



MEDIA STATEMENT

loveLife congratulates Class of 2021 after a trying and challenging year

Johannesburg – Friday, 21 January 2022: Learning conditions have in the past year been tough as Covid-19 continued to disrupt learning and to starkly showcase the widening inequality gap affecting learners with scant resources. With the entire world engulfed by the pandemic, the class of 2021 has triumphed mentally, psychologically, and physically against a virus that has taken a lot from them, including in some instances loss of family members.

loveLife CEO, Dr Linda Ncube-Nkomo said, “despite challenging conditions, learners across the length and breadth of our country came to the party and most showed a resilient spirit of being in classes, learning. A hearty congratulations to the class of 2021.”

loveLife also applauds educators in both public and private schools who have really been under strenuous pressure as Covid-19 challenged what we previously knew as normal, daily schooling – which had to now go out of the window at schools. Our teachers were there to do their best under the circumstances, while also prioritising the health of learners, and putting theirs at risk. Well done to the educators of the class of 2021!

There has been notable support systems that stretch from home to the private sector throughout 2021. This is the support that has enabled learners to receive the love and light a classroom is meant to bring. We are encouraged, and continue to motivate, for such support not to cease or be selective. Thank you to the families, friends and corporate supporters of the class of 2021.

While loveLife congratulates our learners and teachers, we do so cautiously as we know challenges faced by the former. Most of our learners continue to get an education under increasingly tough conditions. The pandemic exacerbates the dire outlook of learners that walk long distances to school (some barefoot) with appalling infrastructure and in many instances some don't have access to data for learning. This regrettable general poor state of education in most of South Africa's provinces compromises the ability of learners to give matric

their best shot and their post school options are thus diminished in an environment where opportunities are not aplenty.

Some of these challenges in the education system have worked against many learners who are now asking themselves a lot of questions after not doing well. These learners need to be encouraged not to give up and rather to go back and work harder. These are learners that should be assisted with information that can help them, from learning material to improve studies to organisations that address various issues such as depression, anxiety, and mental health.

We encourage learners and parents to make use of the various psychosocial support structures in place including the loveLife Contact Centre at which callers can get free counselling and advice by sending a 'please call me' to 0833231023. Learners need all the support they can get to navigate the journey of dealing with poor results and figuring out what to do next.

"All is not lost, if at first you don't succeed, try and continue trying till you get it right. As we doff our hats to the class of 2021, let's do so knowing we have lots of work ahead in getting our education sector fixed. loveLife is ready to walk this journey", concluded Dr Ncube-Nkomo.

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About loveLife

The New loveLife Trust known as "loveLife", is a South African non-profit youth organisation that was established in 1999. loveLife's vision is to promote holistic youth health for all young people between 10-24 years. The organisation seeks to ensure that young people are empowered with information that enables them to make informed decisions related to their overall health and to identify opportunities using a peer-led model to address challenges they face. These challenges include: HIV/AIDS, violence, joblessness, rising mental health issues leading to suicide and substance abuse, lack of access to jobs and economic opportunities, poor basic education system and cost of tertiary and a public health care system that is not designed to cater for the needs of adolescents and youth. These challenges have been exacerbated by numerous factors in particular the COVID-19 pandemic and an ailing economy.