

# Heroic schoolgirls teach adults a life lesson

BY KANINA FOSS

The bus was packed. Even when the woman collapsed, there was little room for passengers to give her breathing space.

Further back, a schoolgirl saw her go down. She told her two friends: "Someone's fainted!"

The girls waited. This was adult territory. Surely one of the grown-ups would take control.

One woman started praying. No one else moved. The girls shook their heads, and sprang into action.

While Thabang Mosokotso (18) and Gugu Legoale (18) asked people to move aside, Thulile Kubheka (17) checked the woman's pulse.

Nothing.

Kubheka laced her fingers, put her palms on the woman's chest, and applied 13 compressions.

Still nothing.

Kubheka decided to proceed



**TIMELY INTERVENTION:** Thulile Kubheka (17), Thabang Mosokotso (18) and Gugu Legoale (18). **PICTURE: SHAYNE ROBINSON**

with mouth-to-mouth, but the woman's teeth were clamped shut. She continued the compressions.

Suddenly the woman started convulsing, and her breath

returned. "She's alive, she's coming back!" shouted Kubheka.

Meanwhile Mosokotso and Legoale had phoned an ambulance. "Get to the closest hospital," the

operator had told them.

The Rivonia Road Putco bus passes Helen Joseph Hospital. The driver hardly had to alter course.

The unconscious woman was put into a wheelchair, but Legoale noticed the seated position restricted her breath and ran to fetch a stretcher.

The girls left their patient in the hands of hospital staff, got back on board, and arrived at McAuley House High School in Parktown West before the first bell had rung. "They weren't even late," principal Eleanor Hough said.

The incident happened on Wednesday. Yesterday, the school received a phone call from one of the passengers.

"She said she was amazed at the behaviour of the girls, the adults just sat and watched," Hough said.

The girls are in Grade 11. Last year, they did a first aid course.

"For me, the big thing (about the incident) is that we know what we're teaching is being put into practise," Hough said.

During the incident, the girls checked the woman's ID book for her name - Zandile Mkhize - and went through the contacts on her cellphone to find a relative they could notify.

The next morning, one of the passengers on the bus, who works with Mkhize, told the girls that she was doing fine. Mkhize has been released from hospital.

Yesterday, like every other school day, Kubheka and Legoale left home in Naledi, Soweto at 5.30am. At 5.40am, they boarded the bus. As usual, Mosokotso - who lives further down the bus route - joined them at 6.10am.

Unlike any other day, as they stepped onto the bus, all three received a round of applause.