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Camagwini Mavovana mavovanac@timesmedia.co.za

PE pupils win with top model

Young Cheetahs team's design outclasses competition in Jaguar School Challenge

FOUR pupils from Charles Duna Primary School in Port Elizabeth could have a bright future as car designers after taking first place in the national Jaguar Primary School Challenge.



Picture: CAMAGWINI MAVOVANA

GOING PLACES: Proud Charles Duna Primary School Grade 7 pupils, from left, Hlumelo Mkhuhlu, 11, his sister Lungisa Mkhuhlu, 12, Aviwe Mhlatyana, 12, and Silindokuhle Zana, 12, are the Jaguar Primary School Challenge winners

The Cheetahs, as they call themselves, won the provincial competition in October and went on to take top honours in the national showdown in Johannesburg on Wednesday

The Jaguar Primary School Challenge annually calls on schools to form teams of four pupils and design a race car out of 160g/m² card, complete with wheels, a body and a mini driver.

The youngsters from Charles Duna defied all odds since this is a no-fees school with a known lack of resources.

Grade 7 pupil Silindokuhle Zana, 12, said the trip to Johannesburg was his first flight.

"For the first time my teammates and I got to see the airport. We saw so many new things and the whole experience was exciting for us," he said.

"Children at school look up to us, they are proud of our win.

"They couldn't believe we'd slept in a hotel and won such amazing prizes.

"More pupils want us to teach them how to build this model."

Team manager Hlumelo Mkhuhlu, 11, said they faced many challenges in the build-up to the finals but were confident of the model they had built.

"The most important part was to build the car because it's an F1 competition. We had to do a verbal presentation, a display and present a portfolio.

"The experience was fun and challenging. It gave us skills to be engineers, to draw and to manufacture," Hlumelo said.

Teammate Aviwe Mhlatyana, 12, said they had to make sure the wheels of the car did not come off while it was on display.

"We needed to design the car perfectly using Silhouette Studio software. We had to use materials like the Silhouette cameo cutter to cut the body," Aviwe said.

Designer Lungisa Mkhuhlu, 12, said she got to boss the boys around because she was the only girl in the team.

"I downloaded the cheetah prints from the internet and saved them to the software to design the car. We named ourselves the Cheetahs because the animal is fast like the Jaguar car.

"We knew we were going to win," Lungisa said.

Maths teacher Thembi Seitshiro said the pupils each received a Raspberry Pi tablet computer.

"They started the car from scratch, they understood the brief and they executed it well. They worked as a team and created a car and a presentation that was flawless," Seitshiro said.

"They were initially scared of their competition but knew they had worked hard and deserved to be among the other schools."

Principal Nombulelo Sune said the win proved that even if the department did not assist in overcoming its many challenges, the school still worked hard to ensure the best for its pupils.

"The people they were competing against come from more affluent schools, but their confidence has definitely been boosted," Sune said.