

CHANGES IN MRYE AND BID FOR ADDITIONAL SPONSORSHIP

Prepared from MRYE documents under the leadership of Silindile Zulu and Maipelo Molaotse

MRYE, the MPEPU Rural Youth Encouragement outreach initiative, constitutes a group of approximately twenty enthusiastic and dedicated undergraduate students from various faculties at the University of Pretoria who themselves come from rural areas. This initiative has been supported by the CTHB since 2005. Each year MRYE undertakes on average, two to three long trips and one or two short weekend visits during the university vacation to schools in rural areas of Limpopo, North West Province, Mpumalanga, Qwa Qwa and Free State, Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. During these trips, they inform the learners about career paths that are open to them, the necessary entry qualifications, courses available and funding which will support their studies. Information brochures and application forms are distributed from all Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs). MRYE members play a mentoring role to any student who subsequently comes from rural areas to any of the HEIs. This role is continued while the new student is at the HEI. Small unofficial branches of MRYE have started up at other HEI campuses including a branch of the University of the Free State, Qwa Qwa, to cater for the needs of these students from rural areas studying at institutions other than the University of Pretoria.



Mike Wingfield, Emma Steenkamp and Jenny Hale with the MRYE group in 2012.

The aim of MRYE is to inspire and inform the learners and also their educators about the importance of education, hard work and good clean living. To quote their mission: “We are driven by passion and willingness of our hearts to empower the youth of South Africa so that they can make informed decisions.” These MRYE students are role models who have a common goal and are prepared to look forward, reach out, inform and empower communities throughout the country to eradicate information poverty.

Three very dedicated and inspired leaders have led MRYE in the past. These include Samukelo Vilakazi for the first 5 years, Sithembiso Khumalo for 2 years and Aaron Mabaso for the past 2 years. In 2013, Silindile Zulu studying BTown and Regional Planning and Maipelo Molaotse enrolled for BSc Biotechnology, have led this group. Since Silindile is in her final year. Maipelo will take over the leadership in 2014.

In 2013, the CTHB supported a number of outreach trips of the MRYE initiative. The first trip of the year took place between 2 and 10 February. A group of four members targeted schools in the Queenstown area around Balfio Thorns, Tentergate and Hartbeesfontein. From Queenstown they travelled to Lusikisiki for the last visits to schools. En route they presented to schools around Libode. The group visited 19 schools on this trip, which turned out to be a great success and was much appreciated by both learners and educators.



Wonderful interacting moments the MRYE team had with the learners.

The second visit of the year was sponsored by MRYE themselves under the guidance of Samukelo Vilakazi, the first Leader of MRYE, who came from Bredasdorp to lead the group to Nquthu in KZN. This trip catered for the new MRYE members who were not going on the trip to Limpopo in July. Career presentations and Maths and Physics extra classes were given to Grade 10 to 12 pupils for the duration of the KZN trip. Five teachers from private schools who had volunteered to teach for that week accompanied the MRYE group who served as tutors.

Between 14 and 21 July 2013 eight MRYE members, again under the leadership of Samukelo Vilakazi, undertook a trip to Venda, Alldays and Atok. Three MRYE Alumni, Reginah Mudau, Matlou Molangoane and Joyce Phooko. were involved in hosting (meals and accommodation) and assisting the group on this trip. Matlou, who works at ESKOM, also joined the group for the presentation at Alldays and distributed the ESKOM bursary application forms. Fifteen schools were visited. Information on careers and training in forestry and agriculture and in mining engineering were needed in the Limpopo area, as these industries are where the available jobs are located. The impression was that learners rarely consider looking further afield for work. The trip was challenging as communication in English at many of the schools in Venda is often difficult.

The MRYE group in 2013 is comprised of mostly new members. We wish these members and the rest of the MRYE group every success in their endeavours to obtain additional and sustained sponsorship, and to grow their group while still keeping the spirit of selflessness, dedication and service.