

Superhero teacher awarded in annual Teacher's Day competition

Acting Principal of Orient Heights Primary, Perumal Govender has been named the national winner of the Woolworths Educational Programme and MySchool's 2017 Teacher's Day competition. In second place was Hlengiwe Hlongwane from Thatlogang Secondary School in Soweto, and in third, Dirkie Lamprecht from Hottentots-Holland High School in the Strand. The announcement coincided with the celebration of World Teacher's Day in October.



L-R Yestel Lutchman, Orient Heights Primary School student with superhero teacher, Perumal Govender.

Govender, a mathematics and technology teacher who is powerfully changing learners' lives for the better every day, was entered into the competition by one of his learners, Yestel Lutchman.

Across South Africa, 19,000 South African learners were inspired to enter their superhero teachers into this year's competition, a significant rise from the 13,000 entries received last year. Learners were asked to submit a 200-word motivation that highlighted their teacher's superpowers and described how they had changed their lives.

In her motivation, Lutchman highlighted how children respond enthusiastically to a teacher with high expectations of them. She said: "My teacher and superhero, Mr Govender is a great role model who always aims super high to make our school better. Since being here, the children in need have got all the things they are in need of including stationary, school shoes and uniforms. He makes a difference in the children's lives and turns an unhappy face into a bright bold smile. Mr Govender is a great teacher and he helps those who don't understand his lesson which is maths. He tries to make sure everyone passes. He is my superhero for one thing mostly, he treats everyone equally with no favourites and he teaches us that everyone is the same and we should not treat anyone differently because we all are human."



From L-R: Second place runner up: Dirkie Lamprecht from Hottentots-Holland High School in the Strand, first place runner up Hengiwe Hongwane from Tlhatlogang Secondary School in Soweto and National winner: Perumal Govender from Orient Heights Primary School in Pietermaritzburg

Govender, who has been teaching for 32 years, responded to the announcement that he is a 2017 Teachers Day national winner with this to say about his purpose as an educator: “I believe that a teacher is morally obligated to enter the classroom with only the highest of expectations for each and every one of their learners. Thus, I believe in maximizing the positive benefits that naturally come along with any self-fulfilling prophecy; with dedication, perseverance, and hard work, I believe my learners will rise to the occasion. I aim to bring an open mind, a positive attitude, and high expectations to the classroom each day. I believe that I owe it to my learners, as well as my community and society, to bring consistency, diligence, and warmth to my job in the hope that I can ultimately inspire and encourage such traits in the children as well.”

Govender has won a R30,000 Woolworths Giftcard, R25,000 cash, and laptop computer and an all-expenses paid weekend getaway for two in Cape Town. Lutchman received a R5,000 Woolworths Giftcard for her winning motivation and Orient Heights Primary has been awarded a R10,000 cash prize.

“This is the seventh year of the Woolies and MySchool Teacher’s Day competition and we are overwhelmed at the sheer volume of children’s heart-warming stories about their incredible teachers,” says Pieter Twine, Woolworth’s General Manager of Loyalty and MySchool. “We congratulate Mr Govender and Yestel, and hope that by recognising this superhero teacher from Pietermaritzburg on a national platform, the competition will continue to inspire schools and communities across South Africa to deeply value the wonderful difference that a great teacher makes in the lives of many thousands of learners.”

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