

Coronation inspires 200 schoolgirls through unique Women's Day event

Issued by [Coronation](#)

6 Aug 2018

To celebrate Women's Day, Coronation hosted 200 schoolgirls from 20 schools at two inspirational events in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The girls, predominantly from disadvantaged backgrounds, revelled in this unique opportunity to hear from and interact with internationally renowned guests - double Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes and celebrated sculptor of Wall Street's "Fearless Girl", Kristin Visbal.



"Today is about recognising and celebrating the real value that girls bring to the world," said Kirshni Totaram, senior executive at Coronation, who hosted the event.

Encouraging the girls to set themselves ambitious goals, Holmes shared how she overcame numerous injuries and emotional setbacks to go on to achieve two gold medals at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

"Having a vision or a goal from a young age gives you purpose along the way and will set you on the path to success. If you don't have a higher goal, you'll never surprise yourself."



“Fearless Girl” sculptor, Visbal, emphasised the important role the girls had to play in the future of business as well as the benefits of gender diversity in decision-making and profitability. “Men and women are better together, and it doesn’t have to be a battle. Men and women are different but we complement one another and make better collective decisions.”

She explained that “Fearless Girl” was a visual symbol of a growing awareness around gender equality and stereotyping. “If you are fearless enough to do what you want, and say what you want, you won’t be hindered by society’s idea of what you should be. It is better to be true to yourself.”

Coronation’s commitment to gender diversity and equality at all levels was highlighted by Totaram. She challenged the girls to work towards becoming financially independent by living within their means, saving from a young age and investing wisely. “If you respect money, you are respecting yourself.”



Totaram has worked at Coronation for 18 years and is a strong advocate for women empowerment. She has developed a mentorship programme for eight of Coronation’s full bursary students, inspired by Coronation’s Women’s Day event last year where Tiffany Dufu, author of *Drop the Ball*, encouraged girls and women to “wake up to our power”.

The girls were invited to submit an essay or video sharing their future goals and how they plan to achieve them. The winning entries from each region, as well as the school that submitted the most entries, were awarded a Coronation unit trust.

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