



## **GOLD Peer Education Development Agency**

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# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Angel wins BBQ Youth Awards**

Angel Mndawe has won the prestigious Black Business Quarterly (BBQ) Youth Award, having been nominated for her leadership and contribution in the Civil Society category. “To me, looking back at where I’ve come from and the struggles I have faced, winning this award is a big motivation in my life and my work,” says Angel, who is excited about the message her win will send to youth in her community. “In my community young people don’t have many opportunities open to them, like going to university to study further. For me, this award is really encouraging as it shows that not having money doesn’t have to stand in the way of your dreams. If you have hope and can focus on that, you can keep moving forward.”

Angel is the GOLD Peer Education Programme Manager at Masoyi Home Based Care (MHBC) in White River, Mpumalanga. There she manages the rollout of the best practice GOLD Peer Education Programme, which uses peer influence to confront the root issues of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, in seven secondary schools and community sites.

The BBQ Youth Awards recognise youth who have brought about positive change and shown commitment to South Africa’s economic and social development goals. The award seeks to acknowledge young South Africans from historically disadvantaged backgrounds who have looked beyond the challenges they face and shown creativity and innovation in their field of expertise.

Angel has faced her share of challenges on the journey to her current leadership position at MHBC, an NGO working in Mpumalanga with those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. “I come from a family of 10 members and I live with my mother, 1 brother, my nephew and 3 sisters. My dad passed away in 2007,” she explains. “I grew up in a poor semi rural area where there is a lack of educational resources and a high rate of orphans, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy.”

Angel’s mom, a domestic worker, struggled for many years to find work and support the family and when Angel failed matric in 1999, things looked bleak. She decided to take a position at MHBC so she could support her family and save to redo her matric. “The situation at home was difficult,” she admits. “My father was self employed and irresponsible by then and my mother was not working. Nobody had a better education at home to give advice on educational matters.”

Slowly working her way up in the organisation, Angel also worked in a laundry on weekends to earn extra money to support her family. She was involved with visiting the sick, orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) and then moved into administration work, being sent to Office Administration workshops. "During these years I managed to afford putting my younger sister through college - paying her fees, transport and books and supporting my family at the same time," she explains. "It was hard, but I could smile because I had never thought I would ever be in an admin position. For me it was a success just being able to attend a workshop, gaining experience and growing."

In 2006 Angel realised that she needed to redo her matric while working. "I registered for part time studies at White River Technical College where George Snyman of MHBC covered the costs of my studies and I passed," she says. "I obtained my matric certificate in 2007."

In 2006, Angel was appointed to be involved in the MHBC peer education program and attended orientation and facilitation trainings and then worked as a school facilitator. "In 2007, in the second year of the program, I became a Program Manager," she explains. "This was possible through the help of GOLD Peer Education Development Agency offering training and support as well as MHBC offering mentoring. I coped and became a good manager, although it was challenging."

Angel has also upgraded her studies, with the help of MHBC. She has obtained a Certificate in Executive Secretarial Work and Computing and is currently registered with Damelin College for Project Management Studies.

Angel is passionate about her work among the youth of her community. "Being part of the peer education program is a really exciting journey," she says. "When I look back at where I come from I see that a great impact has been made in the lives of the young people and my community, it is amazing. Working in this field has really encouraged me to live a health-enhancing lifestyle because I'm expected to lead by example."

"Having won the BBQ Youth Award, I will go back to my community and continue to inspire young people, letting them know that even when things seem dark, life carries on and hope is still there," she says.

## **About Masoyi Home Based Care Project**

Masoyi Home Based Care Project is an NGO working in Mpumalanga with those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Their peer education programme aims to raise up leadership and combat the root causes of the disease in their midst.

## **About GOLD**

GOLD Peer Education Development Agency (GOLD) is a dynamic non-profit organisation playing a key role in the transformation of under-served communities in Sub-Saharan Africa through the roll out of a long term adolescent peer education model.

GOLD is currently working with 36 community organisations to roll out the GOLD peer education model in 122 schools and community sites to over 7400 peer educators in the Western Cape, KZN and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa and in Botswana and Zambia.

GOLD Peer Education Development Agency was awarded the 2007 Commonwealth Best Practice Award in the category Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances.

<http://www.goldpe.org.za/>

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**Captions for photograph:**

Angel and Peer educators.jpg - Angel Mndawe chats to a group of peer educators.