

HUMANS OF YearBeyond

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Empowerment Starts at Home - *Using the Potential in Your Community*

A story emphasising the significance of providing opportunities for young people and ensuring that these opportunities are rooted within their own communities.

Ashton Solomons is a 28-year-old mentor born and raised in Heideveld on the Cape Flats. He grew up witnessing a community battling drugs, domestic violence, crime and gangsterism. While he sees the challenges, he also sees hope and purpose, believing his community is full of potential.

As 1 of 4 siblings and a breadwinner at home, he has seen firsthand how access to opportunities can transform not only a household but also a community, "before I joined the NYS, I went for 21 interviews and failed 21 times to secure an opportunity".

Having directly experienced the power of mentorship, he believes every young person deserves a mentor, just like every corporate leader in the Fortune 500 companies gets a mentor. "Through young people, we can equip other young people to become a better version of themselves".

Ashton believes in being active in his community and is part of the community food kitchen, sports after school programmes and more.

His journey started in 2021 as a volunteer tutor, and then in 2022, he joined the YearBeyond programme through our partner GCU. Inspired by his experience and having his own mentor, he applied to be part of the YearBeyond Academy in 2023.

This January, he started his role as a mentor supporting NYS2 participants. His story of grit and perseverance has taken him to spaces he had never imagined. Most recently, he shared the stage with the president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, to discuss the impact of interventions made to curb youth unemployment.

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From YeBoneer, to YeBo Academy, to Mentor, the YearBeyond progression has helped Ashton discover his passion and align with his purpose.