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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE MAGAZINE



PHUMEZA NDZAMBO

2026 International
Speech Contest Winner

District 74 Southern Africa Toastmasters

District 74

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EDITOR'S NOTE



O h, what a month of celebrations and fun we have just had but rest assured that the celebrations are not done yet. We still have just over a month to help our club and clubs nearby to achieve one of the 4 Distinguished statuses or for us go achieve our own Pathway goals.

I hope the stories shared in this issue will inspire you to finish the Toastmasters' Year strong or join a club, if you have been uncertain about why you should join Toastmasters.

As a team we would also love to celebrate with you and say Thank you for journeying with us these past few months, so look out for next month's issue.

Khethiwe Malema

Contact the editor to feature your story

Reach us on email:
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Toastmasters District 74 Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.



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DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

May is here, and I'm filled with gratitude as we look back on the incredible success of ThriveCon. What a celebration it was! We came together as a District, sharing wins, lifting one another, and honouring those who have gone above and beyond in their Toastmasters journeys. Every speech, every leadership role, every step – it all came alive in those moments.

We also marked a significant milestone as we completed our District Council Meeting during ThriveCon on May 2nd. It was a powerful moment as we welcomed a new wave of leadership. Our new leaders were elected, and now we begin the handover – a process that all clubs can learn from. If you haven't yet done your club elections, I encourage you to do so, so that your club can also experience a smooth, intentional handover – ensuring a legacy of excellence.

As we enter the final weeks of the Toastmasters year, let's finish strong. Achieving Smedley Distinguished and beyond remains within reach through supporting, valuing, and encouraging every member, because every milestone reflects growth, dedication, and the strength of our clubs.



Thank you to the editorial and production team for bringing Achieving Excellence to life.

May these stories inspire you to share the magazine widely, ignite new possibilities, and help us finish strong as true Catalysts of Success.

Bhekisisa Ngomane,DTM

FROM THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DESK

As we move into May, the focus shifts toward maintaining momentum and finishing the Toastmasters year strongly. Clubs are encouraged to highlight membership-building efforts, and educational achievers.

May also presents valuable opportunities to promote leadership growth as clubs begin preparing for officer transitions and upcoming training sessions. Sharing these moments reinforces the leadership development aspect of the Toastmasters journey.

Consistent storytelling, recognition, and engagement remain key to building visibility and inspiring excellence across the district. Follow our pages here. [[Link here](#)]



Leya Musunga



District 74

Southern Africa Toastmasters

BEAT THE CLOCK

Membership Drive
01 May - 30 June 2026

**ADD 5
NEW, DUAL, OR
REINSTATED MEMBERS**



Reward: R300 Voucher + ribbon from TI + up to R200 in boosted Facebook Ads.

Beyond the Club

By Tumelo Maphalala

When many people join Toastmasters, they believe they are signing up to become better speakers. What they often do not realize is that the lessons learned in a Toastmasters club rarely stay within the four walls of a meeting room. Over time, those lessons begin to shape something much bigger... how we lead beyond the club.

Looking back, I can see that some of my greatest growth has happened far beyond my own club, area, and division. Leadership in Toastmasters has a way of stretching you into spaces you never imagined. It introduces you to people who challenge your thinking, responsibilities that test your resilience, and situations that force you to discover strengths you did not know you had.

Recently, during a particularly difficult season, I found myself reflecting on words shared with me by Toastmaster Kage! I had been expressing frustration about being challenged by my Toastmasters leadership, feeling the weight of leadership in a way that felt deeply personal at the time. His response was simple, but it stayed with me.

He told me that one day I would look back on that moment in my professional life and realize I had faced something similar before, and that I had already overcome it. Therefore I could most definitely do it again. That perspective changed something for me.

Sometimes the challenges we experience in Toastmasters feel bigger than the role itself.



They can feel uncomfortable, frustrating, and even unfair. But often those very moments are preparing us for leadership beyond the organization. They teach us how to navigate difficult personalities, manage pressure, communicate under strain, and remain steady when circumstances test us.

Toastmasters does not only prepare us to speak at a podium. It prepares us to lead in boardrooms, workplaces, communities, and in our personal lives. The beauty of leadership development is that its lessons travel with us. What we learn in one season often becomes the strength we draw from in the next.

Sometimes growth begins in the club, but its impact reaches far beyond it.



The Power of Networking

By Tumelo Maphalala

Leadership often grows in rooms we almost did not enter. Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of attending several conferences, and each one has reminded me of something powerful: growth does not only happen at the podium. Sometimes it happens in the conversations between sessions, in the introductions over coffee, or in the exchange of ideas with someone whose path looks nothing like our own. That is the quiet power of networking.

Many people hear the word networking and immediately think of business cards, polished introductions, and formal exchanges. But true networking is far more meaningful than that. It is the intentional building of relationships that can expand our thinking, challenge our perspectives, and open doors we may never have found alone.

As leaders, it can be easy to focus only on our immediate responsibilities; our clubs, our teams, our workplaces, and our own goals. Yet some of the greatest lessons come from stepping outside those familiar spaces and engaging with others who are walking their own leadership journeys. Their experiences can sharpen our own.



This was one of the reasons I was especially looking forward to traveling to this year's Toastmasters District 74's May Conference; ThriveCon in Lesotho. That is, other than the travel experience. Conferences like these are more than events; they are opportunities to connect with leaders from different clubs, cities, and countries.

They remind us that leadership is not meant to be developed in isolation. Networking also teaches humility. It reminds us that no matter how much we know, there is always someone who can teach us something new. At the same time, it reveals that our own journey may be exactly what someone else needs to hear. The power of networking is not simply in meeting people. It is in allowing those connections to shape us.

As leaders, we should not only attend the room. We should engage in it. Because sometimes the next level of our leadership is waiting in a conversation we have not had yet.



Leading with Confidence: Kega Madigage Reflects on Her ThriveCon Experience

By Nomthandazo Miselo

Kega Madigage, a passionate Technology Leader and President of the Nedbank Executive Toastmasters Club, gave insight on her experience at the conference.

Kega shared that her biggest takeaway was the powerful reminder: “The only way to become a confident speaker is to speak before you feel ready, and keep doing it.” Reflecting on this insight, she said, “That message reminded me that growth starts with action. Confidence follows when you show up consistently, even when you don’t feel ready.”

She found the wellness session particularly impactful, emphasizing that effective leadership begins with self-management and that mental well-being is just as important as physical health. One quote that stood out to her was, “If it’s not fun, it’s not Toastmasters,” reinforcing the importance of enjoyment in the learning journey.

Kega also noted that Toastmasters leadership mirrors real workplace challenges, with true impact realised when these skills are applied beyond the club environment.



Thrivecon in PICTURES



Umlazi Toastmasters Club: Where The Fire Burns Low But Mighty

By Tumelo Maphalala

One of my favourite parts of Toastmasters is the ability to participate from anywhere in the world. Through virtual meetings, I have experienced different cultures, communities, and conversations without ever leaving my space. In a way, I have even come to love the city of Durban through the vibrant online meetings of Umlazi Toastmasters Club every other Wednesday.

Though small in number and currently meeting strictly online, Umlazi Toastmasters has a strong spirit of connection and resilience. With only nine dedicated members, the club continues to show up, speak up, and support one another in a way that truly reflects the heart of Toastmasters.

Like many community clubs, Umlazi Toastmasters has faced challenges brought on by the current economic climate. Membership growth has been difficult, and leadership responsibilities have sometimes led to fatigue among those carrying the torch. Yet the club continues, driven not by obligation, but by belief in the value of what they are building together. What stands out most is the atmosphere. Meetings are warm, welcoming, and filled with genuine camaraderie. Guests from the surrounding community often join, attracted by the club's joyful and inclusive nature. There is laughter, learning, and above all, connection.

Even more inspiring is the visible growth among members. Each speech reflects increasing confidence, broader perspectives, and stronger leadership skills that extend beyond Toastmasters into personal and professional life.

Umlazi Toastmasters Club is a quiet force. Special recognition goes to the four-member executive committee: Slondile Tshabalala, Mzamo Mkhwanazi, Edwin Mnguni, and Julie Davies. The fire may burn low at times, but it burns with resilience, purpose, and strength, carrying the promise of an even brighter future.



L'Avenir Toastmasters: Where Language Meets Leadership

— By Tumelo Maphalala

One of the greatest gifts Toastmasters has given me is the opportunity to experience clubs beyond my own borders. Through a single meeting, one can step into a different culture, hear new perspectives, and witness leadership expressed in unique ways. My LinkedIn stalking and subsequent conversation with Acting Vice President Public Relations, Tadiwa Chopamba, introduced me to one such club; L'Avenir Toastmasters Club in Sandton, Johannesburg.

Chartered in September 2019, L'Avenir Toastmasters meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 18:00 to 20:00 in a hybrid format. The club falls under District 74, Area A02, and has established itself as an Anglo-Francophone club with a distinctive bilingual identity. Membership is open to anyone over eighteen seeking to improve their English as a Francophone or their French as an Anglophone.

What immediately stood out to me was the club's philosophy. Tadiwa described the culture as supportive, inclusive, and growth-oriented. L'Avenir embraces progress over perfection, encouraging members to take risks, stretch themselves, and learn without fear of judgment. In a world where many people fear making mistakes, such an environment can be transformational.

The bilingual and multicultural nature of the club adds another layer of richness. Meetings weave together English and French, allowing members to strengthen not only their public speaking skills, but also their confidence across languages. Communication becomes more than speaking; it becomes connection.



Like many clubs, L'Avenir has faced challenges with member engagement and growth. Yet the club has adapted through creative meeting themes, interactive sessions, and a stronger social media presence.

L'Avenir Toastmasters is more than a club. It is a reminder that when language and leadership meet, remarkable growth follows.





From Curiosity to Champion

The Journey of Phumeza Ndzambo

— By Leya Musunga

G Long before she ever stepped onto a Toastmasters stage, Phumeza Ndzambo had already envisioned herself in that world.

The spark was ignited in 2001, when her brother briefly attended a student Toastmasters club and spoke highly of the experience. At the time, she was a high school student in rural Eastern Cape, South Africa far removed from any club, but the idea stayed with her.

Life, however, did not unfold in a straight line. University did not come immediately after high school, and other responsibilities took priority. Still, the thought of Toastmasters lingered. Years later, with access to online resources, she revisited that early dream. In 2016, while balancing undergraduate studies and full-time work, she made a bold decision: she reached out to join Act Toastmasters Club without ever having experienced a meeting firsthand. The organization exceeded her expectations, and she has never looked back.

Discovering the Desire to Compete

For Phumeza, competing at the district level was not part of a grand, long-term plan. There was no defining moment where she declared her intention to become a contest speaker. Instead, her journey unfolded organically.

The turning point came in October 2025, when she delivered a Pathways speech at her club. Her club president recognized its potential as a contest speech, and the overwhelmingly positive feedback from members gave her the confidence to pursue it further. From that moment, she approached each stage of the contest journey step by step allowing growth and opportunity to guide her forward.

The Message Behind the Winning Speech

At the heart of Phumeza's winning speech lies a powerful and relatable theme: the often overlooked realities of parenting. While society tends to emphasize major considerations such as financial readiness and physical health, her speech sheds light on the small, everyday challenges that test individuals emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Her message calls for empathy and grace. It encourages audiences to reconsider how they judge parents and to recognize the unseen effort behind raising a child. At the same time, it validates those who are not yet ready for parenthood, affirming that taking time is both wise and necessary.

Ultimately, the speech is a tribute to parents everywhere acknowledging that they did the best they could under unique circumstances.

Crafting a Winning Speech

Phumeza's approach to speech development reflects a key Toastmasters principle: inspiration can be found in everyday life. Early in her journey, she received advice that



meaningful speech ideas often emerge from ordinary experiences, professional insights, or fleeting thoughts. She embraced this by consistently capturing her ideas in her phone notes. The winning speech itself was inspired by a simple yet memorable comment from one of her young relatives, which led her to reflect deeply on parenting experiences.

From there, she refined the idea into a structured speech within the traditional 5-7 minute format. Feedback from her club played a critical role in shaping the final version. By carefully applying suggestions while preserving her authentic voice, she created a speech that resonated deeply with audiences.





Mastering the Mindset

Like many speakers, Phumeza acknowledges that nerves are part of the process. Her greatest challenge and strength lies in her active mind, which tends to overthink.

To manage this, she has developed a deliberate approach to self-awareness. By guiding her internal dialogue and confronting her fears with practical questions, she prevents herself from spiraling into anxiety. Techniques such as deep breathing and vocal warm-ups further help her stay grounded before stepping on stage.

A Surreal Victory

When her name was announced as the winner of the District 74 International Speech Contest, the moment felt almost unreal. She describes it as an out-of-body experience rising automatically, walking toward the stage, and suddenly becoming aware of the magnitude of the achievement.

Even simple actions, like smiling, required conscious effort as she processed the moment. It was a culmination of years of growth, persistence, and self-discovery.

Lessons from the Journey

Phumeza's journey highlights that success is rarely a single defining moment. Instead, it is built through a series of small, intentional steps. Each stage of her Toastmasters experience contributed to her growth not just as a speaker, but as an individual.

Advice for Aspiring Speakers

Her advice to aspiring speakers is both practical and empowering: start where you are. Whether it's joining a Toastmasters club or committing to personal development, the first step is what matters most.

She lives by a powerful principle:

“There's none readier than she who is willing.”

Readiness, she believes, is not about perfection it's about the willingness to learn, to take risks, and to grow through every experience.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Phumeza identifies two key pitfalls for contest speakers. The first is allowing pressure to become overwhelming, turning natural nerves into anxiety. Maintaining balance and perspective is essential.

The second is the temptation to make last-minute changes during a performance. Adding unscripted elements can lead to mistakes or even disqualification. Preparation, she emphasizes, should always be trusted over impulse.

Finding Your Authentic Voice

For Phumeza, authenticity is not a final destination but an ongoing journey. It requires self-awareness, openness to feedback, and a willingness to evolve.

By understanding her values and remaining receptive to new perspectives, she continues to grow as a speaker. Her story is a testament to the power of embracing one's voice imperfect, evolving, and deeply human.

Thrivecon in PICTURES



Zizipho Mabusela's Inspiring ThriveCon Experience

By Nomthandazo Miselo

Zizipho Mabusela, a member of the Nedbank Allstars Club, recently attended ThriveCon, where she gained valuable insights into the true impact of Toastmasters. Her biggest takeaway was realizing that Toastmasters goes beyond public speaking—it builds leadership, confidence, and meaningful networks that influence all aspects of life.

One of the most impactful sessions for her was “Monetizing Toastmasters Skills,” which highlighted practical ways to turn communication and leadership abilities into career opportunities. She found this both relevant and empowering.

Zizipho was especially inspired by the Table Topics and Evaluation Contests. Watching speakers think quickly and communicate confidently reinforced the importance of adaptability, while evaluations demonstrated how to give feedback that is both constructive and encouraging was inspiring. A quote that stayed with her was: “Failure is not the opposite of success; it’s part of the journey.”

The “Beauty in Failure” session challenged her perspective on setbacks, helping her embrace setbacks as growth opportunities. She now plans to apply these lessons by delivering more supportive and motivating feedback in her workplace and beyond.



Finding Joy in the Journey: How Consistency Leads to Achievement

By Leya Musunga

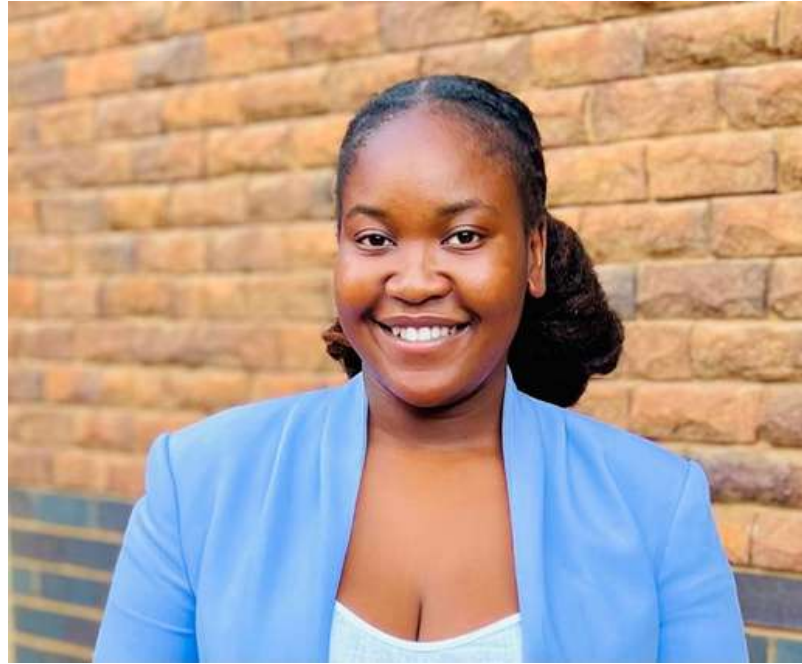
For Tintswalo P. Ngobeni of Harties Toastmasters Club, achieving multiple awards wasn't driven by pressure—it was driven by enjoyment, consistency, and staying true to her purpose.

When she first joined Toastmasters, it wasn't with a rigid plan or high expectations. Instead, she saw it as something she could do for fun. That simple mindset became her greatest advantage. By removing pressure, she created space to grow naturally and stay engaged.

Rather than focusing on big milestones, Tintswalo took a practical approach to her goals. Each week, she committed to doing something—no matter how small—that would move her closer to completing her Pathways achievements. This consistent effort ensured steady progress and made the journey feel manageable.

Her motivation followed the same principle. Because she genuinely enjoyed the process, showing up each week didn't feel like an obligation. It became something she looked forward to a space where she could learn, participate, and grow while having fun.

“Doing something enjoyable at least once a week kept me going,” she shares.



Her advice to fellow members is both simple and powerful: remember why you started. Whether your goal was to build confidence, improve communication, or challenge yourself, hold onto that reason.

“Keep on keeping on for that,” she encourages.

Tintswalo's journey is a reminder that success in Toastmasters doesn't always come from pressure or perfection. Sometimes, it comes from consistency, enjoyment, and staying connected to your purpose.

“By removing pressure, she created space to grow naturally and stay engaged.”

Intentional Growth: How Purpose Led to Multiple Toastmasters Awards

By Leya Musunga

For many members, Toastmasters begins as a journey to improve speaking skills. For Annah Moses of Eloquent Speakers Toastmasters Club, it became a story of intentional growth, consistency, and inspiring others through action.

At the start of the Toastmasters term, Annah made a clear decision: she would be purposeful about her development. Rather than leaving progress to chance, she mapped out her Pathways journey by breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable milestones. She then aligned those milestones with the club calendar, creating a practical roadmap for success.

This approach helped her remain focused and consistent throughout the year. While her ultimate goal is to earn the Distinguished Toastmaster award, the multiple awards she achieved along the way became a natural result of disciplined planning and steady effort.

For Annah, motivation comes from more than personal recognition. She believes Toastmasters is not simply about completing projects—it is about becoming a stronger communicator and leader. Her journey is also driven by purpose. She understands that others are watching her progress, and by pursuing her goals, she gives them confidence that they can do the same.



“If I can do it, they can too,” is the mindset that keeps her moving forward.

Her advice to members aiming for multiple awards is simple: start now, plan well, and stay consistent. Do not wait for the perfect moment. Take every opportunity to speak, lead, and learn.

She also encourages members to visit other clubs, deliver speeches, and take meeting roles beyond their home club. Collaboration strengthens growth and creates more opportunities.

Most importantly, Annah reminds members to enjoy the journey and celebrate every milestone along the way.

“Do not wait for the perfect moment. Take every opportunity to speak, lead, and learn.”

I Didn't Think Toastmasters Was for Me: Gerald's Toastmaster Journey

— By Khethiwe Malema

My name is Gerald Pietersen from Kariega, formerly known as Uitenhage. I am the youngest of six children and married to Sheri-Ann. Together we have a son, Benaiah Lukhanyo, meaning "Yahweh has built the one that shines."

I am currently studying towards a Masters in Entrepreneurship and have been self-employed for the past 10 years in training and development. Our company specialises in customised soft skills training, including Communication Skills, Change Management, and Problem Solving. Beyond business, we remain active in our community through youth leadership seminars for matriculants in Uitenhage.

Before joining Toastmasters, I was already a qualified facilitator delivering training at various levels. At first, I believed Toastmasters was not for me, until Angie Kivido refused to take no for an answer. Since I already opened and closed the hall used for meetings at the coffee shop, she convinced me it made sense to stay and participate.

The greatest value Toastmasters has brought into my life is networking and collaboration. Building relationships and supporting fellow Toastmasters in business is what excites me most. The experience has also made me more mindful of how I manage my time in conversations and more intentional in how I engage with people.

Serving as an Area Director has been both challenging and rewarding. Navigating meetings, deliverables, and club check-ins taught me important lessons: be honest when you are struggling, communicate with leadership even when you feel you are failing,



and ask for help when needed. Walking away from an assignment knowing you could have done better is difficult, which is why it is important to always give your best.

After attending ThriveCon, I am determined to finish strong by supporting clubs that still need assistance, connecting with members, and helping others achieve their goals. To our members: remain committed and serve with purpose. Toastmasters goes beyond Pathways; it equips you to communicate confidently in everyday life.

Without Toastmasters, I would never have visited three African countries, built meaningful relationships, or discovered this truth: Toastmasters unlocks a new dimension you never knew you were waiting for.



Thrivecon in PICTURES



Driven by Growth: Turning Inspiration into Achievement

— By Leya Musunga

For Agang Siska of Eloquent Speakers Toastmasters Club in Botswana, the journey toward multiple awards is rooted in inspiration, consistency, and the courage to keep improving.

From the start, Agang drew motivation from fellow club members. Watching others grow and deliver impactful speeches inspired her to raise her own standard. Instead of competing with others, she focused on becoming better than her previous self. This mindset shaped how she set her goals ensuring they were realistic, consistent, and aligned with continuous improvement.

A key part of her approach was embracing feedback.

Each speech became an opportunity to refine her skills, apply what she learned, and maintain steady progress.

By staying intentional and consistent, she was able to build momentum over time.

Her motivation to pursue multiple awards did not come from recognition alone. It was fueled by two powerful forces: the encouragement of her club and her own inner voice pushing her forward. The supportive environment around her reinforced her belief that she could achieve more, while her personal drive kept her focused on her goals.



Agang's advice to fellow members is simple yet practical: keep writing, keep rehearsing, and take the opportunity to speak. Growth comes from action, not perfection.

"Always go for it," she emphasizes.

Her journey is a reminder that progress in Toastmasters is not about perfection, but about consistency, courage, and the willingness to keep showing up and improving.

"Instead of competing with others, she focused on becoming better than her previous self."

Healing Beyond Medicine: The Voice Behind Veterinary Care

— By Modieng Ramekosi

As veterinarians, we spend years mastering the science of treating animals—but one of my biggest realizations came after qualifying: every animal comes attached to a human.

At the time, I was an introvert with low self-confidence, and I quickly understood that my success would depend not only on clinical skill, but on my ability to communicate with pet owners. I needed to grow not just as a clinician, but as a communicator.

I was introduced to Toastmasters by a friend, Lesedi Masina, and from my very first meeting at Florida Toastmasters, I felt at home. What stood out most was the emphasis on learning through practice an approach that resonated deeply with me. That decision marked the beginning of a transformative journey.

Toastmasters has helped me grow in ways I never imagined. I've gained the confidence to engage with strangers and speak in front of groups, while also broadening my perspective through diverse interactions. Professionally, it has made me a more effective veterinarian able to explain complex conditions clearly and build meaningful connections with clients.

I once believed public speaking was reserved for the exceptionally polished.

Today, I see it for what it truly is: the human ability to express your thoughts authentically and connect with others. Letting go of perfection allowed me to find my voice.

Some of the most powerful speaking moments in my career happen not on a stage, but in consultation rooms. Guiding pet owners through end-of-life decisions requires compassion, clarity, and sometimes silence. In those moments, the right words can bring lasting comfort.

At its core, both veterinary medicine and Toastmasters are about connection and I'm grateful for how both continue to shape me.



Jaco Theron
Club Treasurer
Florida Toastmasters Club

Finding My Voice Through Toastmasters

— By Modieng Ramekosi

Joining Toastmasters was a natural step in my journey as someone who has always loved speaking. Whether serving as an MC, engaging in corporate environments, or empowering women through my work, I've always used my voice with confidence.

However, I reached a point where I realized that passion alone was not enough. I wanted to be more intentional, more refined, and more impactful in how I communicate. Toastmasters offered the perfect environment to grow—a supportive space where I could be challenged, learn continuously, and improve without pressure.

Since joining Toastmasters, my growth has been both personal and professional. Professionally, I have become more structured and deliberate in how I present my ideas. I've learned that clarity and delivery go hand in hand—how you say something is just as important as what you say.

On a personal level, Toastmasters has taught me the value of presence. It's no longer about speaking to fill the room, but about speaking to connect. This shift has made my communication more meaningful and impactful.

Interestingly, my biggest challenge was not stage fright, but pacing. I naturally speak fast—a habit shaped by environments where time is often limited and messages need to be delivered quickly.

Through Toastmasters, I've learned the importance of slowing down, pausing, and trusting my message. I've discovered that a well-paced speech is far more powerful than a rushed one. Slowing down has strengthened my delivery and allowed my audience to truly engage with my message. One of the most

memorable moments in my Toastmasters journey was entering a speaking contest. I did it simply to challenge myself, with no expectations of how far I would go.

To my surprise, I progressed all the way to Division level. The experience pushed me beyond my comfort zone and tested my confidence, discipline, and resilience. It reminded me that growth often begins with a simple decision—to say yes and show up.

Toastmasters continues to shape me into a more intentional and impactful communicator. Each meeting, each speech, and each evaluation is an opportunity to grow. "Your voice doesn't need to be rushed to be powerful. When you slow down, own your space, and speak with intention, people don't just hear you—they feel you."



Kgomotso Masela
VP Public Relations
Honeydew Toastmasters

From Tale Teller to Transformational Speaker

For Patrick Mtembu, the journey into public speaking began with a defining moment, hearing Mike Lipkin speak in Simon's Town during his time in the Navy.

"That moment planted a seed," he recalls. "I knew this was something I wanted to do, but I didn't know where to begin." Although he continued investing in personal growth through books, it was *Get Inspired or Get Expired* by Dr. Tibane that reignited his passion. Through mentorship, he was introduced to Toastmasters, a decision that would transform his life.

"Toastmasters gave me the stage I had been searching for," Pat says. "A place to turn inspiration into action and storytelling into impact." Nicknamed "The Tale Teller" by his mother as a child, Pat has now stepped fully into that role, using his voice to connect, influence, and inspire.

Pat describes his Toastmasters journey as deeply transformative. Personally, it helped him embrace storytelling with confidence and intention, teaching him that the true power of speaking lies in connecting with an audience. Professionally, the impact has been just as significant. He now communicates with precision, carries himself with confidence, and leads with presence.

"Toastmasters doesn't just build speakers, it builds leaders who inspire change," he says.

Before joining Toastmasters, Pat's biggest challenge was self-doubt. He often worried about how he was perceived and relied heavily on audience validation. That mindset shifted when he discovered the true value of evaluations.

"Feedback isn't personal, it's growth," he explains. By consistently stepping up for roles and speaking opportunities, he learned to turn fear into fuel, viewing evaluations as stepping stones toward becoming a better communicator.

One of Pat's most memorable experiences was delivering his first speech.

"It was a 'knock it out of the ballpark' moment," he says. Encouraged by fellow members, he delivered a passionate, high-energy talk he jokingly calls his "Go get them, boy!" speech.

Today, Pat continues to grow as a speaker and leader at Soweto Positive Speakers Club. Guided by the values of service and purpose learned in the Navy, he is no longer simply telling stories, he is living one.



Patrick Mtembu
SAA

Soweto Positive Speakers Toastmasters Club

District 74

SOUTHERN AFRICA TOASTMASTERS

CLUB ANNIVERSARIES

May 2026

Division

A

Johannesburg Toastmasters Club - 76 Years
Ignite Toastmasters - 6 years

Division

C

Two Oceans - 35 Years

Division

E

Firstmasters Botswana - 7 Years
New Age Orators - 1 Year

Division

F

Sasol Chemicals Ubuntu Toastmasters - 4 Years
Honeydew Club - 33 Years

Thrivecon in PICTURES



May Hall of Fame Winners



BRIGHT SPARK AWARD
The Winner
is



DEVIN PEARSON,DTM

TOASTMASTER OF THE YEAR
WINNER



Glenis Whitehead, DTM



**WINNERS
(TIED)**

**DIVISION DIRECTOR OF
THE YEAR**



Lesedi Masina
Division F
Lorna B. Holtman, DTM
Division C

**AREA DIRECTOR OF THE
YEAR
WINNER:**



Vivien Boddy
Area D1



John Whiffen Helping Hand Award
Winner



Shawn Langa, DTM

Muggins Cup - MayCon
WINNER



Mojabeng Tigeli, DTM

BRIAN CLARKE SHIELD
WINNER



Lesedi Masina
Division F



**DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER
AWARD**

Segametsi Moumakwa,
DTM Nedbank Club
22 July 2025



**DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER
AWARD**



Mojabeng Tigeli, DTM
Pinnacle Toastmasters
Club
21 August 2025



**DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER
AWARD**



Lorna B. Holtman, DTM
Northern Star
Toastmasters Club
05 November 2025



**DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER
AWARD**



Bill Russell, DTM Cape
Town Speakers
12 November 2025



**DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER
AWARD**



Mmapule Nkosi, DTM
Gold Reef Toastmasters
Club
16 November 2025



**COMMUNICATION &
LEADERSHIP AWARD
WINNER**



Bonang Mohale



**VAN BLERK MEMORIAL TROPHY
WINNER**

Daniel du Preez
Pietermaritzburg Toastmasters Club

**GOLDEN GOOSE
WINNER**

Achieving Excellence Magazine Team

**BEST CLUB PUBLIC RELATION
AWARD**

WINNER:
Gaborone Toastmasters Club

**BEST PUBLIC RELATION EVENT
AWARD
WINNER**

Eloquent Speakers Club

Missed our previous issues you can find them on

Toastmasters74.org

