

Denver Isaacs.

An Inspiration in the Face of Adversity.

Cornerstone Institute student Denver Isaacs is proving to be a shining light of inspiration and a prime example of a unique case of overcoming childhood trauma, and utilising his experiences to pave the way for other young people to rise above their own adverse circumstances.

Isaacs explains how growing up on a small farm outside of Robertson offered a limited future for the children in the area, most of whom had parents working on farms for little pay. The lack of prospects and bullying he endured at school helped shape his goals of creating a better future for himself, as well as inspire others to do the same.

Professionally trained in Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai, Isaacs was introduced to Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) at a young age, while growing up in Robertson. With the dedication of his father and older brother, he learnt amateur skills in fighting, forging a way towards his many victories and triumphs in the MMA world today.

Isaacs began professional training in 2018, in Port Elizabeth, subsequently taking the mixed martial arts world by storm. With the encouragement from his trainer, Isaacs started competing that same year.

During this time in PE Isaacs joined the Christian organisation, East Mountain, which teaches Christian leadership and Theology, and contributes towards helping communities in the area. It was during his time working in the underdeveloped northern parts of PE that Isaacs observed the severe trauma children were experiencing from abuse and poverty. He supported them through sharing the gospel and inspiring hope for a better future. Isaacs believes he has been presented with a special gift and purpose to give service and help others find hope.

Beyond his achievements as an athlete, Isaacs has pursued his education with as much vigour as his passion for Mixed Martial Arts, enrolling as a BPsych Equivalent student in 2019 at Cornerstone Institute. This shows true testament to the many opportunities of betterment available when making determined choices to thrive beyond his adversities.

His fighting, explains Isaacs, is an incredible tool for inspiring young men to better themselves. He is not affected too much by the fame and popularity it has stirred amongst many, but rather that it stands for something more in the eyes of the youth facing limits and hardship. This too, is why he chose to study at Cornerstone.

Cornerstone stands for something more than just a Higher Learning facility, it has a rich history of giving hope to those who have been served societal and economic limits. Since its inception during the time of Apartheid, the institute has prided itself upon its policy of offering an education to people of all colour. This inclusivity is something Isaacs expresses is shared between his fighting and his life at Cornerstone.

As a metaphorical reflection of his journey through MMA, Isaacs brings reference to Mandela's example of hope and explains how South Africa has a history of fighting for the good of the people. Mandela

inspired aspiration in South Africans by achieving a dream that was put on hold. Isaacs explains his admiration for the unity that Mandela hoped for and relays that admiration for the core values that Cornerstone stands for.

Isaacs chose the Bpsych Programme, as he believes Christianity and Psychology complement each other in providing service for the good of others. The prospect of achieving a degree in his home town, he explains is near to impossible and he hopes it is another benchmark in his journey that will send a message to others to constantly strive towards self-betterment.

During his time at Cornerstone Denver has not only worked towards completing his qualification, but was also nominated by his peers, last year as the Vice President of the Student Representative Council, acting as a voice for the students, and mediator between the student community and the larger Cornerstone faculty. During 2020 Isaacs took part in the student senate where he noted the gratitude of students facing a lack of data during the move from contact to remote learning, due to the national lockdown, and how Cornerstone proactively put in place methods of providing data to those who had limited means.

Cornerstone Institute has an array of students who are determined to build a better future for themselves, and overcome many of the obstacles presented to them, through hard work and irrevocable belief. They are an inspiration to many and are held in high regard within the institution. Through sharing their stories we have the opportunity to encourage and instill hope in those facing hardship and help them create the lives they envision for themselves.

Denver Isaacs is certainly an asset to the world and we believe his story has the potential to change many lives for the better.