

A DAY OUT WITH MY MENTOR

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RACHEAL PHIRI, GRADE 10 STUDENT AT CHALO HAVING A GREAT TIME WITH HER MENTOR

Mentorship is one of the crucial things one can have. Mostly we teenagers require guidance to make informed decisions. I am blessed with a wonderful mentor, Eunice Kashimba. She takes an interest in every area of my life and makes it colorful with fascinating activities.

In March, she invited me to a Teen Conference organized by the SAT department at the Government complex. The outing was two weeks before going on the school holiday. The central theme and discussion of the conference were 'choices.' This conference was an ideal platform for different individuals to showcase the art of other forms and discuss various concerns affecting a large group of people.

Before the lunch break, there were poetry activities, singing performances, and interviews with some of the renowned leaders of Zambia. Later, we discussed sexually transmitted infections such as HIV & AIDS and drug usage amongst youths. By the end of the talks, we learned a lot about sexual health and safe sexual practices that are effective in preventing and controlling STIs and the morbidities and complications associated with STIs. To add on, we discussed the devastating social, physical and mental impact on life and its contribution to violence, crime, financial problems, housing problems, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and vagrancy. Therefore, we concluded by thinking critically when confronted with alcohol and drug use.

A DAY OUT WITH MY MENTOR CONTINUED

After lunch, we had a lesson on Identity and Identity crises as teenagers. More often than not, we question our sense of self or place in the world. Hence, we need to identify ourselves as we associate with others - getting a concrete ground for ourselves. A sense of identity helps people interact with the world around them, thus reducing confusion and anxiety, guiding a person's choices, and nurturing meaningful self-esteem.

My favorite part of this conference was the "money talk" because I was getting insights on how to spend money, big or small, and be able to save if that is the goal. Firstly, one has to identify their needs and wants to cut off unnecessary expenses; secondly, planning, budget, and allocating the money to different areas. I learned the '50%, 30%, and 20% principles' by the end. According to this principle, any time one receives money, 50% goes to savings, 30% to current needs, then 20% to wants. If there are no wants, 20% will go to 50%, which will make 70% savings. The other thing to note is to understand the situation and time you are in, which will help you to know how to spend money. The greatest lesson I got from the conference was "The choices you make depend on the choices available." My understanding is to make choices that are right and healthy for yourself and be the one to provide options to other people. For example, let people choose to make you a friend, and you are not choosing which friend to choose.

All in all, this was a very wonderful experience for me, and I learned a lot. This platform created an environment that facilitated sharing information and navigating different issues people go through.

