

GROW SMART

An initiative by GROWTHPOINT
PROPERTIES



In collaboration with
Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION



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MEDIA RELEASE FROM GROWSMART, AN INITIATIVE BY GROWTHPOINT PROPERTIES

Advancing quality education in South Africa for all

We currently face a huge crisis in South Africa. The reality of poverty, crime, unemployment and inequality continue to pose a major challenge for children seeking access to education in the country.

Twelve years ago, Growthpoint Properties initiated a corporate social investment programme in collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department, called The Growsmart Educational Programme. Growsmart started as a literacy competition in underperforming schools which aimed to advance the learning experiences of children in grades 4, 5 and 6.

Growsmart has now grown beyond Literacy to include Mathematics, Natural Science, Story writing & Poetry, Debating and Entrepreneurship. In addition to this growth, the programme has also expanded its reach geographically with collaborations with the Eastern Cape Department of Education and most recently the Limpopo Department of Education with the support of the Dwarsrivier Chrome Mine and sponsored by Boleng Trust. The ultimate goal of the programme is to improve educational outcomes nationally.

Jewel Harris, founder of Growsmart and General Manager of Growthpoint Properties, says:

“Growsmart is a leading example of the impacts and importance of ongoing effective public-private partnerships. It is designed to be transformative for educators and learners, but also for their families, communities and South Africa as a whole.”

To date, the programme has impacted more than 300 schools and distributed over 2.7 million Growsmart newspapers to over 60 000 learners covering content relevant to the CAPS curriculum, i.e. 4 editions per year to each learner in grades 4, 5 and 6 from participating schools and published 140 authors under the age of 13. Behind each learner, there is a dedicated mentor who guides the learners and helps them prepare for the competition

Over the years, the programme has had many success stories. One such success is Micaela Jephta from Hanover Park. Micaela won a full scholarship to Christel House, a bursary partner, in 2013 and matriculated with 6 distinctions in 2018.

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She was also honoured with the '2018 Christel Award'. Micaela says,

“Coming from a public school in Hanover Park made me more appreciative of the opportunity that I had at Christel House. I will forever be grateful to Growsmart for the opportunity that I was given”

Growsmart is proud to continue to work with our Alumni to facilitate their applications for tertiary institutions as well. In total, since 2011, 25 learners have received scholarships and five of those have proceeded to enrol into University.

In 2020, The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major disruption in education which forced teachers to step out of their comfort zones to continue teaching in new and innovative ways. So too, did the Growsmart Educational Programme need to pivot to ensure that it can continue safely all the while ensuring that the learners are still studying. As such, Growsmart partnered with Heart FM radio in the Western Cape and Tru Fm in the Eastern Cape and invited learners to compete in the Growsmart Live and On-Air Radio Competition. Growsmart also created online tutorials videos, releasing over 100 educational tutorials online in Mathematics, Literacy, Story Writing & Poetry, Geography, Entrepreneurship and “Whatchamacallit” Wednesday videos (a fun Literacy segment).

What has been impressive during this year has been the ability and agility to teach and study online. This has inspired the Growsmart team to develop a “New Thinking” strategy on how to host the 2021 Programme in a digital format.

The Growsmart Educational Programme will be launching online. In doing so, Growsmart will be able to further offer support to the devastating digital literacy divide that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed as well as address learners ability to read for meaning by adding various practise and exercise worksheets. This has received the support of the Educational Departments.

The Programme intends to be even more comprehensive in that it will be able to monitor, not only the progress of those learners participating in the competition but rather the whole class.

The Growsmart Programme prides itself on being a fun and value add to the teachers, learners and their communities alike. The specially created Growsmart material is available for free and for learners to use in the classroom and at home. Growsmart Educational materials started with the Growsmart newspaper but have since grown to include a Creative Writing and Entrepreneurship workbook. These fun, colourful

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and interactive workbooks take the learners on a curriculum-based journey that leaves them feeling inspired, better versed and stimulated.

Since 2009 the Growsmart Educational Programme has been at the forefront of advancing the learning experiences and behaviour of children in Grades 4,5 and 6 in a fun and competitive format.

The impact that it has is further reaching as it encourages and supports learners to achieve educational goals that may otherwise have not been possible.

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Notes to Editor

- Growsmart is an annual competition that started in 2010 with participating schools selected by the Education Department
- Initiated and funded by Growthpoint Properties
- Fully supported by the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Limpopo Education Departments
- For Intermediate Phase learners within the metro areas (Grades 4, 5 and 6)
- Currently reaches 69 410 learners (160 schools) in the Western Cape and 25 121(60 schools) in the Eastern Cape, who received 4 editions of the Growsmart newspaper per year
- Schools must have less than 60% for literacy to qualify and are selected by the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Limpopo Education Departments

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