, 17, said he was thrilled about attending the Honeywell Leadership Challenge Academy hosted at the US Space and Rocket Academy in Alabama.

"I have never been overseas before and I am looking forward to the experience," Matthew said.

He is one of two South Africans - the other is from Gauteng - taking part in the leadership challenge.

Matthew said he had first learnt about the leadership programme while in Grade 8 at Muir.

"I was too young to apply then because it is only for the 16 to 18 age group," he said, adding that in Grade 9 and Grade 10 he did not perform well enough to apply.

"Once I got my performance up at school in Grade 11, I applied in September with the previous term's results," he said.

As part of the stringent selection process, Matthew was required to submit a number of essays detailing what he hoped to achieve by attending the academy as well as detail his leadership positions at school.

A keen saxophonist, Matthew has been involved in the wildlife society, Scripture Union and the blood donor panel at Muir College.

"Some of my friends are a bit jealous but they are happy for me," he said.

The aspiring engineer said he enjoyed maths and science most and hoped these subjects would help him while at the academy, where he will learn more about leadership positions and challenges in the field of space technology and astronomy.

"The leadership camp will test us in different leadership positions," he said.

Matthew said he hoped the experience would make him a better leader at Muir College.

"There will be a few students from the University of Alabama to teach us about rocket technology, which I really enjoy," he said.

For his future, Matthew intends to study engineering at the University of Cape Town or the University of Pretoria before specialising in astrological engineering.

"Once I am qualified, I can then go back and tutor at the Space Academy," he said.

Muir College headmaster Robin Stephenson said he was proud of Matthew for taking on the unique opportunity.

"He is an inspiration to the other boys. He must be quite brave.

"It says a lot about him to step out of his comfort zone," Stephenson said.

Matthew leaves for America on 3 March and will return on 10 March.

The Honeywell Leadership Challenge Academy provides scienceoriented workshops, lectures and team exercises for the participants to develop their leadership skills.

Source: Herald

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