

# Botswana's future astronaut is born

## Maru a Pula student wins DSTV Eutelsat Star award

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**I**t has been a couple of days since Botswana's very own Tanaka Chonyera was crowned the winner of the 8th edition of the DSTV Eutelsat Star Awards competition.

The 18-year-old, a Maru-a-Pula student won in the essay competition category, convincing the judges. He knew his writing stuff as well as the subject matter very well.

Oozing with passion and knowledge for his subject, remarks Paolo Nespoli, an ESA (European Space Agency) Astronaut who chaired the adjudication of the awards, the young man has blended his passion with research and study.

"This has resulted in sound knowledge and understanding of the subject matter," he said.

Since inception the competition has drawn over 8000 entries from the region, and East Africa has produced 7 overall winners and runner-ups. For this edition, students from senior secondary or unified schools were asked to write a creative essay or design a poster based on the topic: "Currently, satellites are being used in a variety of ways but there is always room for expansion and growth. Write an essay or design a poster on areas you believe the full potential of satellites has not yet been tapped into or embraced."

Priscilla Marealle of Tanzania was crowned the winner of the poster category. For Tanaka, the wait to the big announcement of the winner was a nerve wrecking one. There was even a point when he thought that he didn't make it, only for him to realise that it was previous winners and not the 2019 winners who were being posted online.

Walking through the grounds of his school, where he is currently enrolled for Form 6, it is evident to see that his peers respect him. His friends are pat-



The sky is the limit for the young astronaut. [PIC: BOTSANG MOTTOI]

ting him on the back, and celebrating with him this big achievement that will open many doors for him. His family is equally excited that finally after all these years, his passion has paid off.

Chonyera wins a trip for two to Paris and is happily taking his mother along. His other prizes include going to witness a rocket blast into space in order to place a satellite into orbit.

The winner in the poster category wins a trip for two to visit the South African National Space Agency and MultiChoice facilities. The two winning schools attended by the overall winners will be rewarded with a DSTV installation, including a dish, TV set, PVR decoder and free access to the DSTV Education Package.

He tells this publication that since the big announcement last week, it has been a crazy couple of days.

"I am ecstatic," he tells *Style*.

Sharing the events of the past couple of days, he explains that he got a call from Nespoli, and thought that it was just a formality. In his mind, he thought that Nespoli was just calling the top three. The night before the winner was announced it was nerve wrecking and

he barely slept. On the day that he was announced the winner, the internet was not at its happiest moments, it kept buffering, and that meant he was unable to properly watch the live streaming on Facebook. "This opportunity will open a lot of doors for me. It has also given me confidence in myself that If I want to do something, I know that I can get it done," he says, explaining that he wrote the award-winning essay on his own.

He points out that prior to the win, whenever he suggested something, no one took him seriously, but now things have changed as his opinion is more valuable. He now wants to study Aerospace Engineering at one of the top universities at either Massachusetts or California. He explains that ever since he was a child, he has been dreaming about building a space ship. "I love space and space technology. And I want to do it for Africa, as right now I don't think there is a country in the continent that has a significant Aerospace programme. I want to see a rocket being launched in Africa," he explains. His mother, Florence Chonyera, is equally excited.



"We have always supported him and all of his ideas," says his mother explaining that he previously won at a competition called Lebone Derby in South Africa. "Parents should never pour cold water over their children's interests but should keep encouraging them," she says. According to Themabile Ndzingo, who is the Corporate Affairs Manager of MultiChoice Botswana, this is Botswana's first win in the essay category, after producing a runner-up in the poster category in 2016. The runner-up was a student at Lotsane Senior Secondary School.

"This shows that we have extremely talented children," she says.

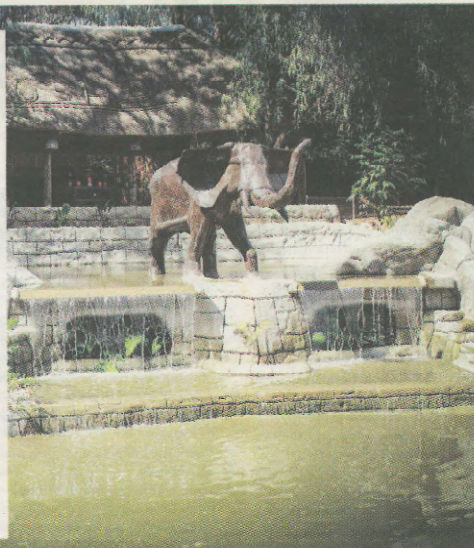
She also says that it was equally exciting to note that the competition was won by someone who was passionate about the subject, and was not just entering for the sake of winning. "This makes the prize even more special," she explains, highlighting that the awards belong to Africa, and not just a specific region. She points out that from all the submissions in Botswana, his was very special. "All the essays were great. But with his, you could feel the passion, and he articulated the topic well," she says.

## Mosha

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Gaborone Resort and Casino was one of their clients at their old premises, and the rest as they say is history. She also reveals that their beauticians are qualified, and that they are the best in the industry. The beauticians are trained on all the treatments that are available at Mosha, and they also undergo regular training. The prices, according to her are reasonable. "Regardless of whether you come here for a full day or a few hours, you will get value for your money. We want to make sure that our clients are relaxed and happy," she says.

The outlet has specials for everyone on Wednesdays (20% of all treatments) as well as 20% discount of all treatments for all pensioners through out the year.



Empire returns to FOX, DSTV Channel