Our BTE Story

Cape Town, South Africa
Grant Period: 2010-2013

Business leadership driving program success
Launched in 2010, Johnson & Johnson partnered with the National Business Initiative (NBI), three institutions of higher education, various community partners, and government agencies to create Bridge to Employment – Cape Town, South Africa and provide students with Mathematics, Science and Life Skills supports. At each point in BTE-Cape Town, South Africa’s program, business ensures activities prepare students for work and, often, are business-led activities.

The program offers:
- Math and science tutoring providing students with a foundation for health careers.
- BTE Club focused on computer literacy, presentation skills, public speaking, and debates, which business finds necessary for almost any job.
- Career Coaching from Johnson & Johnson employees, including lunch-n-learn opportunities, company site visits, and career coaching.
- Open Days & Student for a Day programs at institutions of higher learning so students can better understand that the bridge from high school to career is higher education.
- Skills Workshops to improve student “soft” skills, another fundamental element of career preparation.
- “Healthy Living” Service Learning Projects that students design and lead in the broader community.
- Professional Development opportunities for teachers to strengthen Math and Physical Sciences curriculum content, teaching methodology, and assessment measures that align with what students need to be successful in the workforce.
Healthcare mentors are key to any successful Bridge to Employment (BTE) program. At BTE – Cape Town, South Africa, Laura Nel leads and inspires a cadre of Johnson & Johnson mentors.

As one colleague describes, “The success of the Cape Town BTE site has much to do with the passion, energy and tenacity of Johnson & Johnson Consumer Cape Town Corporate Affairs Director, Laura Nel.” Laura uses every public platform as the National Business Initiative Chairperson to promote BTE and acknowledges the role that mentors play in nurturing, guiding, and coaching the young minds entrusted to them. She has attended every parent and BTE student meeting hosted by the school to offer encouragement and provide information.

Laura actively recruits mentors and has brought more than 24 young employees of the company forward to take on the awesome job of mentoring BTE students and her energy and commitment to the project has them coming back to work with their mentees.