

Caring to dream

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Creative intelligence is not just about being SMART - it's also about having HEART.

icandiCQ is committed to caring, which is why the company recently got involved with a project that is helping give a group of underprivileged young boys between the ages of eight and 15 the chance to dream. These boys are growing up in communities where drug and alcohol abuse is rife, where there is little parental involvement and guidance, and where poverty is a daily challenge, but they are also incredibly talented young soccer players who are part of a soccer development programme.

Inspired by the words of Nelson Mandela, who said, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children", icandiCQ treated the boys to a memorable afternoon of inspiration, with a trip to Soccer City, followed by an early supper at Primi Junxion, Blackheath.

The boys are also part of Growing Legends, a character development programme, led by occupational therapist and personal development coach, Samantha Towee-Moore. The programme aims to provide the boys with the life skills to rise above their circumstances, to build self-esteem and to help them find a voice in the communities they live in, so that they embrace the opportunities that their talent in soccer can provide. The long term aim is for these boys to role model their strong characters based on constructive beliefs like self-discipline, perseverance and team work and to understand that their responsibility is to give back through leadership and by uplifting others.

With this in mind, the afternoon's events were more than just a fun experience, but an opportunity to build on the life skills they are being taught.

An afternoon to remember

The boys were collected after school and excitedly headed off to Soccer City. On their arrival they each received a satchel with their names embroidered on the bag, along with words, 'I lead my life, anything is possible'. They also received drymags with the word 'Fighter' stitched to the chest. They have been taught to fight for their dreams, to take lead of their lives and to dream big. This was further inspired by the autographed card they received from their football hero, Happy Jele of Orlando Pirates. It contained the words of legendary soccer star Pele who rose above similar circumstances, by fighting for his dream, 'Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.'

At Soccer City, the boys arrived and were led to the VIP parking area, and asked to select which car they'll be driving when they reach their dream and become professional soccer players - that's where the visualisation of the dream began.



Team photo



Happy Jele giving his autograph to his young fan

Inside Soccer City, they took a tour around the stadium and discussed football trivia and the boys showed that their passion and talent is certainly backed by knowledge. Moving into the warm up room, they hung up their bags, taking up ownership of the space. They pictured themselves preparing for the game as Coach Grant Fernades of FCAK fame talked them through an offensive game strategy.



Team talk in the warm-up room— preparing for the game



Inspiration and motivation

Their focus intensified and for the first time they were able to contain the excitement they felt about sharing this experience with Happy Jele as he put his arm around them and talked to them about living their dream.

At this stage the tour guide excused himself and returned soon afterwards with some exciting news; he had permission to take them on the pitch - a very rare opportunity that only the privileged few have experienced!

Walking down the tunnel to the pitch - the anticipation and excitement was, as someone said, 'a goosebump moment'.

On the pitch the boys cheered as their voices echoed through the stadium and they gathered in a circle to say a prayer of thanks for this opportunity.



On the bench dreaming of the future



Playing professional football with their hero



In awe of the stadium where the world's best have played

Leaving the stadium, the boys showed off what they would look like as statues outside the stadium, when in the future they are revered soccer stars. The opportunity to dream and see the vision of their future formed part of every moment of the day.



Our dreams are taking flight

Following the afternoon's excitement, the team headed off to Primi Junxion to 'carbo-load'. For all, this was their first experience in a restaurant - and they were treated like stars! Most of the boys had not eaten pasta before, so this was also a new experience, and the restaurant kindly provided samples of the food so that the boys could see what they liked before

ordering. Eating dinner at a 'proper restaurant' was another opportunity to show the boys what life can offer if they work hard at school and focus on excelling in their talents. A nourishing and delicious meal was a welcome treat for many of the boys who face fridges at home, where food is traded for alcohol.



Tummies full – what a day!

At the end of the dinner, the quietest boy in the team hugged Samantha goodbye and whispered in her ear, "I have a dream Coach Sam and I want it". The goal for the afternoon's events had been achieved - showing these children they have the right to reach for, and achieve, their dreams.



A special thank you card from the team

Commenting on the afternoon's activities, Samantha had this to say: "The boys found their right to dream that day. The deputy principal of one of their schools told me that their attendance has improved and they have approached their English teacher to ask for additional help as they have a dream that they are working on. They took their 'Fighter' drymacts to school to show their teachers and to explain they have a personal fight on. These boys need our help to facilitate their futures. Thank you to icandiCQ and Happy Jele for reaching out and changing lives."

Staying committed

icandiCQ is committed to continuing being part of the project in the future and has also contributed towards some of the travel costs for two boys who have earned a spot to train at a West African Academy which will provide them with the latest European training methods as well as expose them to a culture of hard work and character development, which is required for the modern day professional athlete.

Kim Nelson, Managing Director at icandiCQ, comments, "At icandiCQ, we believe creative intelligence is not just about adding innovation, inspiration and imagination to our daily work. It's also about caring about our communities - it's about adding heart. Every day we are living our dreams through the creative work we get to do for our clients, which is why we're passionate about contributing towards initiatives, like these, where dreams can be fulfilled."

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