

February 2016

Catching up with a past pupil: Promise Mabena

Promise Mabena is past pupil of the uBambiswano Saturday School Programme who attended the programme between 2002 and 2005. Promise visited St Andrew's on Saturday 27 February 2016 and we sat down to ask her a few questions about her experience at uBambiswano and what she is up to these days.

What impact has uBambiswano had on your life?

It taught me so much! More importantly it taught me new things and it taught me that there was so much I could do. Suddenly, I was aware of many more options and therefore I was better able to make decisions about my future. I realised I was special to have received this opportunity. My caregivers were equally grateful and they supported and encouraged me throughout. I wish I could have had support until Matric. It was more difficult without Saturday School after Grade 9. I became a better person, it changed the way I view life. I appreciate every effort that the teachers made to help me. It is one of the greatest experiences of my life.

What was your favourite subject or who was your favourite teacher at Saturday School?

Joline was my favourite teacher. She also taught my favourite subject which was English. It was always important to me to do well in English. The interest and enthusiasm that I developed for the language helped me tremendously in my studies. I became an avid reader and often helped my peers with their homework. Years later I felt inspired to tell my story. 'Repositioning' was recently published and is a personal account of the challenges I overcame while coming into my own, how I developed the courage and confidence to be true to myself and to fulfil my dreams. I think it shows the power of determination and is proof of what can be achieved when you believe you can.

What is one of your fondest memories of uBambiswano?

I was so in love with music. We went to Grahamstown to attend a music festival. It was my first trip out of the province – at the age of 12. My love for music and travel grew. They're great memories!

What did you do after your school career?

I studied BCom Accounting at the University of Johannesburg. I am currently completing my Honours in Auditing and working at iLAB where I do software testing. I would like to pursue IT Auditing as a career.

Do you have any hobbies that keep you busy in your free time?

I write books, poetry and music. I discovered I could do these things because of what I was exposed to at uBambiswano.



Promise with Annette

Do you have any advice for young South Africans of today?

Do not give up on your dreams. Do not compare yourself with others. The journey you're on is your own and nobody else's. God is always placing people and circumstances in your path to help you.

How does it feel being back at St Andrew's, visiting the uBambiswano pupils?

It is wonderful to be back and to be given the opportunity to share my story with the children. Visiting today means so much to me. I am back home! I wanted to acknowledge the great work that St Andrew's is doing through uBambiswano. I am who I am today because of the opportunity I got. I would like to give back to this programme by doing voluntary teaching in either literature, life skills, music and computers. I am passionate about seeing uBambiswano grow. I know the value it has in so many people's lives. I was a part of it. I want to give back as much as I can. This is my way of saying 'Thank you!'

Thank you to Promise for sharing her personal experiences at uBambiswano with us – it is always lovely to catch up with past pupils.



Promise with a few uBambiswano learners