



## KETSIA VELAPHI

*Shifter, aged 18*

I am a South African international student in Year 13 at Hutt Valley High School in Lower Hutt. My family are still in living in South Africa but their support for me travels across oceans and I love them for that and everything else they still do for me. They fuel my passions immensely. I am passionate about sports and physical activity in general, especially when it's used to empower the disempowered, an experience I've been fortunate enough to have. I am also passionate about people - helping them improve their circumstances, being a pillar they can lean on as well as being part of their cheer squad when they boss it.

I love working with people especially when I can help out in anyway. I have a really broad range of interests including poetry, dance, music, yoga and meditation, politics, humanitarian and community work and female empowerment. I aim to use my passions and interests to propel me into a political career as well as continue to build on my strong sense of social activism.

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### HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT SHIFT?

I first heard about Shift when Emma, the previous Lower Hutt Shift Coordinator came to Hutt Valley High to talk about the kinds of activities young women could get involved in. I had just arrived in New Zealand and decided to get involved because I thought it would be a good way to meet new people and try things I hadn't done before.

### HOW HAVE YOU BENEFITED?

Shift has added and enhanced so many aspects of my life. I do not exaggerate when I say I have become a better person in mind, body and soul since I got involved. Prior to engaging with Shift, there were many things I'd thought I would never be able to manage. I had just moved from South Africa all by myself, I was living with a host family I hadn't met before and had to manage a great deal of anxiety and panic. I was having to start over in so many ways. Joining Shift helped me start enjoying the challenge of engaging with new people, new activities as well as a new country. I have definitely become more confident than I was before and have made positivity a massive value in my life.

I believe I can do what I put my mind to and "I can't" is a lie. I know I have the potential to be better each day and Shift has sparked the passion to go for whatever it is I want. I will always be grateful for that!

I love Shift because it encourages a beautiful sisterhood among young women and I believe that is essential in today's world. Women standing for women, encouraging each other and challenging each other and themselves - that is a brewing place for magic and positive change. I feel being part of Shift allows that to be part of my story too, as well as empowers young wāhine around me and ignites the same sense of sisterhood in them.

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