

# Learners take to the high seas

**NOSIPHO DAMANE**

LEARNERS from high schools on the Cape Flats have taken to the high seas. This is thanks to a South African sailing academy, which aims to train 250 teenagers from previously disadvantaged communities annually.

As part of the academy, yachting was introduced to learners at Grassy Park High School in 1996 and attracted a relatively small but keen group. The learners sold pies at school to generate funds to buy their own boat, and started sailing at the Zeekoeivlei Yacht Club.

The sailing academy was officially launched in Cape Town with the sponsorship from MTN cellular network operators. The main objective of the MTN sailing academy is to teach as many children to sail as possible.

"We are trying to get the youth to do something constructive with

their lives," said Ashley Parsaman, the teacher who introduced yachting at the school.

Incentives for talented young sailors included a place in a team to compete at the Youth Match Racing series in New Zealand and a chance to crew on the MTN sailing academy's yachts entered in the prestigious MTN Cape to Rio 2000 yacht race.

"Sailing has become part of my life," said Lee Tobin a member of the school team.

Lee and his friend Kevin Williams would like to take part in the Mirror Internationals which will be held in Saldanha Bay in April this year but are in desperate need of sponsorship.

Students who wish to sail can contact Ken O'Brian at the Wynberg Rotary on 762 6117. People who wish to sponsor Kevin and Lee should contact Ashley on 706 2369.



■ Keen sailors from Grassy Park High School are, back row from left, Ashley Parsaman, teacher Cliff Benjamin, Lee Tobin, Kevin Williams, Troy Prince, Ryan Kessner, Lincoln Mitas and front row from left, Faizel Abdurahman, Marco Tobin, Marvin Sasman and Ryan Beckett.