

# SOS steps in to help Mpumelelo's family

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The South African live events industry was heartbroken when audio technician, Mpumelelo Dakile, was killed when caught in a taxi-related crossfire on 10 December 2021. A family man, he left behind his wife Itumeleng Motswaledi, who at the time was 26 weeks pregnant, and their 8-year-old daughter. The SOS Charity Fund, in collaboration with The King's School Discovery, has

stepped in to ensure private education going forward.

Mpumelelo Daikile (DJ) and Itumeleng Motswaledi's (Tumi) love story started over a decade ago. "I lived in the East Rand with my grandmother as a child, and we would come to Soweto over the school holidays to stay at my great-grandmother's house," said Tumi. "That's how I met Mpumelelo. After I completed matric I wanted to work as a theatre performer, but didn't know which channels I had to go through. Mpumelelo said that while I decided what to do, I should join him at the South African Roadies Association (SARA). I did and I just loved it."

Freddie Nyathela, the founder of SARA, makes every effort to ensure that his students work on as many events as possible. "That's when I saw how life could be, instead of staying at home and not doing anything," Tumi explains. "The World Cup came and I did communications for the cast for the opening and closing ceremonies, working with an Australian company called The P.A. People who were contracted in by Prosound."

Many opportunities came along, and very often Tumi and Mpumelelo would find themselves working on the same productions, even when they represented different companies. "Oh, you're here too," they would tease, meeting up in the carpark before a gig. When their daughter was born in 2013, Tumi stayed at home for five years. More recently, she took on the role of Production Assistant at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz Festival and was working on the spectacular showcase for the second year running when Covid-19 put a stop to the live events industry.

Mpumelelo, in turn, a greatly loved and respected technician, had sharpened his skills as an audio engineer and worked closely with SARA and other rental companies. For the second time in his career, thanks to an initiative by Freddie Nyathela, he was given the opportunity to travel to the United States to work on UniverSoul Circus. It ended up being a longer term than expected, ten months in total, with the pandemic making it difficult for him to return home.

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By January 2021, Mpumelelo was finally back in South Africa and the family were delighted to be reunited. Then, in December, the unimaginable happened and Tumi was left to care for her 8-year-old child with a baby on the way.

Duncan Riley of DWR Distribution and the SOS Charity Fund heard about the plight and had to help. "I'm grateful to have a network of wonderful people around me, and my first thought was to ensure that Mpumelelo and Tumi's daughter would not only have an education but that she would have an excellent foundation for her future. I made contact with Pastor Craig Rowe of Community Ministries and, being involved with a network of schools, he recommended we apply for a bursary at The King's School Discovery. Their kindness and generosity was more than we expected."

While The King's School has provided a bursary for 50% of the school fees, the SOS will cover the balance on a monthly basis. "We would like to ensure that Tumi's daughter has a better start in life," he explained. "There are so many children born who don't have a chance and are failed by the state-funded public schools." The SOS also provided a new uniform for the bright-eyed girl, stationery, school books and transportation costs.

"I can't imagine what Tumi has gone through, but we believe in her and will be here for the long haul," said Duncan. "I would like to thank Craig Rowe and The King's School for this opportunity and also thank each person in the live event industry who has sown into the SOS Charity Fund over the years. We could not do this without you."

Says the proud mom, Tumi, "When I took my daughter to school on the first day, I wasn't sure about it and I thought she would cry but she didn't. Her teacher gives me regular feedback and there is progress every day. She is a smart kid and the SOS and The King's School has been a great help."

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On another note, Tumi, who recently welcomed her second baby into the world, is a wonderful, well-spoken and hardworking individual. If you are looking for someone with experience as a production manager, has worked as a lighting technician and who has a great knowledge and love for the industry, please contact [sales@staging.dwrdistribution.co.za](mailto:sales@staging.dwrdistribution.co.za) and we'll forward her details to you.