



BRIGHT FUTURE: Gelvandale High School pupils, from left, Charlton Goliath, 13, Leah Syse, 13, Loren Palmer, 14, Merize Freeman, 13 and Buhlebenkosi Veto, 15, will be going through to a national TANKS final in Durban at the end of October after winning the S4-Unako TANKS Coding tournament this month

Gelvandale pupils are 'coding' boffins

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Gelvandale High School proved to be one of the school coding kings of the Bay, after beating more than 150 other pupils to be crowned winners of the S4-Unako Tanks Coding tournament held in Lorraine last week.

The tournament, sponsored by S4 Integration and organised by Unako, a community organisation, saw 16 Bay schools represented by teams of five pupils compete at the S4 headquarters in Lorraine using the Tanks coding app to solve challenges.

Charlton Goliath, 13, Leah Syse, 13, Loren Palmer, 14, Merize Freeman, 13 and Buhlebenkosi Veto, 15, took top honours and earned themselves an S4 hamper including various items.

The team will also be going through to a national Tanks final in Durban at the end of October, sponsored by Sita.

Tanks aims to introduce pu-

pils from disadvantaged communities to coding concepts, in the hope of enticing them to consider careers as software developers.

The gaming app, which is designed primarily for pupils aged 10 to 14, has a tank moving through a maze, following directions provided in the form of physical tokens that form a puzzle and direct the tank when they are photographed.

In addition to reaching out to pupils, TANKS was also effectively used during orientation of programming first years at Nelson Mandela University.

The educational mobile application designed by former Nelson Mandela University post-graduate student Byron Batteson, was officially launched in November 2017.

The promotion of Tanks is now led by NMU's Professor Jean Greyling who said the game consists of 35 levels, each setting a challenge to the player, with increasing capacity.

"The department of computing Sciences is regularly ap-

proached by industry desperately seeking computing graduates.

"Software development is one of the most scarce skills not only in South Africa but across the globe," Greyling said.

"Putting this in context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution [often focused on by our political leaders], it is critical that pupils be introduced to programming at a young age.

"Since many pupils do not have regular access to computers, many are ignorant about coding as a career.

"This is the challenge which Tanks attempts to address."

Earlier in March, Tanks received a "Highly Commended Certificate of Excellence" as runner up in the Innovative Technology of the Year award at Africa Tech Week

Tanks also recently shared the stage with 65 globally selected projects at Unesco's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) Mobile Learning Week in Paris, France.