

## 'Hardwork Bears Sweet Fruits

Cebisile Ngobese



Hillcrest Advice Bureau's Graduate Nozipho Mhlongo

It is always comforting to know that there are people who are there to shine the light when you are facing dark and tough times in your life.

Nozipho Sinobuhle Mhlongo is one of many young people who experienced trying times financially when she needed to pursue a career at university. Fortunately for her, the Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund (HABandBF) organisation was there to lend a helping hand when she needed financial assistance with her studies, and gave her an opportunity to her dream of becoming a qualified university graduate.

She studied Bachelor of Social Science in Geography and Environmental Management, Higher Certificate in Supply Chain Management and Bachelor of Commerce in Entrepreneurship. She said, before she became one of the students who are sponsored by HABandBF, she had to work three jobs in order to finance her studies and graduated in the year 2018 at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN).

"I did not finish my degree in due time as I was financially excluded in 2014. I had to look for work in order to pay for my school fees. Unfortunately, I did not find anything in 2014 and so I stayed with my parents that year and they both helped me to do my driver's license. I tried going back to school in 2015. I applied for funding at Ethekewini municipality and KwaDukuza municipality but I had no luck. I got my very first job as a cashier at Shoprite in 2015 but unfortunately the money wasn't enough to save towards my outstanding school fees and so I got another job at World Sports Betting as a betting clerk. I was earning R4000. I lived off R2000 and saved the other R2000 towards my university fees. In 2016 I got another job at Hesto Harness as an operator. There, I worked overtime which helped me to save even more money as I would earn about R6000. Eventually I managed to save my outstanding fees of R22 000 and went back to university in 2017", said Mhlongo.

She said a tragedy occurred in her family. She lost her father in an unfortunate shooting accident and she said this was a very stressful and emotional time for, especially since it was a time for exams.

“I wasn’t the smartest nor greatest person and in my dark days where I needed someone to help me, HABandBF was there for me just when I thought no one was. I will forever be grateful to the bureau. It is people like them who change the world. Please continue to help others. Change their lives as you have done for me. My advice to others is that know your assignment that God has sent you to do and no matter what, don’t give up”, she concluded.

She now works as a Junior Merchandise Planner and she has built a beautiful home for her mother and siblings.