

**Ephraim Mohlakane, South Africa**



**Family History**

Ephraim was born on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1976 in a township south of Johannesburg, Katlehong. He never knew his father, who abandoned them when he was little. His mother and little brother are also intellectually disabled. He was raised by his mother and granny

Ephraim took the responsibility to support his mother, brother, sister and granny with his disability grant and wages from the workshop, paying for his brother's school fees as well as paying a contractor for fixing the roof at his house. His granny recently passed away.

**Schooling**

Ephraim started school at De Bruyn School, which is a mainstream school and proceeded at Tshepong Stimulating Centre, a special school until the age of 16 years. He was involved in several projects such as coaching smaller children in soccer, can collection as well as bread baking. He actually received a certificate for this bread making course. Ephraim is currently registered for reading and writing lessons and is receiving extra lessons from a volunteer community member with the help of South Hills Library. This will empower him and help improve his reading ability.

**Hamlet Protective Workshop**

Ephraim joined the Hamlet in January 1998 as a dayworker and proceeded to be a weekly boarder. He worked at the protective employment workshop and due to his attitude and personality, he was then promoted to Workshop Assistant Supervisor.

# 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Disabilities

## Unity & Diversity in Action

July 6-9, 2015 – Tel Aviv, Israel

Under the auspices of the Trump International Institute for Continuing Education in Developmental Disabilities

### **Sports Achievements/leadership Positions**

Through his involvement in Special Olympics, Ephraim has travelled extensively to overseas countries such as Canada, Alaska, California, Ireland as well as in Africa – Namibia and Kenya as well as to such interesting places as Robben Island and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. In his travels he has met such influential people as Former President Dr Nelson Mandela, Steven Spielberg, Muhammad Ali, Arnold Schwarzenegger, as well as Presidents of Namibia and Kenya

He was selected as Global Messenger for Africa – which is a 2 year term 2002 – 2004. (Global Messengers are part of the Athlete Leadership Programme). There are only 12 Global Messengers in the world – only 1 in Africa – which is Ephraim. He is also a Board Member for Special Olympics South Africa – which is a 9 year term.

He is also a member of the Hamlet Self Advocacy group, which is a forum that represents the rights and needs of Intellectually Disabled People. He has delivered speeches at the Hamlet Foundation functions.

Ephraim is the past vice chairperson of the Self Advocacy Movement of South Africa, a project of Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA) which is the National umbrella body of all Down Syndrome Associations in South Africa and strives for the rights of persons with Down Syndrome and other Intellectual Disabilities. Ephraim is an inspiration to others who have intellectual disabilities as he has delivered many speeches at conferences in this capacity.

### **Employment**

Through the support of DSSA Ephraim is now permanently employed at St Benedict's College, a private school for boys 5 – 18 years in Johannesburg where he is employed as a sports coach.

### **Certificates / Letters of Acknowledgment**

Bread Baking Course.

Special Olympics – demonstrating outstanding leadership abilities (5 – 10 May 2002).

Special Olympics – Athlete Leadership Programmes (22 – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2002).

Special Olympics – Thank you for reaching out to Special Olympics Athletes.