

Only 500 people have flown in space in the last 55 years. Our students met one of them.

Turning great minds into great teachers

**Dr Don Thomas** was an astronaut with the US's NASA space programme for 20 years, logging over 1,000 hours in space and orbiting the earth nearly 700 times.

Now he is on a mission to jet propel young minds to new heights, and, thanks to the efforts of people like Polyoak director and airline pilot, Fatima Jakoet, he visited SA for his Living Maths Space Tour to inspire youngsters to study sciences and maths at school. Four of our scholarship students got to meet him...



**DREAM BIG AND NEVER GIVE UP**

ASTRONAUT DON THOMAS GREW UP IN TOUGH FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. HIS MOM WAS A SINGLE PARENT WHO COULDN'T AFFORD SCHOOL FEES, BUT FROM THE AGE OF SIX HE WANTED TO BE AN ASTRONAUT, AND HE NEVER GAVE UP. HE APPLIED TO THE NASA SPACE PROGRAMME FOUR TIMES BEFORE HE WAS ACCEPTED.

**Space man!** "My experience at The Space Talk was out of this world," says first-year scholarship student Michael-Jade Petersen. "My highlight was meeting a real-life astronaut (Don is front row, centre). He showed us future technology, spoke about possible life on Mars and reminded us to never give up on our dreams."



## WOMEN IN MATHS

In August scholarship student, Megan Jansen, took four top Grade 10 and 11 maths students from Steenberg High - a school close to our heart as many Polyoak kids go there - to a Women-in-Mathematics Mini-Convention at UWC.

"Different women - including an astrophysicist, doctor, accountant and stylist - spoke about the importance of maths in their careers," says Megan. "One listed all the careers that need maths, and it went on and on. What inspired the girls most was where each speaker came from - proving it doesn't matter where you come from, but where you land."

## MATHS on the Move

When it comes to problems, Polyoakers always come up with a plan.

"Teaching Mathematics in primary schools requires a lot of equipment," says Brenda Elshove. "This can be challenging when venues are shared. However, our problem was solved when Rennie and his team, Vivian, Ntembeko, Yusuf and Wayne, designed and made an amazing bright blue trolley. Now we are definitely Maths on the Move."



## HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR LUNCH?

A big part of our scholarship programme is giving our future teachers a well-rounded education. This year Nicole Haird, daughter of Gauteng's Graham Haird, and her fellow dietetics students from UCT, spent a day sharing the value of a healthy balanced diet with our students.

"As student teachers, we came up with ideas on how to incorporate our knowledge of nutrition into school subjects," says second-year scholarship student, Kauthar Abrahams.



**KAUTHAR'S TOP TIPS FOR A HEALTHY LUNCH...**

- use brown bread instead of white
- salt
- sugar-free peanut butter
- egg
- low fat cheese
- carrot sticks
- sliced cucumber
- apple slices
- grapes
- nuts
- whole grain crackers
- water

## HELPING YOUNGSTERS LAND THEIR FIRST JOB

This year 102 scholars across the country went through our Work Readiness Workshops, which cover everything from CV writing to social media do's and don'ts. Gauteng's factory tour is always a big hit - youngsters love seeing our packaging in production.

**TOP TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS**



- Look clean, neat and tidy. First impressions count
- Walk and sit upright for positive body language
- Speak with confidence
- Draw on personal and professional experiences