

What might happen if you're curious, eager to explore and willing to persist?



Andrew Taylor
Published Feb 25, 2019

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MaP's Tanaka Chonyera Wins "Star Award"

The winner of the 2018 **DStv Eutelsat Star Awards** essay competition is Maru-a-Pula School (MaP) student Tanaka Chonyera (18). Selected from thousands of entries, Tanaka has won a once-in-a-lifetime trip for two to Paris, in the company of Eutelsat. Tanaka will then travel to French Guiana to witness a rocket launch into space.

At the DStv Eutelsat Awards ceremony held in Accra, Ghana, on February 13th, Tanaka's winning essay was described as reflecting "a deep, free-thinking passion and commitment to space science and technology."

Explaining what led him to enter the contest, Tanaka noted "I love every thing to do with space and space technology. When I found out about this competition I thought to myself: Finally, this is something for me...If there's anything you're passionate about you should go for it."

Since 2011 the competition has inspired over 7,000 essays and made the dreams of 24 students from across the continent come true. The contest continues to inspire young Africans to become exposed to, involved in and excited about science and technology concepts, and satellite technology in particular.

Contestants chose between designing a poster and writing an essay on the topic:

"Currently, satellites are being used in a variety of ways but there is always room for expansion and growth. Write an essay or design a poster on areas you believe the full potential of satellites has not yet been tapped into or embraced."

Tanaka's essay opens with this paragraph:

We started with gunpowder sticks whizzing around the air scaring off enemies in China and now we have a 418,000 kg giant hunk of metal whizzing around the earth at Mach 23! How crazy is that? Satellites are one of the pinnacles of human achievement – the technological marvels that constantly fall towards earth, but miss every time. They enrich our lives by providing new ways to communicate, they predict weather phenomena like magic and they even spy on each other. They do all these things, but there's so much more that they're capable of and I'm not going to wait around for someone or some organization to make better use of them...I'm going to do it myself. Let me tell you how.

Tanaka goes on to present his bold ideas, that, as he admits, sometimes err in the "realm of science fiction." His creativity prompted award presenter, Paolo Nespoli, a European Space Agency astronaut, to comment: "We had to call him because we were not sure if he was crazy or the next Nobel prize winner. We actually put our money on the second one, so that's good!"

Tanaka is in his sixth year at Maru-a-Pula, an independent day and boarding secondary school in Botswana. The School values assertiveness, especially in the service of curiosity, encouraging its students to ask "Why?" - and more essentially

"Why not?"

It was at Maru-a-Pula where Tanaka made numerous attempts to launch a rocket propelled by a mixture of sugar, water and potassium nitrate. Things didn't always work out. Tanaka says, "I think it's very important to fail, especially failing differently each time, because I know that each time I fail I get closer to success." And as he mentions in his essay, Tanaka finally did achieve vertical propulsion for his rocket, winning Maru-a-Pula first place in a STEM competition.

The **DStv Eutelsat Star Awards** are open to all students, aged 14 to 19, from secondary (high) or combined schools on the continent where MultiChoice Africa maintains operations.

Entries are accepted in English, French or Portuguese and will be judged on the basis of the criteria of **accuracy, creativity, originality and innovation.**

Entry forms for the 2019 competition can be obtained from any MultiChoice Resource Centre, the nearest MultiChoice office or via www.dstvstarawards.com.