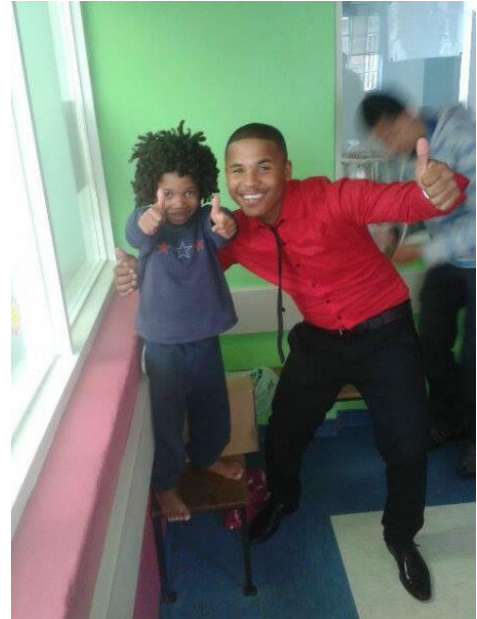


Empowering Youth to a better Future



Rainbow Academy Success Story

FERNANDO CLASSEN



Hi, my name is Fernando Classen and I am 24 years of age. I want to tell you a little bit about myself before sharing what I am currently doing... I come from an area called Silvertown, a coloured township, where gansterism , drugs and teenage pregnancy is very rife. I completed my matric year at Bridgetown High in 2009 -not having any idea of what I wanted to do or become. I then decided to take a gap year in the hope of finding my career path. However, my gap year turned into 3 years. I cannot believe how quickly time has passed.... but if I think about it now, it was all part of God's plan for my life. In 2011 I received a phone call from Denay Willie, who is the founder of the Rainbow academy and I joined the academy later that year not knowing what to expect.... But to my surprise, it turned into one of the most amazing experiences of my life - even though it was completely out of my comfort zone. Someone once told me that "We learn best when we are out of our comfort zone" and I couldn't agree more.

In 2012, The Rainbow Academy brought out so many hidden talents that I never knew existed. Singing, dancing and drama was all new to me but soon became a major part of my life. The academy gave me the opportunity to meet and network with very important people. It also allowed me to be a part of live radio interviews as well as performing on live television such the Espresso show and many other performances all over Cape Town. The confidence and experience I gained whilst being a part of the Rainbow academy will always be a tool that I will use on this journey to success, the people that I've met along the way has made a huge impact in my life and I will forever be grateful because of that.

During the year 2013 I started working for a company called "**Soccer stars**" and was appointed head coach. My role was to teach children the basics of soccer. I discovered that my passion is working with children through different means such as soccer, ministry and community development. Being involved in the Church also allowed me to find my

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calling and purpose in ministry work. I am also involved in voluntary government work for a program called “**Year beyond**” whereby we tutor children in under-privileged schools. I’m currently studying ministry full time and through the “Year Beyond” program I was given the opportunity to study a short course for leadership and development at the University of Stellenbosch.

I am now involved with another youth education community project called **STUDY BUDYZ**. **STUDY BUDYZ** is **NUMERACY, LIFE SKILLS AND LITERACY PROJECT** in **Silvertown, Athlone**, founded to assist children and youth **Grades 4 – 12 from disadvantaged backgrounds where basic social support, care and needs are a daily challenge and limitation**. Our VISION is to impact the lives of these learners by providing them with opportunities that would not be afforded to them due to poor economic and social homes, environments and circumstances. We encourage learners to rise above their circumstances/limitations and to break the cycle of poverty and apathy through education and belief in themselves.

We exist to support children and youth, most of whom are at risk, by offering extra tuition and support after school. Volunteering tutors assist learners with preparation for tests and exams. Learners receive small group instruction and individual support. They receive a meal before the programme commences since it is proven that you cannot teach a hungry child. To further nurture our learners, we engage with parents by doing home visitations where parents are encouraged to become actively involved in their children’s education and learning.

Another focus is Youth Development. Here, we explore their creative abilities and untap latent leadership potential through Camps, Holiday Programmes and Youth events such as Soccer Tournaments & Clinics, Dance and Crafts Clinics and Talent Extravaganzas. Youth are encouraged to “Reach for their Dreams” and to become agents of change in their lives.

I was and still am faced with many obstacles in my life that I had and have to overcome, the one thing that carried me through all the challenges of life was and still is my faith in God. **I want to tell the youth of today that life is like a boxing match - You will be knocked down many times - but WHAT MATTERS IS HOW MANY TIMES YOU GET BACK UP TO KEEP GOING AND LEARNING! Don’t think for one moment that where you are right now is where you will end up!!**

THE INDUSTRY YOU IN CAN BE VERY DISCOURAGING AT TIMES BUT ALWAYS REMEMBER THE “AEROPLANE ALWAYS TAKES OFF AGAINST THE WIND”. #faith #music #success

