



Smiles as these deaf students graduate in Bryanston. Sitting (from L to R) are Rosina Moeti, Kabelo Moloi and Nandipha Jongizulu. Back row are Buti Njeviyana, Japhtha Moisi, Dion Reddy, Mpho Magasoane, Godfrey Jonkers, Vusi Mhlongo, Thabang Ngakane and Oupa Motloutsi.

Photo by NOKO MASHILO

These deaf graduates battled to win and are now ready to face the world!

# BEATING THE ODDS

**I**F IT IS hard to secure employment for abled people, can you imagine how more so it is for deaf people?

But this is about to change. Microsoft, together with Employ and Empower Deaf (eDeaf), have just finished training 10 deaf people with information technology, or IT skills, needed in the workplace.

The trainees got their Microsoft Certified Application Specialist certificates and were ready to begin their careers as IT specialists or data captureurs.

This is a field in which eDeaf director Jesse Kotze believes the deaf are without peer.

"Because of the fact that deaf people cannot communicate freely with the hearing world, they are often regarded as incompetent or not intelligent and not fit to be employed," said Kotze.

Kotze said that was far from true – because a number of local companies successfully took a brave step to employ deaf people – with great success!

"This is proof that in some careers the deaf are as good or even

better than hearing people," said Kotze.

Microsoft SA's academic programme manager, Reza Bardien, said they had been working with eDeaf for more than two years to understand the challenges faced by deaf and differently-abled people.

"We agreed to work to remove obstacles to mainstream IT education and certification through the Microsoft IT Academy Programme.

"We wanted to help what must be the most marginalised people in South Africa realise their full potential," said Bardien.

Oupa Motloutsi from Tokoza was

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one of the trainees who received their certificates last week.

He held a number of small jobs as a data captureur in various companies, but could not secure permanent employment.

"I looked for work for a very long time and did not secure any.

"But now I have my certificate to show that I am skilled. I am very happy," said Motloutsi.

Another deaf person who never took no for an answer ever since matric was Kabelo Moloi from Hammanskraal.

"I wasted no time in doing computer courses, which helped me get a number of good jobs, including one in the premier's office in North West," said Moloi.

