

# PROUD TO BE ME

**NAME:** ..... **CLASS:** .....



# PROUD TO BE ME

Look at the pictures of the people below and read about their achievements.

**“HI, I’M ANANIAS SHIKONGO.  
WHEN I WAS 3 YEARS OLD I LOST  
MY LEFT EYE IN AN ACCIDENT.  
THREE YEARS LATER A DONKEY  
KICKED ME, SEVERELY DAMAGING  
MY RIGHT EYE AND CAUSING THE  
LOSS OF SIGHT IN THAT EYE TOO.  
BY THE AGE OF SIX I WAS BLIND.**

I took up Para athletics when I was 14 years old. I am a sprinter. A sighted guide runs with me.

I run distances of 100, 200 and 400 metres. I compete against other blind Para athletes. I started competing for my country, Namibia, in 2004. At the Paralympic Games in London 2012 I injured a muscle in my leg. This meant that I didn’t perform very well. Four years later, at Rio 2016, I went on to make history by becoming the first Namibian man to win a Paralympic gold medal. I ran 200 metres in 22.44 seconds, breaking the Paralympic record. I was thrilled.”



Cover image: © Ian Walton/Getty Images

# PROUD TO BE ME

**“I’M YIP PIN XIU. I WAS BORN WITH A CONDITION CALLED MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY. WHEN I WAS YOUNG MY MUSCLES, ESPECIALLY THE ONES IN MY LEGS, GOT WEAKER. I STARTED USING A WHEELCHAIR WHEN I WAS 13 YEARS OLD.**

I am a Para swimmer. I learnt to swim when I was 5 years old. Someone spotted my talent for swimming and seven years later I became a competitive swimmer. I began swimming freestyle, but as my muscles weakened I found it difficult to kick my legs. Now I use my arms to swim backstroke. At Beijing 2008, I became the first Singaporean to win a Paralympic gold medal. This is my most memorable sporting achievement. Four years later, at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, I was proud to be Singapore’s flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Games.

I studied sociology at university, enjoy cooking and want to encourage you all to dream big.”



**“HI, I’M HIDETAKA SUGIMURA. I WAS BORN WITH A CONDITION CALLED CEREBRAL PALSY.**

I use a wheelchair because the use of my arms and legs has been affected, and I find it difficult to balance. When I was younger I wanted to play a sport. My teacher suggested I play the Para sport of boccia. It is a precision game requiring lots of concentration and pin-point accuracy.

Representing my country, Japan, I travel all over the world playing in team and individual boccia competitions. My teammates and I were very proud to win silver medals at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. We train very hard and are looking forward to competing in front of home fans and family at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. We hope to win gold this time. We can’t wait.”



# PROUD TO BE ME

**“I’M KUNIKO OBINATA. WHEN I WAS 8 YEARS OLD I WAS INVOLVED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT. THIS RESULTED IN A LEG AMPUTATION. WHILE I WAS AT UNIVERSITY MY LIFE CHANGED WHEN I ACCIDENTALLY CAME ACROSS AN ABANDONED PAIR OF SKIS. I DECIDED I WOULD HAVE A GO AT SKIING AND FELL IN LOVE WITH THE SPEED OF SKIING AND THE BEAUTIFUL SNOW.**

I began training regularly in between studying. I went on to represent my country, Japan, in the Paralympic event of Para alpine skiing. I competed in downhill and slalom events using a ‘sit’ ski. I loved the thrill of skiing fast down a mountain. It was such fun.

I competed at five Winter Paralympic Games, including the 1998 Games that took place in the Japanese city of Nagano. I was so proud to win Paralympic gold at my home Games. I went on to become one of Japan’s most decorated athletes.

I finished competing at the age of 38. Now I am an advisor for the next Paralympic Games that will be taking place in Tokyo in 2021.

I am so thankful that I accidentally came across those skis.”



# PROUD TO BE ME

## WHAT MAKES ME PROUD?

Write a short blog, short story, newspaper or magazine article, personal poster or similar detailing why you are proud to be who you are.