

Sebastian Robbertse (Grade 11: WH) is the 2024 recipient of this award

14 March 2025

The Ackerman Award for entrepreneurship and innovation in the service of others

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.

Criteria:

1. The nominee must be a current pupil at Bishops.
2. The nominee must be in Grade 9 or above.
3. 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.
4. While the achievement(s) of the nominee may have brought personal gain, this must not have been the driving motivation for the endeavour.
5. 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 CITATION – 2024

SEBASTIAN ROBBERTSE

This award is made in acknowledgement of Raymond and Wendy Ackerman's selfless contribution to South African society and their support of both individuals and communities to improving the situation of others.

Raymond Ackerman was a student at Bishops from 1944 to 1948.

The recipient of the award is Sebastian Robbertse, at the time of the award being made, a 2024 Grade 10 student at Bishops, for his remarkable vision, perseverance, and selfless commitment to supporting the children of the Langa community.

In 2023, as part of *The Big Ideas Project*, Sebastian and his group visited an orphanage in Langa, where they discovered a severe shortage of food and essential supplies.

Motivated by this challenge, Sebastian, alongside his two peers, took immediate action to address the orphanage's needs. They formed a partnership with *Food Lover's Market* and received invaluable support from *Markets of Cape Town*, enabling them to collect and deliver fresh food and necessities to the orphanage at no cost.

However, Sebastian's dedication did not stop at the completion of *The Big Ideas Project*. Driven by a genuine desire to make a lasting impact, he continued to explore new avenues for supporting the orphanage and its children. His collaboration with *Food Lover's Market*, as well as his vision for expanding the scope of his efforts, led to the creation of *Feeding Futures*, a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) dedicated to providing ongoing assistance. Through this initiative, Sebastian is also hoping to partner with *Food Forward SA* and the *Amy Foundation*, furthering his mission to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

In addition to his ongoing efforts, Sebastian is planning a Winter Blanket Drive to ensure that the children receive warmth during the colder months.

For his unwavering dedication, innovative thinking, and tireless efforts to improve the lives of others, Sebastian Robbertse exemplifies the qualities of leadership, compassion, and community service. We proudly award him the *Raymond and Wendy Ackerman Award* for 2024, in recognition of his outstanding contributions and positive impact on the Langa community.



ACCEPTANCE SPEECH - ADRESS TO THE ASSEMBLY IN THE WAR MEMORIAL CHAPEL ON FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2025 AT 7.50AM - 8.30AM

Good morning, Mr. Reeler, Father Momwabisi, My Family, the Ackerman Family, and my fellow students.

I stand here today before you, truly humbled and grateful to be receiving this award. To say that this is a special moment in my life would be an understatement. When I started this journey, I would never have imagined that one day, it would be recognized in such a meaningful way.

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge what this award stands for: It is the collective efforts of a community that has managed to accomplish a common goal. I wish to thank Food Lovers Market for their donations of food, their commitment to my project, and their contributions to its growth. I also want to express my deepest gratitude to the Ackerman family, who have done so much (and continue to do so much) for our school and the broader community.

This project started in 2023 during the Big Ideas Program. My group and I initially wanted to find a solution to the problem of the many stray dogs in Langa. Unfortunately, after spending an entire term on this idea, we could not find a suitable solution, and the idea failed. Yet, instead of accepting failure, we worked even harder. We refocused and eventually found another worthy cause in helping feed the youth of Langa. “Feeding Futures” was born.

During one of our outings in the Big Ideas program, we visited an orphanage named Ikhaya Lekhamva. This orphanage had been receiving incredible help from Luke Carter and his group. However, we saw an opportunity when we noticed that the orphanage struggled to receive sufficient food for the more than 30 children housed there.

It was during this visit that we saw firsthand the extent of the problem, which only highlighted a clear, unfair disadvantage affecting the next generation of children. The lack of sufficient food left many of these kids hungry, impacting their ability to study or attend school. Knowing that many of us take for granted a fridge full of food or 3 meals per day, I left the orphanage that afternoon wanting to change those children’s reality.

At the start, we spent countless hours emailing and calling various food charities and supermarkets. Eventually, fate brought us our “food fairy”, Kate Marias, the social investment manager of Food Lovers Market, and it was her email that kick-started our initiative. Kate, I am so privileged to have you here today. Kate, you have not only helped me get food for the orphanage, but your continued mentorship guides me daily.

I would also like to mention Ridwhana from Food Lovers Market, who unfortunately could not be here today. Thank you, Ridwhana, for your hard work in helping me each month to organize a food package for the orphanage.

“Feeding Futures” has had many challenges since our first delivery to Ikhaya Lekumva in December 2023. There were many milestones and big decisions along the way. After the Big Ideas project came to an end, my group made the mutual decision to part ways. I felt like I needed and wanted to do more for the orphanage, so I continued on my own. Simultaneously, I unfortunately parted ways with our transport team

The future of my project was now going to be decided over the decisions made in its first month. My first big challenge was around the logistics of delivering the food to the orphanage. After finding a solution to my delivery problem, I was buoyed and confident that I could continue to do this.

Since then, my project has been running strongly for the past year, and we have managed to get food, sanitation supplies, and nappies delivered to the orphanage each month.

One of the many advantages of being involved in “Feeding Futures” is the wonderful relationships I have managed to foster with some remarkable human beings. I have had the absolute pleasure of working directly with Luke Carter, and Odwa from the Ikhaya Lekhumva orphanage. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child, but in this circumstance, it takes a committed and incredible group of people to culminate in giving back to communities in need. Because those communities are our future.

I am glad to share with you that I believe this is just the start for “Feeding Futures”. In December of 2024, I went on a tour through a township in Knysna called Khayaletu. On this tour, we visited the Lukhanyiso Safe House, a place for children born into disadvantaged circumstances. It is here that they are helped to gain job experience and education, as well as being provided a community home, all of which gives them a second chance.

I am currently working to include Khayaletu safe house in our “Feeding Futures” initiative, and I hope that by the middle of this year, once the renovations to the Food Lovers Market in Knysna are finished, we will be able to make our first delivery to them.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has helped me on my journey, to my parents Jenna and Harel, my grandparents Jane and Henry, family, friends and dorm mates, thank you all for helping me become the best version of myself and enabling me to discover my passion to help others. Thank you for allowing me to appreciate everything and everyone I have in my life.

I would like to thank Bruce, the leader of my delivery team, as without your efforts every month, all of this would not be possible. I'm grateful to Bishops, which has provided me the platform to not only grow as a person but to follow my dreams, and there is nothing more rewarding than aiding others to follow theirs.

Throughout my speech, I have tried to focus on all the failures I've experienced, not as a means to make my project sound greater by any aspect, but to instead express that failure is a step to success and that it is not a barrier but a stepping stone to achieving your goals. As the great Nelson Mandela once wisely said, "Do not judge me by my successes; judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

If I could go back and speak to myself 2 years ago, this is what I'd say. No matter how hard things get, no matter how much you want to quit, and no matter how hard others try to push you down, do not give up on your dreams, achieve your goals, and help others. I believe that every single one of you sitting here today is capable of great things. Thank you.