

My name is Katlego Leshiba and going into grade 12. This is my testimony of how HSC has changed my life forever.

I started attending HSC in 2016 and was one of the first alumni. I first heard of HSC from Miss Tina in 2016 at school [Diepsloot: Leap School Math & Science] when she came introducing it in South Africa for the first time. I fell in love with the idea of HSC the minute I heard of it. I fell in love with the idea of handling all the scientific stuff I always learnt and read about in textbooks and watched on television. God knows I wished and prayed in my heart to be chosen as that one girl and only learner in school to get to experience that. Up until then, science had been one I knew from reading and not from practical work. Being a girl from a disadvantaged background who did\ does not live with her parents I was willing to utilize every chance I got to learn because it has been echoed so many times that education is the key to success.

Having missed the opportunity to attend The American International School of Johannesburg because I could not submit my birth certificate in time, I lost hope. HSC became my hope when I was told I had been chosen to attend the camp. I was sick throughout the first camp although I attended every session. At camp, I received R100 for perseverance and that's all I needed to feel I would go on and live up to my name which means prosperity. I didn't know that I was noticed. After that year I became stronger and had hope for the future. I wanted to attend more of the camps and learn more and do more before choosing a career.

In 2017, my school announced that they are introducing school fees the following year and my mom couldn't afford it. I thought I would have to change schools. Leap, is the best school in the township with the most disciplined learners, I was happy, but when I heard about the changes I thought I was going to end up in the public schools where discipline is the third language, I lost all hope. At the end of the year I found out I was being sponsored and my school fees was paid for. I was happy and I attended the camp again and this time the camps theme was Medicine and technology. The life lesson I took from this camp was that failure was a part of life and I should be prepared to fail at some point in time. I had the opportunity to learn suturing and work on some really advanced technology and that on its own shone light to all the possibilities HSC could bring.

Last year was the year I accepted the things I could not change and acknowledged the good things I had in life and how to utilize them. I also realized without STEM, I would have lost hope a long time ago. I had the opportunity to fly a drone that very year although it was really tiny and operated for 5 minute. HSC then sponsored us to attend a workshop at IBM to

learn about coding and technology. I got another opportunity to attend camp and flew a bigger drone at camp. Despite all the lessons in class learning about self-confidence and self-esteem, they never made a difference in my life but Mrs. Carice who came as a motivational speaker helped me with my self-esteem and self-confidence. I also had the opportunity to pitch and present our business idea and I took pointers from that.

HSC has helped me grow as an individual, not only on an academic level but on a personal level as well. I learnt a lot from my fellow campers and got to socialise with people of a higher class than mine and I only felt the difference when factual questions were asked. Not only did I learn from them, but I also got motivation and a lifelong sisterly bond. At camp this year, I was told by my fellow campers that I was beautiful and mature. This is something people who live with me on a daily basis has never pointed out. Miss Tina also told me I was a leader and I am only starting to believe that now. I also had support in terms of making my college research using HSC resources.

One of the things I have learnt that will stay with me forever is that no one is self-made. That is the one thing in my life I had never learned to accept, and I never requested help from anyone in fear of being a burden which I have been all of my life. I thought I could be self-made but now I know better and are willing to ask for help because I know there are people who care about my future and are more than willing to help me succeed. Because of HSC and the beautiful people, I had the chance to meet, learn from, I now wish of being an electrical engineer and study at MIT. I know I am dreaming too much, but anything can happen in the next year, including death which I hope delays itself for a few more years.

I am Grateful to God for HSC and Miss Tina Taylor and her friends. I would never have had an idea of what I wanted to be if I had never been introduced to them and thank you for believing and sponsoring me!

Love you guys.