

KUCETEKELA FOUNDATION

Student Profile

Name: **Merilyn Vallabh**

Gender: Female
Date of Birth: 31st October 1995
Place of Birth: Ndola, Zambia

Guardian: Ada Jorda (Grandmother)
Profession: Supermarket Supervisor

Primary School: Northmead Basic School

Secondary School: **Chalo Trust School**

2010 Level: **Grade 10**



Family Background:

Merilyn comes from an elderly and single-headed household. She lives with her grand mother who took guardianship after her mother, Themlata, who had become pregnant at the age of 16 while still in school gave birth. The mother has since been unable to take responsibilities of Merilyn. Merilyn's grandmother works as a manager at a local supermarket, Melissa's, working from 7 AM until 8 PM Monday through Saturday to support her three grandchildren. Her income cannot sustain the education of her grand daughters and as such she has been dependant FAWEZA, an NGO which provides assistance to young girls, for the education of her grand daughters. Merilyn says, "KF has removed a big burden from my grandma who did not know after grade 7 where I would go to school. She did not have enough for school and clothing.

While Merilyn had not seen her mother since 2006, she recently reconnected, visiting her mother, stepfather, and step-sister in Johannesburg, South Africa. Although they are not as close, she said that she enjoyed the visit and getting to know her younger sister (though she is very rambunctious!).

Merilyn's Educational Background:

Primary - asd Northmead Basic School

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Merilyn is a very attentive and hardworking girl. Her scores in all subjects in end of term examinations in primary school were above average. She was a favorite of the teachers at her school because she was the only one who asked questions in class. She has always demonstrated great intelligence and has acted as a role model for her peers. Her former teachers rated her academic performance as good and felt that she would do much better in an environment conducive for studies.

At Chalo Trust School

Grade 8

Merylin was ambitious about what she could achieve here at Chalo Trust. She felt she could always do better, and therefore strove to improve. Her favorite subjects are French, History and Mathematics.

Grade 9

Merilyn was challenged by her courses in Grade 9, but this only pushed her to work harder. Her best subjects were French, English, Geography, and Office Practice, and she is optimistic about her examinations. In addition, she said that her behavior has improved, coming to realize “everything is not about myself. I have become well-mannered and have stronger Christian values.” The principal’s comments reflect Merilyn’s commitment: “Merilyn continued to display good behavior in class and outside. She is very sociable and good towards her friends. Above all she is a very committed students with matters to do with God. Keep it up!” Merilyn’s goals for next term are to improve in history and civics and to be number one in her class.

Merilyn’s Interests:

Merilyn was chosen by her teacher as the manager of religious education, a responsibility that requires her to make sure everyone is prepared for R.E., gets books from the library, and makes sure people have done their homework. She says that it is at times difficult because her classmates can be stubborn; however, she offers help with homework for those who struggle.

Merilyn is also part of the school drama club where she has learned how to act and speak in public. She mentioned how she feels her confidence has improved since joining this club. She is a part of the choir where they sing gospel songs and practice the national anthem. She also is an extremely talented poet. In grade 10, she plans to join the modeling and community service club.

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Career Interests:

Merilyn wants to be a medical doctor so that she may help the people of Zambia, especially the impoverished in her community who cannot afford to go to hospitals. She sees a lot of misery in her community and her heart goes out to these people, especially the children.

Merilyn's Role Model:

Merilyn looks up to her grandmother for her strength and courage. She has encouraged her and cared for her when her mother was not able. "She is a woman who encourages others. An example of this is where she works—it is very busy and she advises other workers." Her grandmother works hard to support Merilyn, and for that Merilyn hopes to someday provide for her grandmother as a thank you.

Merylin's Thoughts:

"I am grateful for Kucetekela Foundation for picking me. And so for taking a load of worries off my chest. And for taking me to a beautiful school like Chalo where my Christian values have been strengthened.

My favourite KF event was when we first met for our first occasion we had together. I could feel joy and peace in the place. We all sang and ate and took photographs. And I could see that this time everyone's lives were going to change.

I have learnt that life is not an easy or a steady road. Life is a big task to handle. All this helped me gain more passion and care for people who are struggling in life.

I just want to say thank you for everything. I have liked my new school because it is a very good school. It teaches people to be obedient to teachers, workers and even parents at home. I also like the way they teach students who haven't understood something. The people are kind here at Chalo Trust. I thank you for everything and I will do my best in academics. May God bless you. "