

Success Story

Thabo's story is a difficult one to tell. Full of hardship and challenges that go beyond the average South African's understanding. Only through hard work, determination to succeed and sheer willpower, did this young man climb out of the pit he was placed in from the age of 3 when he was abandoned by his family.

Thabo was put into foster care only for his foster parent to die and him to end up under the uncertain care of an elderly neighbour. Thabo knew he didn't have much time to live with her, so at the age of 10 he moved into the streets, which is where Kidz Care Trust found him. He had joined a posse of street kids and

had to beg during peak traffic times at the traffic lights near Mimosa Mall. He was specifically assigned to begging by the other kids due to him being the youngest of the group. In return the older kids offered him protection and a place to live in their home under a bridge. It was in the company of these apparent friends that he picked up a habit of sniffing glue and smoking cannabis (dagga). He battled against the cold during this time and was faced with starvation and being attacked. When Thabo was about 12 years old, he moved into the KCT Child and Youth Care Centre, but struggled to adapt to the rules and routines of the centre due to his past reality of street living. He would get into a lot of altercations with other boys in the centre which lead to violence. He was addicted to cannabis and ran away from the centre a few times. His actions were a reflection of Thabo feeling like a failure because he was not being successful at school. The children's court then ordered Thabo to be sent to Jimmie Roos School. Just as things were looking better Thabo turned 18 and the system no longer had a place for him. He couldn't find work, so he had no choice but to go live with his friends in a township where he picked up his drug habit again. At this time Thabo slept on the floor of a single room shack with one pair of clothing and one blanket. That was all he owned. Eventually Thabo approached Kidz Care Trust as he couldn't cope with his situation anymore and KCT decided to involve him in their youth program. Throughout this program they taught him cooking, gardening, cleaning skills and work etiquette. They also assisted him to acquire his identity document, which was a grueling 2-year process. KCT signed Thabo up for an in-service training program at Kopano Nokeng Conference Centre at the age of 19. At Kopano Nokeng he was taken under the wing of Andrea Bradfield who gave him an opportunity to train and gain experience. Andrea was so impressed by Thabo's performance and ambition to succeed that she offered him casual work helping her with waitressing and organising events, with the possibility of a permanent appointment.

Thabo also started with adult education at Navalsig and distinguished himself as a natural leader. Last month he opened a bank account and Kidz Care Trust has been helping him with financial management. Now, at 20 years old, Thabo lives at Kidz Care Trust centre, making his own money, receiving an education and is still hungry for more success.

