



## KARLENA'S STORY

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40-year-old Karlena grew up on Mooiplaas farm in Stellenbosch. When she was 10 years old, her father sadly passed away. Karlena's mother worked in the vineyards on Mooiplaas farm to provide for Karlena and her two brothers.

As a little girl, Karlena dreamed of working with children one day, but she did not know how she would go about realising her dream. At the age of 16, Karlena dropped out of school to work alongside her mother on the farm to help provide for her family.

Karlena got married and after the birth of her first child, she was offered a position to work at Kaapzicht wine farm. This is when Karlena was first introduced to Pebbles Project. When Karlena heard that there was a Pebbles Project Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre on Kaapzicht wine farm, she was elated.

In pursuit of her childhood dream, Karlena applied for a position as a practitioner at the Pebbles Project ECD centre. Karlena was appointed as a practitioner and worked at the ECD centre for two years, after which she was presented with the opportunity to work at a crèche in town. Sadly, Karlena was forced to resign when the crèche was converted into a tea garden.

The Pebbles Project Early Adulthood Programme Manager reached out to Karlena to inform her that Pebbles Project was opening its own manufacturing kitchen and encouraged Karlena to apply for a position. Karlena was thrilled to apply for a position where she would have the opportunity to work in a kitchen, since she's always had a passion for cooking and takes pride in her ability to ensure that a dish is seasoned to perfection.

Karlena applied and was invited for an interview, after which she was hired to work in the Pebbles kitchen. Karlena loves working in the Pebbles kitchen. She says: "I love what I do. I enjoy being part of a team. I like my team - we work really well together. The communication in the kitchen is great and our kitchen manager always finds ways to motivate us."

Furthermore, Karlena is grateful to work for a non-profit organisation. She says: "I love working for an organisation like Pebbles, because I see first-hand how big the need is out there. For example, my Mom, who lives alone, doesn't always have enough food to eat. It makes me aware of how important the work is that we do in the kitchen every day. My job at Pebbles also helps me to support my Mom financially."

When asked whether she misses working with children, she says: **"It's always been a childhood dream of mine to work with children and Pebbles helped to make that dream come true. I enjoy working in the Pebbles kitchen just as much. I am happy where I am now. I am proud to say that I work in the Pebbles kitchen. I help feed children and people in need. It makes me happy."**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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