

JANUARY 2026

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE MAGAZINE

**A Journey of
Reinvention,
Service, and
Purpose**
Lorna Holtman

**Leadership
And Social
Media**

**New Year,
New You?**

**Story of
Leadership,
Balance, and
Growth**
Thobeka Tshabalala

**Journey to
Accredited
TLI Trainer**
**Retshiditse
Talafala**

Anke Stow
Finding My Voice, Setting My Goals

District 74 Southern Africa Toastmasters

District 74

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Toastmasters District 74 Mission

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



EDITOR'S NOTE



Compliments of the New Year fellow Toastmasters and all readers.

Many of us entered the new year with a list of resolutions and goals for ourselves and maybe even for our clubs. Some of these may have been goals set out at the beginning of our current Toastmaster year, giving us just over 5 months to achieve them and what a roller coaster 5 months it is going to be.

If you have not yet set your goals, please read through some of the stories in this issue and be inspired not only to set some Toastmasters related goals but with practical actionable tips on how to achieve some of those goals.

There are plenty of Toastmasters related goals to choose from, whether it is to complete a Pathway level, a Path, compete in this year's contests, support your club in achieving one of our 4 Distinguished Club statuses or pursue a leadership role, the key is not just to set a goal but to set one aligned to your personal or career aspirations.

Remember each goal you set and achieve is another growth step towards a better you.

Khethiwe Malema



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DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A new year has a special way of stirring hope within us. As we welcome January, I wish every member of Toastmasters Southern Africa a year filled with progress happiness, and meaningful moments – moments that stretch you, shape you, and remind you of who you are becoming.

The start of a new year gives us permission to begin again. It invites fresh energy, clearer focus, and a renewed connection to our highest selves. It's a chance to ask: Who am I growing into this year?

January also marks the start of the second half of the Toastmasters year – a powerful midpoint that calls us to recommit to our personal and professional development. Whether your journey is just beginning or well underway, this is your moment to realign with your goals and lean into growth with intention.

This is also the season of goal-setting, when many are searching for confidence, clarity, and stronger communication. Let's open our doors wide. I encourage every leader and member to invite boldly to your first club meeting of the year. You may be the spark someone has been waiting for.



As you turn these pages, allow yourself to be inspired – and then share this magazine with others. Let the story of Toastmasters travel far and wide.

This year, let us continue to be Catalysts of Success, igniting growth, purpose, and possibility – together.

Bhekisisa Ngomane,DTM



communication across
District 74.

And as always don't forget to follow us on our social media pages so you never miss an update on what's happening in our district. [\[Link here\]](#)

Leya Musunga

FROM THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DESK

December was a month of reflection, gratitude, and celebration across District 74. As the year drew to a close, our communication platforms became spaces of appreciation honouring the journey travelled, the milestones achieved, and the people who made it all possible.

Clubs embraced the season with themed meetings, year-end reflections, and festive messages that highlighted fellowship, connection, and the joy of belonging to Toastmasters.

As we bid farewell to the year gone by and welcome a new one, the PR Desk extends heartfelt thanks to every member, club, and leader who shared their stories and amplified our voice throughout the year. May the New Year bring renewed energy, bold goals, and continued growth both on and off the stage. Here's to finishing strong, starting right, and making the year ahead one of impact, excellence, and inspired

A Journey of Reinvention, Service, and Purpose

By Leya Musunga

A New Beginning Through Toastmasters

For Lorna Holtman, joining Toastmasters in June 2022 marked a powerful turning point. Following a period of personal loss, Toastmasters became a space of healing, growth, and renewed purpose. Encouraged by Toastmaster Ambassador Carmen Smidt, Lorna stepped into a supportive community that would soon shape both her confidence and leadership journey.

Professional Excellence Beyond the Club

Outside Toastmasters, Lorna is a Higher Education consultant, Certified Reinvention Practitioner, and semi-retired Professor specialising in Curriculum and Instruction. Her work spans academic research, supervision, leadership development, and institutional support. Yet, when asked about her favourite role, her answer is simple—tutoring her grandchildren. She also finds joy in mentoring young professionals, a passion that mirrors her Toastmasters service ethos.

The Path to Distinguished Toastmaster

Lorna did not set out with a fixed timeline to achieve her Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award. Instead, the goal evolved naturally as she immersed herself in club activities and district leadership. Visiting clubs such as Harties Toastmasters gave her a strong sense of belonging and encouragement, making the journey both achievable and meaningful.

Leadership Across Districts

Lorna's leadership spans multiple clubs and two districts. In District 87, she serves as Secretary at Swan City and Sarikei Toastmasters Clubs. In District 74, her roles have included Vice President Membership and Treasurer at The Professionals, President



of Northern Star, and Vice President Education and Treasurer at Anrol International Advanced Toastmasters Club.

Her service as Area Director for Area B4 led to the prestigious Area of the Year award. She currently serves as Division C Director, supporting five Area Directors and 22 clubs, and completed a club mentor role in September 2025.

Support, Balance, and Growth

Lorna credits her success to strong mentorship, particularly IPDD Granny Be007, as well as district training and encouragement from fellow Toastmasters. While balancing leadership with professional and personal responsibilities was challenging, careful planning and teamwork made it possible.

Lessons and Legacy

Reflecting on her journey, Lorna emphasises that consistent effort builds momentum and that leadership is rooted in service, not titles. Sponsoring new clubs, earning Area of the Year, and building lasting friendships stand out as key highlights. Above all, her story inspires Toastmasters to embrace growth, community, and the courage to begin.

Lead by Example

By Tumelo Maphalala

Leadership in Toastmasters is rooted in service, guidance, and growth. Yet one of the most powerful ways is often the simplest: leading by example. As we step into the new year and look ahead to 2026, Toastmasters leaders are reminded that their influence is not defined solely by the roles they hold, but by the actions they consistently demonstrate, especially in their own self-development.

It is easy, as leaders, to become consumed by agendas, reports, and supporting others, sometimes at the expense of our own educational goals. However, when leaders continue to give speeches, complete projects, and pursue Pathways levels, they send a powerful message: growth never stops. By actively participating, leaders show that learning is not reserved for new members, it is a lifelong commitment.

Leading by example builds credibility. Members are more inspired to pursue their own goals when they see leaders doing the same.

A President who delivers speeches, an Area Director who completes projects, or a mentor who actively seeks feedback reinforces the culture Toastmasters strives to create, which is one of accountability, courage, and continuous improvement..

Strong finishes in 2025 have created momentum, and momentum fuels confident beginnings in 2026. The new year offers a fresh chapter, one filled with opportunity, ambition, and renewed focus. Let all Toastmasters leaders commit not only to serving others but also to developing themselves. When leaders grow, clubs grow. When leaders stretch themselves, members follow.

Leadership is not about standing ahead of others; it is about walking the journey alongside them. As we step into 2026, may we lead boldly, intentionally, and visibly, by example.



Thobeka Tshabalala: A Transformational Leadership Journey

By Nomthandazo Miselo

Thobeka Tshabalala's leadership journey is rooted in passion, innovation, and empowerment. An accomplished software developer with expertise in backend development using C#, Thobeka has delivered impactful projects, including a surveillance system for the JSE Bond Surveillance team, earning stakeholder praise. Her commitment to excellence extends beyond technology she champions financial education through her YouTube channel and proudly holds the title of Novation Hackathon 2025 winner.

Her style is transformational she inspires growth, innovation, and shared vision. Through her roles in Toastmasters as VP Membership and VP Education, she has learned the power of first impressions and the importance of empowering others to achieve results.

Michelle Obama stands as her leadership inspiration, embodying authenticity and empowerment values Thobeka strives to emulate. Balancing leadership with personal life is challenging, but Thobeka relies on systems, early routines, and succession planning to maintain harmony.

Her advice to aspiring leaders? You don't have to know it all asking for help is part of being a great leader. With systems and intentionality, excellence becomes attainable. Thobeka's journey proves that leadership is not just about guiding it's about growing together.



**"Toastmasters taught me
that first impressions
matter and
empowerment sustains
success."**

Leadership and Social Media

By Tumelo Maphalala

For a long time, social media felt optional in leadership spaces. It was nice to have, but not essential. Lately, however, my relationship with LinkedIn has shifted. What once seemed like a simple networking platform has become a powerful window into ideas, conversations, and communities far beyond my immediate environment. Over the past few months, it has exposed me to leadership styles, professional journeys, and thought leadership that I might never have encountered otherwise. And in that exposure, one truth has become clear: leaders who use social media well gain a distinct advantage.

Social media, particularly LinkedIn, is no longer just about visibility. It is about learning. Leaders can observe how others navigate challenges, communicate values, celebrate wins, and reflect on setbacks. A single post can spark insight, provoke thought, or validate an experience you thought you were navigating alone. For emerging and seasoned leaders alike, this creates an ongoing, informal classroom, one that operates in real time.

Beyond learning, social media offers leaders a platform to influence positively. By sharing lessons, acknowledging teams, and contributing to conversations, leaders shape narratives that extend beyond their organisations. Authentic presence matters more than perfection. People connect with honesty, reflection, and purpose, not polished titles.

Social media also democratizes leadership. You don't need a corner office to lead a conversation or inspire others. Consistent, thoughtful engagement builds credibility and trust over time.



Used intentionally, LinkedIn becomes a space where leadership is practiced daily through dialogue, encouragement, and shared growth.

As we move deeper into a digitally connected world, leaders should not shy away from social media. Rather they should lean into it. When used wisely, it becomes a tool for learning, connection, influence, and impact. Leadership today is not confined to boardrooms; it is also built, shaped, and amplified online.

“Social media also democratizes leadership. You don’t need a corner office to lead a conversation or inspire others..”

Reginald Lawrance: Leading Through Service and Transformation

— By Nomthandazo Miselo

Reginald Lawrance is a dynamic leader who serves across multiple platforms—Nedbank Cape Toastmasters, Nedbank, community initiatives, and as a Board Member at Rahima Moosa Hospital. His leadership philosophy is rooted in service, trust, and empowerment. For Reginald, leadership means bringing hope, vision, and direction, while delivering results through collaboration.

His style is transformational, connecting purpose to outcomes and motivating people to embrace change. In Toastmasters, Reginald served as Vice President Education, when Nedbank Cape Toastmasters was chartered in June of 2024, learning the importance of growth and role interconnection. As President, he discovered the power of positive influence—setting clear goals, sharing knowledge, and fostering teamwork.

Inspired by his father's resilience despite racial barriers in the 1930s, Reginald values dignity, hard work, and belief in human potential. These principles guide him to lead with empathy and consistency.

Balancing leadership and personal life requires intentional time management, healthy boundaries, and prioritizing wellbeing. His advice to aspiring leaders? Stay humble, listen, build trust, empower others, and lead with empathy—not ego. Leadership isn't about perfection; it's about growing together.



Reginald's journey proves that true leadership is not a title—it's a commitment to serve, inspire, and transform lives.

“Empathy and consistency are not leadership traits they are leadership responsibilities.”

District 74: Out and About Over the Christmas Holidays



The Science Behind Nerves

By Kagelelo G. Mogotsi

In our last edition, we discussed that your personality is not broken, it's hiding behind a survival reflex. Let's stop guessing and understand why.

I was comforted to learn that our brain is doing exactly what it evolved to do, to keep us safe. That it doesn't realize that you're delivering a speech and not being chased down by a predator. So instead of symptoms, let's appreciate the machinery behind this reaction.

Why our brains blank our personality on stage

Our brains think the audience is a threat, it does not care that it's a friendly and supportive Toastmasters room. This is because we are wired to care deeply about social belonging due to rejection being associated with danger historically. Being cast out meant less resources, less protection and lower chance of survival. So when you stand in front of a room full of eyes evaluating you, the brain triggers a primitive survival program called hypervigilance.

Hypervigilance then suppresses our personality because the brain stops prioritizing expression and switches to protection mode. You stop being you and you put on a defense to avoid risks. When this happens the body becomes ruthless, expression becomes optional and survival a necessity. The muscles tighten, vocal tone flattens, focus becomes narrow and emotional accessibility dampens. In other words, natural gestures leave the room, monotony becomes the main character, charisma bids its farewell and you appear rigid and serious.

Your body is not trying to help you perform; it's trying to stop you from dying. Wrong priority but understandable. Experts also allude that the nervous system has a bias towards shrinking not expanding. When you're nervous the body chooses shrinking which is translated as self-minimization because it's safer.



The nervous system therefore, hides you until the danger has passed. The nervous system operates on black and white lens. Either you're safe (expressive, humorous and relaxed) or in danger (guarded, stiff and flat). There is no gentle slope between the two.

All this is to say, you're not boring or less charismatic, you're running on an outdated survival program that was written long before the lectern, microphones and auditoriums. The good news is anything that is a reflex can be re-trained. Through exposure, repetition and deliberate stress-management, we can teach our bodies that the stage is not dangerous. That's where we are headed on the next installment, we shall tackle exactly how we can re-train our nervous system so our authentic personality shows on stage, again not by accident but on purpose.

My Journey to a TLI Accredited Trainer - Lesedi Masina

By Lesedi Masina

"Becoming a Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) Accredited Trainer has been one of my most meaningful leadership achievements this year. It is a journey that requires commitment, preparation, and a genuine desire to serve others through learning.

The Train the Trainer Experience

The process begins with attending a Train the Trainer session, a full-day, intensive programme designed to equip aspiring trainers with practical facilitation skills. During this session, we were introduced to a variety of in-person teaching methods, including problem-solving techniques using whiteboards and flip charts, interactive discussions, and structured group activities. These methods highlighted how different learning styles can be accommodated in a live training environment.

Learning by Doing

What stood out for me was that the session was not purely theoretical. We actively applied the methods we were learning through practical group exercises, which allowed us to grasp concepts faster and experience first-hand how engagement improves learning. I also gained insight into why many experienced facilitators bring their own teaching materials — preparation and adaptability make a significant difference.

Strengthening My Facilitation Skills

As someone who already facilitates AI training professionally, this experience helped me refine my approach and strengthen my ability to manage an audience effectively while delivering content with clarity and impact.

Evaluation and Accreditation

After completing the Train the Trainer session, the journey continues with **evaluation**.



I conducted my first official training during COTii with an evaluator present to assess how well I applied what I had learned. The evaluation was then submitted to the TLI Chair for review.

More Than a Title

Once accredited, you carry not just a title, but enhanced leadership, communication, and facilitation skills which is ultimately what Toastmasters is about.

Building Skills as an Accredited TLI Trainer

By Retshidisitse Talafala

"When I suggested a Club, where members can learn talking by talking they welcomed it" Dr Ralph Smedley, 100 years and counting Toastmasters International has been in existence, transforming the lives of ordinary people to unearth gifts and abilities they never knew they have, using a method proven to be most effective.

In the early days of my Toastmasters Journey I visited Florida Toastmasters and on that day TM Lesedi was presenting an educational and her topic was "Making the most with your Toastmaster membership" She highlighted the roles and skills one can learn from taking up said roles, she also emphasised on opportunities that exist at Toastmasters to any member and thereby fully utilising their membership fee they have already paid for.

To ensure that Toastmasters celebrates the next 100 years there should be a constant and consistent supply of Trainers, a great legacy and I'm excited to be part of that legacy. Key skills one needs to be a trainer are:

Firstly, be a strong member,

I have completed a Path working on my second Path. Currently I serve as the President of the West Rand Toastmaster. To further build my skills and confidence I also participated in the emissary challenge.

Secondly, develop training skills:

I attended the "Speaker to Trainer" workshop, where I acquired skills on how to deliver effective training.

Third, gain experience and evaluation.

Get experience by conducting training and be evaluated by an experienced TLI trainer, where you need to meet a certain percentage to qualify to become an accredited TLI Trainer.

"Toastmasters is built on a method that works, learning by doing, in a safe and supportive environment."

Toastmasters remains a place where leaders are made—in a safe, supportive, and fun environment. I am proud to contribute to this enduring legacy and help build leaders for generations to come.



Retshidisitse Talafala
President of West Rand Toastmaster



Finding My Voice, Setting My Goals

— By Anke Stow

My name is Anke Stow, and I live in Johannesburg with my husband, Glenn, and our one-year-old daughter, Chloe. Family and connection are my anchors, and communication has always been my passion, two powerful reasons why Toastmasters became such a meaningful part of my life.

Eight years ago, I recognised that strong communication skills were essential for both my career and personal growth. At the time, I worked in the IT industry, presenting demos and managing stakeholder communication. While I was technically competent, I wanted to speak with more confidence and impact. A colleague introduced me to Toastmasters, and from my very first meeting, I knew I had found a community that would challenge and support me.

Balancing Family, Work, and Toastmasters

Balancing parenthood, a demanding job, and Toastmasters isn't easy—but it is possible with intentional planning. I see Toastmasters as an investment in myself. Often, that means attending meetings virtually or practicing speeches after Chloe's bedtime. When you prioritise what matters, you find creative ways to make it work.

The Last Six Months: Lessons and Incentives

The past six months have been a period of significant growth. I stepped into leadership roles, mentored new members, and worked on advanced projects. The biggest lesson I learned is simple: consistency beats intensity. Small, regular actions—such as drafting a speech outline during lunch or practicing impromptu speaking in daily conversations—compound into meaningful progress.

Our club also introduced an exciting incentive: using funds earned from Speechcraft courses to send members who completed a Pathways level in the past six months to ThriveCon Conference next year. This sparked motivation across the club—including for me. On December 19th, at 3 a.m., I delivered a speech online at a club in Texas, USA, just to meet the deadline. That moment reinforced how goals, when paired with incentives, drive action.

In total, eight members qualified for the incentive. Since not everyone can attend the conference, some rewards will be converted into a new Path of the member's choice—ensuring the incentive remains inclusive and aligned with Toastmasters' educational goals.

Goals for the Year Ahead

Over the next 6-12 months, my focus is twofold:

1. Complete my first Pathway in Visionary Communication
2. Compete in the upcoming contest season—not just to win, but to challenge myself and sharpen my skills under pressure

“When you prioritise what matters, you find creative ways to make it work.”



I also plan to support my club in introducing more goal-driven incentives, such as recognising members who complete a speech each quarter or mentor others.

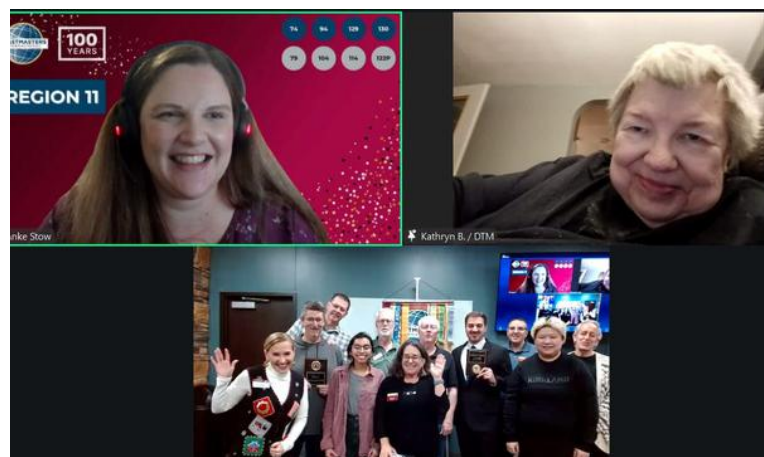
Contest Experience and Advice

Having participated in contests before, I've learned that while winning is exciting, preparation is where the real growth happens. As our club prepares to host its first contest in a few years, my advice is simple: start early, seek feedback, and focus on connection—not perfection.

A Message to Members and Future Members

If you're already a member, set clear goals and share them with your club. If you're considering joining, don't wait. Toastmasters is more than public speaking—it's a journey of confidence, leadership, and community.

Goals give direction, and incentives give motivation. Together, they turn aspirations into achievements.



Finding My Voice Beyond My Comfort Zone

By Leya Musunga

As a first-year varsity student, joining Toastmasters was a big step far outside my comfort zone. Naturally shy, I often struggled to speak up, even when I had something valuable to share.

I joined Toastmasters because I wanted to build confidence and learn how to express myself more clearly and courageously. The club has provided a safe and supportive environment where I feel encouraged to speak, even when nerves arise.

My expectations are truly being met. With each meeting, I am learning, growing, and gradually finding my voice. I am deeply grateful for the patience, guidance, and consistent encouragement from fellow members who make this journey possible.



Loaga Esther Mfolwe
Gaborone Toastmasters Club

District 74- Social Media Report



	Facebook	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube	X
	Page	Group				
Followers	14,591	9,309	3,200	385	1,358	4,201
Interactions	372	334	317	98		
Viewed	9,205	5,862	14,717	177	714	



Website

Active users - 3800
New users - 3700
Page Views- 4600

From the PRM Desk

Finding and Owning My Voice

By Leya Musunga

For many years, I worked quietly behind the scenes, building confidence in written communication through completing both my first and second degrees via online learning. While this strengthened my ability to express ideas on paper, it also highlighted my limitations in verbal communication.

I joined Toastmasters as a deliberate and purposeful step toward finding and owning my voice.

My expectation was simple yet significant: to speak with confidence and clarity, whether prepared or impromptu. Through Toastmasters, I am steadily developing these skills in a supportive and encouraging environment.

More importantly, I am learning to translate improved communication into personal growth, stronger leadership presence, and meaningful impact in every space I engage.



Mariam Gumedde
Gaborone Toastmasters Club

Strengthening the Human Side of Leadership

By Leya Musunga



Bryan Masheleng
Gaborone Toastmasters Club

As someone deeply rooted in IT and digital transformation, I am constantly driven by a thirst for knowledge and continuous improvement. While technology has sharpened my analytical thinking, I recognized the need to strengthen the human side of leadership communication, influence, and presence.

I joined Toastmasters to bridge that gap. My goal is to become a more confident and compelling speaker, capable of translating complex technical concepts into clear, relatable, and impactful messages. Through Toastmasters, I am developing the confidence to lead conversations, inspire teams, and connect authentically with diverse audiences.

This journey is shaping me into a more well-rounded professional who communicates with clarity, purpose, and impact.

New Year, Same You?

By Tumelo Maphalala

As the calendar turns and a new year begins, a familiar question quietly lingers: will anything truly change, or will it simply be a new year with the same habits, the same fears, and the same unfulfilled intentions? “New Year, New Me” is a popular phrase, but real transformation requires more than declarations, it requires deliberate action.

Growth does not happen by accident. It happens when we choose discomfort over convenience, learning over familiarity, and courage over complacency. Without intentional effort, it is easy to carry yesterday’s patterns into tomorrow. That is why the start of a new year is not just a celebration of time passed, but a call to reflect on who we are becoming.

Toastmasters offers a powerful tool for anyone ready to challenge the status quo of their own lives. It creates a safe, structured space to practice skills that many of us hope to improve but often postpone; confidence, clarity, leadership, and self-expression. Through speeches, evaluations, and leadership roles, members are encouraged to stretch themselves consistently, not just once a year.

The beauty of Toastmasters lies in its accountability. Goals are set, progress is tracked, and growth is celebrated collectively. You are not left to figure it out alone. Each meeting becomes an opportunity to show up a little braver, speak a little clearer, and lead a little stronger than before.

As we step into the new year, it is worth asking: are we willing to do better by ourselves? Not perfectly, but intentionally. Not all at once, but consistently. The new year does not demand a new you, it invites a better one.

So as resolutions are made and lists are written, consider this: if you want meaningful change, choose an environment that supports it. Toastmasters is not just a club, it is a catalyst. A catalyst of success to be exact. The question is not whether the year will change you, but whether you are ready to change within it.



Congratulations

Triple Crown Awards - DECEMBER 2025

Members

- Carmen Jolene Smidt - Anrol International Advanced Toastmasters Club



DECEMBER 2025 TOP 5 RANKED CLUBS WITH THE MOST COMPLETED PATHWAY LEVELS

Rank	Total Levels	Club Name
1	15	Bloemfontein Toastmasters Club
	15	Green Speakers Toastmasters Club
2	13	Eloquent Speakers Club
	13	Gaborone Toastmasters
3	12	Rainbow Toastmasters Club
	12	West Rand Toastmasters Club
4	11	Good Hope Club
	11	Moving Forward Toastmasters
5	10	Algoa Club 2457
	10	Carpe Diem Aspire
	10	Pinelands Club
	10	Nedbank Allstars

Transforming Fear into Confidence: A Toastmasters Story

By Khethiwe Malema

I am Helga René Petersen, born and raised in Genadendal—the oldest Moravian mission station in South Africa. As an only child, family has always been my anchor. I've been married to Alfredo for 25 years and am the proud mother of Lesley (23), a nail technician and third-year UNISA student, and Alexander (17), currently in Grade 11. They are my heart in human form.

Doing good for others is important to me. As a member of the Anglican Women's Fellowship (AWF), we strive to make a meaningful difference in our local church and community.

My Toastmasters journey began in June 2024, thanks to our District 74's Finance Manager, Matome Seabi, who signed me up. Two of my mentors since starting this journey have been Achieving Excellence Managing Editor Khethiwe Malema and Segametsi Moumakwa, DTM.

What I thought was a once-off event turned into a life-changing experience. Today, I am a proud member of the Nedbank Cape Toastmasters Club—the youngest club within Nedbank Limited—and currently serve as VPPR.

Balancing work, family, and Toastmasters can be challenging, but it's deeply rewarding. Thursday evenings at 18h00 are reserved for Toastmasters—my safe space to learn, grow, and transform fear into confidence. Through active participation, I've discovered the power of communication and leadership.



Our club is preparing for its first showcase in February 2026 as part of an ongoing showcase series established this Toastmasters year with the aim of not only providing each club an opportunity to plan a showcase but also with the aim of highlighting the various benefits Toastmasters can bring to Nedbankers. I am extremely excited to be part of this milestone as one of the key organisers in our club.

Toastmasters is more than a program; it's my journey of growth and self-discovery.

Anchored in Values, Rising in Leadership: Rorisang Masilela

— By Khethiwe Malema

I am Rorisang Masilela — a finance and strategy professional by training, a leader by calling, and a lifelong learner at heart. I come from a close-knit family grounded in faith, discipline, and service. These values have shaped how I lead, serve, and pursue excellence. Family remains my anchor and my first leadership classroom, influencing how I show up in my career, my community, and every space I occupy.

Beyond titles, I see myself as a steward of the time, talent, and treasure within me. I am passionate about transformation personal, organisational, and societal and I believe growth is most meaningful when it uplifts others along the way.

I joined Toastmasters out of a deep desire to sharpen my voice and lead with clarity and confidence. My career already required presentations, facilitation, and leadership conversations, but I realised that effective communication would determine the reach of my influence. A secondment to the Office of the CEO made it clear that technical excellence alone is not enough; how I communicate matters just as much.

Attending RoarCon 2025 was a turning point. Hearing Nozipho Tshabalala, author of *After the Fires*, remind us that “what got you here won’t get you there” reinforced the urgency of honing my communication skills. Having joined Toastmasters in March 2025, I found myself at Conference within three months and it was lit.

The last six months have been transformational: a season of stretching, learning, and refinement. A period marked by courage and growth.



“Three lessons stand out:

1. Confidence is built, not inherited it grows through practice.
2. Feedback is the breakfast of champions and growth requires repetition and reflection.
3. Leadership begins with self-awareness and courage.

I am on a one-way journey toward speaking with clarity, listening with empathy, and leading with authenticity. In the coming months, I aim to deepen my communication and leadership capability, complete my Level 3 projects on the Visionary Communication Path, and prepare for ThriveCon 2026 in Lesotho.

To those considering joining: Toastmasters is more than public speaking it is a journey of finding your voice, refining your leadership, and growing within a safe, supportive community.



District 74

SOUTHERN AFRICA TOASTMASTERS

CLUB ANNIVERSARIES

January 2026

Division

B

Algoa Club 2457 - 66 Years

Division

C

Table Bay Club - 58 Years

Division

D

Umlazi Toastmasters Club - 4 Years

District 74

SOUTHERN AFRICA TOASTMASTERS

MEMBERS ANNIVERSARIES

January 2026

Years

56

Thomas Horne - Aloga Club
Longest District 74 Member

9

Jeremy Thurgood - Two Oceans

4

Marie Ange Ravanne - L'Avenir Toastmasters
Julia Immenkamp-Hill - ToastED Toastmaster
Michelle Leopold - Transformers Toastmasters
Joseph George - Bloemfontein Toastmasters
Samantha Montes - Table Bay Club

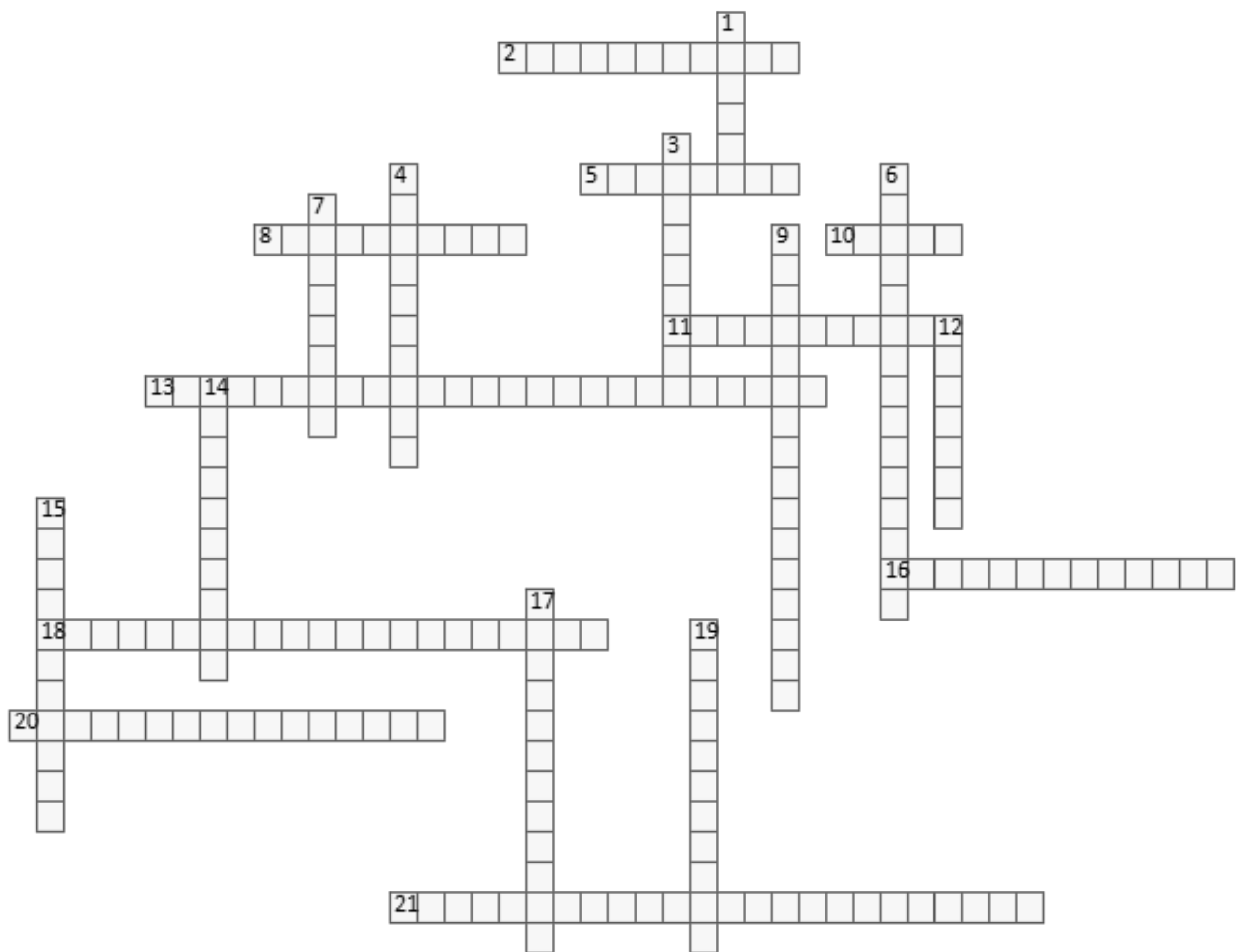
3

Luciano Joao - L'Avenir Toastmasters
Jenna Stone - Table View Toastmasters Club
Tlou Mashitisho - Komani Toastmasters Club
Keabetswe Tiro - Nedbank Executive Toastmasters
Khethiwe Malema - Nedbank Allstars
Benovia Cuyler - Nedbank Allstars

2

Thabiso Nalane - Alberton Toastmasters Club
Sagwadi Mashimbye - Alberton Toastmasters
Donne Minne - The Breakfast Club
Marinda Ramalheiro - Table View
Veruschka Thomas - Table View

January Crossword



Across

- 2.** Tool used by the timer to signal time
- 5.** Name of the Toastmasters education program introduced in 2018
- 8.** Term for feedback given after a speech
- 10.** Symbol of authority used to maintain meeting decorum
- 11.** Term for impromptu speaking session
- 13.** A Measure of a club's performance
- 16.** Custodian of a club's assets
- 18.** The first manual in the traditional education program
- 20.** Guide for completing projects in Pathways
- 21.** Highest educational award in Toastmasters

Down

- 1.** Document listing meeting roles and agenda
- 3.** Role responsible for tracking filler words during a meeting
- 4.** Role that improves listening skills
- 6.** Competition level above Area
- 7.** City where Toastmasters International was officially founded
- 9.** Role that evaluates speech structure and delivery
- 12.** Toastmasters founder's last name
- 14.** First step in Pathways program
- 15.** Event for practicing public speaking outside regular meetings.
- 17.** Advanced manual focusing on storytelling
- 19.** Official Toastmasters magazine published monthly

Create your own puzzles for free at www.teachize.com



Happy New Year, District 74!

May 2026 bring fresh
opportunities, confident voices,
and continued excellence in
leadership and
communication. Here's to
growing together and
achieving even more one
speech at a time.



Missed our previous issues you can find them on
Toastmasters74.org



www.toastmasters.org