

The President's Award

The President's Award is an international award (overseen by the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation), in over 130 countries and territories globally.

The Award is a fully inclusive programme and has no social, political or religious affiliation.

To earn an Award, each young person must learn a skill, improve their physical well-being, volunteer in their community and experience a team adventure in a new environment.

The aim of the Award is to acknowledge that not all learning happens in the classroom and to equip young people to become committed, responsible and fulfilled citizens of the world.

The Award is available to all 14-24 year olds and is the world's leading youth achievement award. The Award certificates are recognised globally by employers and institutions of higher learning.

I decided to start the President's Award in grade 8. I completed the bronze award in grade 8, and the silver award during grade 9 and 10.

I undertook the award to challenge myself – to see what I could learn about myself and what I could do for my community.

My most exciting achievement was walking 150km's of the Camino in Portugal and Spain in 2018 to raise money for the Tygerberg Children's Hospital. It was a huge success, raising funds locally and from the foreign walkers I met along the way.

I also challenged myself by doing kloof jumping and surfing – things I had not experienced before.

I dedicated much of my community service to working with animals and the old age home in Stellenbosch called Geluksoord. I ran their annual book sale for them, and often visited the residents on special occasions. Through this I realised just how little one needs to do to add so much value to people's lives.

The President's Award was hard work, but so worth it. I challenge as many Paul Roosers as possible to try it – and see what they, and those that benefit, get out of it.

Aidan Forssman

Grade 11E3