



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local micro-entrepreneurs win a total of R100 000

A gym, a dressmaking concern, a daycare centre and a tent decorations and catering business were yesterday encouraged to create further employment and uplift their communities.

The small business owners have been recognized by Citi in the Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards 2011. Founder the Mathabatha DayCare Centre in Ga-Mokaba area in Limpopo, Teresia Mogale, has been selected as the overall winner of the 2011 Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards, as well as the winner in the skills development category, earning her R60 000 and R10 000 respectively.

The Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards Program is an annual initiative designed to promote and reward micro-entrepreneurs who are making a meaningful difference in their communities.

Donna Oosthuyse, MD and General Manager for Citi South Africa, says: "The Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards is one of our most important projects. In the face of rising unemployment, we need more individuals like these who are directly contributing to solving this problem and creating jobs."

The Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards Program is held in 27 countries across the world.

"Micro-entrepreneurs own small-scale businesses and employ just a few people. Typically, they have no access to commercial banking due to a lack of collateral or credit history," says Oosthuyse.

Teresia used to support herself by selling food at taxi ranks. When this did not succeed, she applied for a small loan from **TIISHA**, a non-profit microfinance organisation based in Limpopo, which loan she used to start the centre in 2008. This is the only day-care centre in a community of more than 7 000 people.

Teresia has grown the centre against all odds and today it is a successful operation which employs five staff, cares for a growing number of children in the daycare centre and provides a host of other services to parents and teachers.

Says Teresia: “We provide HIV/Aids education classes, working in partnership with the Department of Health. Many of our children are HIV-positive so our ongoing monitoring of every child’s health is a critical part of our work.”

Other services Teresia and her team provide include:

- escorting children safely to and from their homes;
- caring for the babies and children of young mothers while they attend school; and
- holding first aid courses for parents and teachers.

The judges concluded that Teresia provides a significant and invaluable contribution to the families of the enrolled children and the community at large. Her networking skills are phenomenal. They have assisted her in overcoming a number of obstacles, including the shortage of toys, provision of nutritious food, playground equipment and water. She has sourced many of these from big businesses in the area.

Since 2008, Teresia has bought her own home, seen her daughter through high school and ensured that there is enough money for her daughter to undertake tertiary study.

“I am so grateful to Citi for the Micro-entrepreneurship awards and I will use the prize money to expand my business by enrolling disabled children. I want to encourage the unemployed youth, especially those with HIV Aids, to form support groups. Eventually I want my own building as we are renting at the moment. I also plan to hire more staff and expand our activities,” she says.

In addition to Teresia’s overall award and category win, three other awards of R10 000 each were presented to category winners:

- Product Development: Makhanane Lena Nkuna - Khanyi Dressmaking, Limpopo.
- Rural Enterprise: MbusoMkhwanazi - Esikhaweni Gym owner, KwaZulu-Natal.
- Youth Development: Rose Lebelo – Jacrose Tent Decorations and Catering Projects, Limpopo.

Four micro-finance officers from Tiisha Finance Enterprise, Opportunity Finance, Phakamani Foundation and Marang Financial Services also received cash prizes in recognition of their efforts to attract the most qualifying entries.

The guest speaker, Alon Raiz, CEO of Raizcorp (a business incubator in Africa) concluded, “Being an entrepreneur is extremely challenging but also rewarding. Entrepreneurs all share similar characteristics in particular their ability to learn from

their mistakes, their resourcefulness and tolerance for pain. An element of luck is also involved but must be coupled with a belief in yourself and a passion for your business.”

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More details on other category winners:

- **Product Development: Makhanane Lena Nkuna - Khanyi Dressmaking (financed by TIISHA Finance Enterprise)**

After being trained by Create-A-Craft, Lena obtained a loan from TIISHA, bought two sewing machines and started sewing pre-school clothes.

She now has a successful dressmaking business that makes school apparel – uniforms and school badges – wedding gowns and embroidery decorations. She supplies eight schools in her immediate area and in many instances she is the exclusive supplier of uniforms. She saves money for the community because they do not have to travel far to buy uniforms.

She employs three permanent staff and has trained over 42 ladies in the area to sew. Most of these women now run their own small enterprises or are employed in sewing businesses. They were all previously unemployed.

The judges commented on Lena’s originality and innovation, noting that she was creative and had developed the art of marketing. Despite her limited education she communicates with all the heads of the schools in her area.

With the profits she has made so far, she has educated her family.

She has overcome many challenges including aging equipment and transport difficulties. She has to travel long distances to get her machinery fixed and has to use taxis to transport her stock to clients.

“I am saving up to buy a car to make things easier. I also need more machines and would like to build a training centre.” And she wants to learn how to make hospital clothing.

- **Rural Enterprise: MbusoMkhwanazi - Esikhaweni Gym (financed by Opportunity Finance) (KZN)**

Mbuso realised that there was no gym in the area in which he lives. He took advantage of the opportunity and started Esikhaweni Gym.

He used his loan to buy good equipment and to set up an aerobics area, locker rooms, showers and sauna facilities. He has 870 members of the gym, and

employs three permanent staff and three casuals. Mbuso has already opened a satellite branch in Mooi River and wants to open up more branches of his gym in KZN.

The gym helps the community, as the area is riddled with crime and drugs at night. The gym gives people an alternative place to go. It also improves people's health.

Judges commented that Mbuso was a true entrepreneur with perseverance and determination.

He still has many challenges to face. The equipment needs upgrading, he needs new flooring, a fresh coat of paint and better lighting. Most importantly, he needs to put in systems to prevent theft.

- **Youth Development: Rose Lebelo – Jacrose Tent Decorations and Catering Projects (financed by TIISHA Finance Enterprise)**

Rose first came across the idea for her business when her husband bought her a sewing machine as a present. She then went on a dressmaking course and worked part-time for an instructor in dressmaking at a company called Create-A-Craft.

To expand her business she took out a loan from TIISHA and bought material on auction. She started making clothing and decorating tents for weddings and other ceremonies. Out of the profits she purchased her own stock and now owns sewing machines, chairs, tables, carpets, cutlery, crockery, pots, stoves, a bakkie and a trailer. She recently bought a computer to assist with the running of the business.

Rose has trained more than 40 underprivileged women in her community to sew. She has created jobs and five new sewing schools for former students. Other students have found jobs in sewing businesses in the area. She also supplies food to 30 orphans in the community on regular basis.

As part of her diversification strategy, Rose wants to build a church for the orphans she takes care of and open a factory where people can buy material for dressmaking.

Judges commented on her mature, stable and profitable business. They found her to be enterprising, displaying astounding business acumen.

She is extremely adaptive to her clients' needs, while she uses modern and conventional function arrangements as well as traditional African set-ups when required.

