

BONGANI Mngonyama feels that his dignity has been restored after the insertion of his artificial eyeballs *Pictures: GRANT ERSKINE*

## Bongani's thrilled with his new eyes

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A JUBILANT Bongani Mngonyama, whose eyes were gouged out by robbers who stole his cellphone, smiled for the camera this week after having a free pair of artificial eyeballs fitted.

The 19-year-old from KwaMashu had the procedure done at the Durban Institute of Technology's Department of Dental Services. Each acrylic eyeball cost R5 000 to make and was hand-crafted and painted. They will last up to five years.

"They will help keep the eyelashes out of the eye socket. If there's nothing in the socket, the eye has a tendency to close on its own," said Peter Furber, who made the insertion.

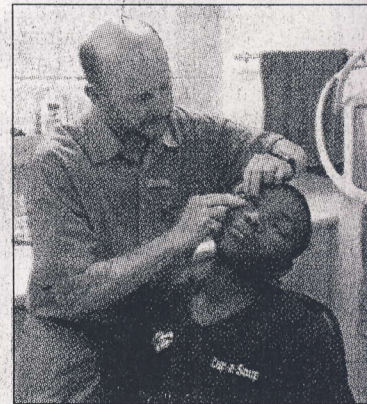
Mngonyama said he was getting used to having eyeballs in the sockets again.

"It does feel a bit strange, but I'm okay. It only hurt when he was inserting the eyeballs, but now I'm getting used to it," Mngonyama said.

He has to clean the eyes every second day with washing powder and will return to the department in a year's time for an evaluation.

He was presented with two boxes of the washing powder by DIT.

Mngonyama admitted that adjusting to life without his sight



DENTAL Services lecturer Peter Furber does the insertion, which took less than 10 minutes

was restored now that he had new eyes.

"I'm trying to remain positive.

"I'm very grateful to DIT for this gift and I want to thank everyone else who supported me throughout my ordeal," he said.

Mngonyama, who doesn't like depending on other people, is eager to resume his normal life and hopes to get a job soon.

His uncle, David Gasa, who accompanied him, said, "This has been a very hard time for our family, but we really appreciate the support we received from every