



Pebbles
Project

CHANGING
LIVES



ERNESTINE'S STORY

25-year-old Ernestine grew up in Kraaifontein. Her parents got divorced when she was very young. After her parents separated, her mother was unemployed and had to raise Ernestine solely off a disability grant which she received from the government. Ernestine and her mother moved in with Ernestine's grandparents, who helped to support them.

During the week, Ernestine would stay with her mother and grandparents. And over the weekends, she would go visit her father who lives and works on Koopmanskloof wine farm. Her father told her about Pebbles Project and introduced her to the Social Worker.

During her final year of high school, she fell pregnant and dropped out of school. She got a job at a retail store but felt like something was missing... A fellow colleague inspired Ernestine when she told her that she was working at the store to pay for her studies. Ernestine says: "That was a big moment for me. She opened my eyes and made me realise that I want more out of life. All I kept thinking was: I must find a way to study. I need to make something of myself."

She told her father about her dream to go study, he suggested that she speak to the Pebbles Project Social Worker. The Social Work team assisted Ernestine to obtain a bursary to study a diploma in office administration at Boland College. During her first year at college, Ernestine fell pregnant with her second child. However, she was determined to complete her studies. She says: "I was in my final trimester and I had to walk all the way from college to the taxi rank every day. Luckily, I had amazing friends who helped carry my bags on days when I did not have the energy to." Ernestine managed to pass all of her exams.

After she graduated, she was contacted by the Pebbles Project Early Adulthood Programme Manager who encouraged her to apply for an administration position at Pebbles Project. Soon thereafter, Ernestine accepted an administration internship at Pebbles Project. The Pebbles Project Early Adulthood Programme Manager was contacted by Unframed. Unframed is an agency that partners with corporate organisations to help place young adults into learnerships. Ernestine was accepted to complete a one year full-time IT learnership endorsed by MICTSETA. Ernestine is doing her practical work experience at Pebbles Project where she assists the Early Adulthood Programme Manager.

Ernestine enjoys working with the young adults alongside the Early Adulthood Programme Manager. She hopes to complete her learnership this year and would like to continue to work with young adults. She says: "My passion will always be to work with young adults. That's where my heart is. I can relate to them so much, because I see myself in them."

Ernestine is grateful to Pebbles Project and says: **"If it wasn't for Pebbles, I would be stuck in a job that didn't make me happy. I am proud that I made the decision to study and will forever be grateful to Pebbles who was ready to take my hand and help me succeed. Pebbles has changed my life forever. I dread to think where I would be today if Pebbles didn't come into my life."**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to contribute to this programme, please visit our website: www.pebblesproject.org