

NEWS RELEASE FROM GROWSMART, AN INITIATIVE BY GROWTHPOINT PROPERTIES AND THE WESTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

13 February 2019

Growsmart enters its tenth year of boosting the education performance of primary school children

The prestigious Growsmart literacy competition, a leading education initiative by Growthpoint Properties in collaboration with the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED), has kicked-off its tenth year.

The annual programme is focused on elevating the literacy, story writing, numeracy, debating and science performance of primary school children.

First launched in January 2010, Growsmart is celebrating a decade of positive impact on education in the Western Cape in 2019. The partnership with the Eastern Cape Department of Education also continues to grow with the competition entering its second year in this province.

Over the years, the successful programme has earned an impressive clutch of awards, both locally and internationally. Most recently the WCED recognised it for Quality Education in the General Education and Training Band.

Jewel Harris, Assistant Regional Manager at Growthpoint in the Western Cape and founder of Growsmart, says, "What is really important at Growsmart is mentoring, guiding and working with learners to help them reach their full potential. During our first decade of making a difference in the performance of primary school children, several Growsmart learners have gone on to receive full scholarships to high schools, matriculated with distinctions, and entered tertiary education. We couldn't be prouder of them. They will have a positive impact not only on their own futures, but on those of their families and communities as well."

In the nine years of Growsmart from January 2010 to December 2018, 1,590 schools have participated, 2,031 teams have competed, and 6,111 children have taken part in the competition. Schools and pupils have received 1.135-million Growsmart newspapers, each one a valuable learning tool. Learners have written and submitted 990 storybooks, which has led to 100 published authors under the age of 13. Growsmart has awarded over R3-million worth of prizes to its winners in the form of school fees and educational hardware, software and other school necessities. It has also generated 16 scholarships and two tertiary education bursaries.

Besides the many schools and educators who have been part of the Growsmart journey so far, the competition's co-sponsors play a vital role in its ongoing success. They include major contributors Novus Print, a division of Novus Holdings, which prints four editions of the Growsmart newspapers for every learner in both provinces, as well as the learners' storybooks. Via Afrika publishes storybooks each year.

Also helping Growsmart learners realise their potential are key contributors Christel House, Leisure Education Trust, SAILI, Students for a Better Future, the Spirit Foundation, and WOW (Stellenbosch University).



This year the competition is set to be bigger and fiercer than ever.

The 2019 competition has already kicked off with thousands of Growsmart curriculum-based educational newspapers being distributed to schools in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape. For its launch, Harris presented the competition's programme to teachers, mentors and principals, and was joined by senior members of the Department of Education. Growsmart also handed out story writing kits, dictionaries and a manual explaining the mechanics of the competition.

For Growsmart's tenth year in the province, a record number of schools from the Western Cape are participating in literacy, story writing, mathematics, science and debating. The programme is also growing in the Eastern Cape, where literacy and story writing will be offered in 80 schools, up from 60 schools last year, and split equally between Port Elizabeth and East London.

"We are delighted with the level of enthusiasm and look forward to working together closely in the Growsmart 2019 competition," says Harris.

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