



MEDIA RELEASE FROM GROWSMART, AN INITIATIVE BY GROWTHPOINT PROPERTIES AND THE EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

19 September 2019

*Growsmart grows smarter - with 80 schools in its second EC literacy contest*

This year, the Eastern Cape celebrates its second successful Growsmart schools challenge, a joint initiative from Growthpoint Properties and the Eastern Cape Department of Education, which aims to inspire and improve performance at primary school level.

Eighty schools took part in the hotly-contested inter-primary competition, featuring group literacy and individual story-writing, up substantially on the 60 that took part in the inaugural competition held in the province last year.

In another landmark, the top 20 stories in the 2019 writing contest were published in the very first Growsmart Story Writing Book this year.

The final eight teams in the 2019 Growsmart Eastern Cape literacy contest - featuring four schools from Nelson Mandela Bay region and four from Buffalo City District - slugged it out in the semi-final and final held at the ICC on Saturday, 7 September.

“The value of this project cannot be underestimated,” commented Genevieve Koopman, chief director of the Eastern Cape Department of Education. “The Growsmart Project is happening at the right time, where the country is focusing on improving reading in all primary schools. It encourages learners to read, understand and narrate stories, in sentences. It also empowers teachers to be great mentors of teaching and reading.”

Growsmart has a proven formula: it has been operational in the Western Cape for ten years now, where 170 schools registered at the beginning of the year, with prizes up for grabs for schools, learners and their mentors. The Eastern Cape is the second province in South Africa where the initiative has been rolled out.

“We are so excited to see the programme grow and to witness the positive impact that it has on our young learners,” said Jewel Harris, regional general manager at Growthpoint Properties. “Not only is Growsmart inspiring and brain-building, it’s also about making learning fun, and rewarding the children’s efforts.”

The Eastern Cape Growsmart prize pot totals around a half a million rand in rewards for both winning scholars, mentors, and their schools - including a R350,000 iPad Lab for the champion school, and R20,000 to each of the winning learners towards their continued education.

Second and third-place prizes are also substantial, while entrants in the individual story-writing competition - which entails both writing and illustrating their own book - stand the chance of professional publication too.



Competing semi-finalists in the literacy contest on the day were, from Buffalo City District, Gcobani Primary School, Khanyisa Primary School, Ngqika Primary School, and Nontuthuzelo Primary School. Flying the flag for Nelson Mandela Bay were Gelvandale Primary School, Malabar Primary School, Sydenham Primary School, and Young Park Primary School.

“You are legends,” well-known author and columnist Timothy Maurice Webster told the students. “You come from the Eastern Cape - Province of Legends. I know there are legends in this room right now. I want you to have the courage to bring the legend out of you.”

**Growsmart:**

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