

## Hearing-impaired chef 'whips' the odds

Nosipho Mngoma, a hearing-impaired pastry chef, has overcome the odds to pursue her dream as a pastry chef at Park Inn by Radisson Newlands in Cape Town.



Nosipho Mngoma

Nosipho Mngoma has always been in love with food. “I knew my destiny would lead me to a career in the kitchen,” says the 25-year-old who grew up in Site B, Khayelitsha, in Cape Town and attended Noluthando Secondary School.

“Even at high school, I worked towards this goal. Despite the high unemployment rate, I persevered, sending my CV to every hotel in the city. This eventually paid off – I was lucky to be offered a position as a pastry chef.”

Park Inn, which is 51% owned by the Deaf Federation of South Africa (Deaf SA), leads by example in its support of the more than 5% of South Africans who have some form of hearing loss. Approximately 19% of the hotel's staff complement is hard-of-hearing.

For Mngoma, who has a certificate in sewing but who did not envisage working as a seamstress, being employed at Park Inn is a dream come true. This is despite some of the challenges she faces. “I love it here and would still like to be here in five or ten years’ time,” she smiles.

“One of the biggest challenges in the kitchen is communication since hearing-able and hearing-impaired staff work together, but I try to keep calm as miscommunication does happen. I try to avoid that at all costs! I like to write things down when I feel someone doesn’t understand me, and I encourage them to do the same when I don’t understand something.”

She jokes that she is clumsy and often falls or bumps into things in the kitchen. “I make a point of laughing at myself when this happens – it adds some humour to my day,” she says. “I love coming to work and my favourite time of day is the morning because I’m refreshed and ready to get going.”

Her favourite pastry is pie. “I love making puff pastry, especially if there is cream inside it,” she laughs. “I like teaching others how to make pie with mince, mixed herbs and spices.”

Nosipho says one should never stop working towards one’s goal.

“Nothing is impossible,” she asserts. “Determination to reach your goal is key. No matter what happens along the way, it’s all about getting to that finish line. You can achieve whatever you set your mind to.”

Carly de Jong, general manager of Park Inn by Radisson Cape Town Newlands, says the company is driven to give hearing-impaired people a chance to forge a career.

“In the month of #Signtember (September), we would like to rededicate ourselves to uplifting the deaf community, which faces challenges that range from poor education to extreme poverty,” she says. “It is important for us to support this cause all year round – but we particularly want to draw attention to this during September, when the world’s attention is on the hard-of-hearing agenda.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>