

Wendy Ackerman visits Bishops to present the Ackerman Award for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Luke Carter (Grade 11:FH) is the inaugural recipient of this award.

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Luke Carter (Grade 11:FH) with Mrs Wendy Ackerman at Bishops on Friday 19 April 2024. On Friday 19 April 2024 a very special service was held in the War Memorial Chapel at Bishops.

Mrs Wendy Ackerman addressed the school assembly before presenting the Ackerman Award to Luke Carter. The Ceremony began with prayers by the Principal, followed by his welcome to the honoured guests. The hymn sung was "Brother let me be your Servant" after which Mr Reeler explained the Award; the Head of School and Deputy respectively read out the criteria for the Award after which Mrs Ackerman addressed the assembly and made the Award. Her words were an encouragement to young people to take up the challenges facing our nation, as Luke had. Luke then replied (see below). The chosen music item was "Sabre Dance" by Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) after which Grace was

pronounced and the Dismissal from the Principal. Guests had Tea in the Colonnade outside the Chapel.

The Ackerman Award for entrepreneurship and innovation is awarded in honour of the role Wendy and Raymond Ackerman played in the service of others.

The criteria for the award is prefaced by the reason for making this Award, namely that "This award is named after Raymond and Wendy Ackerman in acknowledgement of their selfless contribution to South African society and their support of both individuals and communities to improve their situation. The award acknowledges and recognizes both a spirit of entrepreneurship or innovation and service to others. Raymond Ackerman was a student at Bishops from 1944 to 1948."

The Criteria are:

"The nominee must be a current pupil at Bishops.

The nominee must be in Grade 9 or above.

The achievement(s) of the nominee must be innovative by nature and in service to others. The actions and behaviour of the nominee must exemplify the values of the school.

While the achievement(s) of the nominee may have brought personal gain, this must not have been the driving motivation for the endeavour.

The achievement(s) may be over a short period of time but must have a lasting and significant positive impact on the lives of others."

THE INAUGURAL AWARD – 2023

LUKE CARTER

The inaugural recipient of the award is Luke Carter, at the time of the award being made, a 2023 Grade 10 student at Bishops.

The award acknowledges and recognizes Luke's spirit of innovation and service to others. This is evidenced by making a difference in the lives of forty children from an under-resourced background, at the Vuka Nomtobhoyi Orphanage, Langa, Cape Town.

Whilst Luke worked in a group as part of the school's Big Ideas programme, he was the driving force behind the venture to raise over R400,000.00. This move shows Luke's deep-rooted commitment to service.

Luke is still actively engaged in the project and undertakes regular visits with supplies to the children's home. Whilst there are always changing factors at play that sometimes create a measure of uncertainty, Luke does not intend lessening his commitment the core of which is assisting and developing the needs of children

who live in abject poverty. This demonstrates the depth of Luke's compassion and dedication.

He played a pivotal role in the formation of the 2023 Big Ideas Pilot Project, aimed to provide meaningful support to the Orphanage and Educare Centre. His personal investment in the project extended well beyond the call of duty, ensuring that the initiatives truly addressed the genuine needs of the children at the Orphanage.

Luke furthermore saw the need to bridge cultural divides by learning some isiXhosa which enabled him to connect more authentically with the children and staff at Vuka Nomtobhoyi with the view to establishing a lasting impact.

In this venture, there is no evidence of any personal gain; rather, a genuine desire to make a positive and lasting difference.

In the words of Rebecca Zeppel, the educator in charge of the Big Ideas Programme at Bishops: "Luke is a true testament to the transformative power of youth-driven change and a source of inspiration for our community."

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH - ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLY IN THE WAR MEMORIAL CHAPEL ON FRIDAY 19 APRIL 2024 AT 7.50AM - 8.30AM

Good morning, Mr Reeler, Father Monwabisi, President of the OD Union, David Carter, Wendy Ackerman, family, invited guests, staff and fellow boys of Bishops.

I stand before you today humbled and grateful to receive this award. I see this by no means as a personal achievement but rather a testament to the power of collective action and the profound impact we can have when we come together to serve others. In this case I was part of a team consisting of Josh Macdonald, Pablo Slaven and Deen Fortune when I began, that through the Big Ideas Program we became involved in an initiative in Langa assisting orphaned children from Vuka Nomtobhoyi Children's Home. As a group we chose to go on a township tour as part of the first stages of Big Ideas to inspire us and interview people which would hopefully lead us to action. I had absolutely no idea this would be a point in my life where things would change for me.

We were inspired by all the positive happenings in the township with the hopes of benefiting those living in poverty. Something that struck me was that a lot of the people helping those in need, had very little themselves; they were with little, formal school education and without work, yet committed to helping many. When we walked around Langa for the first time in September 2022, we saw this tiny shack, not even half the size of a classroom at Bishops. In this space, more than 30 children were living at one time. The facilities were appalling. There was no running water and absolutely no flushing toilets - the only way to use the toilet was a bucket system in the house or walk down the street to a public toilet. The sleeping conditions were unimaginable as at least three children slept on the same single mattress. The same space in which you ate and worked during the day, was the same space where your mattress was put out at night. When you see this, you start to think ... why ... why these children, why anyone? The truth is that nobody deserves these conditions, so that is what caught my attention.

After our first trip to Langa, we were touched by Vuka Nomtobhoyi Children's Home and had big hopes for our involvement with it. We collected our thoughts to try and create some sort of idea of what to do going forward, bearing in mind we were all only fifteen and still in school. A philosophy we adopted was under-promising and overdelivering, and this is paramount to anyone wanting to do any kind of social upliftment work in communities with limited resources, especially in South Africa.

For this project, we received incredible support from Citadel & its CEO Andrew Moller; and from the Head of Philanthropy, Jean de Villiers, to raise over R400,000.00 at an auction. Jean couldn't be here today, but I thank him in his absence, and Andrew for attending this morning. We knew that the home was in no suitable condition for children to stay in, so we thought we could just build a new house within the next month. We met with various contractors and funders and believed that we could achieve this. Unfortunately, we were met with many complications which did not allow this. From, finance, to small politics within the township, this task was going to be incredibly difficult, and would only be realistic in the long term.

Near the start, I met an amazing man Jorg Caluori who has dedicated his retirement to serving children in townships of Cape Town. He comes from Switzerland and is here today. To see someone move from a foreign country and do this kind of work in South Africa, is admirable. I work closely with him, and others involved, and while things keep changing, my long-term goal is to provide a safe space for these children in Langa less fortunate than me and foster a lasting connection between Bishops and them.

In September last year we reached a big goal, where R200,000.00 of the money raised from the auction was put towards the purchase of a private home in Langa; but after countless meetings, we realised building a new house was not possible. Unfortunately, many systems in South Africa seem to work against you when trying to do genuine good. In a nutshell, the house has been ready since February this year, and we have not been able to move the children from the Vuka Nomtobhoyi Children's Home across because of numerous unexpected complications, but I am working around this and so is Jorg. Currently, it looks like we will be working with four incredible women from Langa to carry this home going forward and house children soon, as that is at the core of why this is all being done. Unfortunately, my ideal plan with Vuka Nomtobhoyi has not been possible due to several obstacles as explained, but my commitment has and always will be rooted in the upliftment of children in poverty, and this is what I am working hard on now with the backing of a brilliant team.

I could go on for hours explaining exactly what has happened and been done, but virtually all of what I have been involved in, would not have been possible without Jorg's tireless commitment, and I salute him for that. I would like to thank my parents as well as each and every person who has supported me on this journey, you all know who you are, and I thank you for believing in this.

Going back to the first day I stepped into Langa, I was truly shocked at the living standards. I just could not understand how children in this community would have

to share beds, wear dirty clothes to school, not receive academic support at home, have no running water, not be able to brush their teeth ... the list goes on. This, unfortunately, is the reality for millions of children in South Africa and around the world today, and it perpetuates a deadly cycle of poverty. How can you have this world, just ten minutes away from a place like Bishops? This raised serious questions for me, which I did not have answers to, but it inspired me to take action.

I wish I could genuinely convey the joy on the faces of those who have been helped, whether it is from making an effort to learn their language, to providing physical help, it is incredible, and shows the true potential we as a nation hold. In itself, that is powerful enough to motivate anyone to help people in need.

We often complain about the state of our townships, but what do we do about it? To me this is the downside to a very privileged South African society capable of helping. I believe it is our duty to help those in need, and that a South Africa without gaps and issues that I have mentioned, is possible. It is going to take a lot of work, but it is within reach. And if we all start from today with a new mindset towards these issues, in thirty years' time I am positive that South Africa would have improved for many.