

Office workers raise funds for needy student

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A group of kind-hearted employees from a Port Elizabeth communications company are furiously raising funds to help a young student continue studying towards becoming a teacher...



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Last month The Herald reported on the plight of Tilana Esterhuizen, 22, a first-year BEd student at NMMU who was on the verge of dropping out after she failed to secure the bursary she had hoped would help her continue studying.

Not willing to just let her dream die, Esterhuizen's youth pastor, Stephen Hermanus, 46, made an impassioned plea through The Herald's classified section asking for assistance from the public so she could continue her studies.

"I did this to help Tilana realise her dream to be a teacher," Hermanus said.

Last week, Good Samaritan Debbie Kruger, an office administrator at Cobalt Communications, contacted The Herald to follow up.

"We would like to find out if Tilana has come right yet, as my colleagues and I would like to make a contribution to her studies," Kruger's e-mail read.

Esterhuizen said she had decided to study teaching: "I have always felt passionate about working with children, especially children with special needs".

She said she had applied for the Funza Lushaka bursary, administered by the Department of Basic Education, in October, but was unsuccessful.

Esterhuizen's father, Lourens, 52, said he was most disappointed that his daughter had not received a bursary.

"I know what she is capable of and how committed she is. She will make a success of her studies if given the chance."

Esterhuizen said his family was struggling financially after both he and his wife were retrenched a few years back.

Kruger and her colleagues at Cobalt are raising funds to help Esterhuizen cover the R18,000 she needs.

Lourens Esterhuizen said he and his family were most grateful for the support and were looking forward to meeting Kruger.

Last month The Herald reported on the plight of 22-year-old Tilana Esterhuizen, a first year B.Ed foundation phase student at NMMU who was on the verge of dropping out after not securing a bursary.

Esterhuizen's youth pastor, Stephen Hermanus (46) made an impassionate plea in the classified section of The Herald asking for assistance from the public to help Esterhuizen realise her dream.

"I did this to help Tilana realise her dream to be a teacher " said Hermanus.

Just last week, good samaritan, Debbie Kruger, an office administrator at Cobalt Communications, contacted The Herald to follow up on Esterhuizen's story.

"We would like to find out if Tilana has come right yet, as my colleagues and I would like to make a contribution to her studies if not" read Kruger's email.

Esterhuizen had previously been enrolled at NMMU in 2012, studying towards a qualification in art and design.

However, after completing her second year of studies she had to drop out because she did not have the funds to complete the course.

After working for a year Esterhuizen decided she wanted to study further to establish a better future for herself. "I paid the admission and registration fees to study for a BEd Foundation Phase and applied for a bursary.

"I have always felt passionate about working with children, especially children with special needs" said Esterhuizen.

Esterhuizen said she applied for the Funza Lushaka bursary which is administered by the department of basic education in October last year.

The bursary is granted to individuals who meet specific criteria. According to the department of basic education's website "the bursary will only be awarded if two of the priority area specialization subjects are included as a teaching subject in your qualification."

This year the priority area for foundation phase students is specialisation in an indigenous African language.

Esterhuizen claimed she had met all the other criteria but does not have an indigenous African language to specialise in.

"I was told there was no bursary available to me for this year and that I should apply again at the end of the year for next year" said Esterhuizen.

Esterhuizen's father, Lourens (52) said he was very disappointed when his daughter didn't get the bursary, "I know what she is capable of and how committed she is, she will make a success of her studies if given the chance."

Esterhuizen said his family is struggling financially after both he and his wife were retrenched a few years back.

Upset about not being awarded the bursary Esterhuizen spoke to her pastor, Hermanus, about the situation.

Hermanus then decided to place an ad in the classified section of The Herald, asking for assistance.

Kruger and her colleagues from Cobalt Communications are in the process of raising funds to assist Esterhuizen cover the R18,000 due to the university.

After numerous emails between The Herald and Kruger, no official amount raised has been confirmed by the time of going to print.

Esterhuizen's father, Lourens, said he and his family are very thankful for the support and is looking forward to meeting with Kruger in the future.

Source: Herald

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