

# Ethan's Story

## Career Navigator Community

Growing up, Ethan had gang affiliated friends and family where drugs and alcohol seemed like the norm for him. It wasn't until he became a little bit older when he realised he was losing people close to him due to these factors. This resulted in him starting to disengage and become more and more silent over time. Ethan had no aspirations to do anything with his life... At the start of 2020, he realised doing something was better than doing nothing so he signed up for the Career Navigator Community programme through the Graeme Dingle Foundation in Wellington.

Ethan first started his Career Navigator Community journey with hesitancy showing a staunch attitude - reasonably shy and acting 'too cool to care' but programme coordinators knew he was looking for something within himself as he kept coming back.

Within three weeks of being on the programme, there was a huge shift in his attitude. From a shy young man to smiling, gaining confidence to speak and showing a great sense of humour. After another participant had shared their SMART goal of reducing their drinking, it was a real wake up call for Ethan. He decided to make significant changes to his drinking habits too, this has resulted in a huge difference in his lifestyle.

During the Youth Week Community Project run by the Career Navigator Community programme, Ethan had several lightbulb moments and started thinking about what he wanted to do with his own career. Talking to the Career Navigator mentors helped him to explore different options and hear advice about career paths that he didn't even know

existed. He took the opportunity to speak to mentors who came into the workshops and asked questions, gaining insight into the working world.

Ethan knew he liked talking, and by being in a safe learning environment, he found his voice. After meeting different mentors who had such a variety in careers and experience, he knew going back to labouring wasn't for him. Ethan wanted to do something different and after spending time on the programme, he realised he liked helping young people in the community.

Ethan became one of the top graduates from his cohort and Graeme Dingle Foundation Wellington took the opportunity to hire him. He now helps other young people involved in the Career Navigator Community programme on their career journeys.

Ethan absolutely loved the programme and found it made a huge difference in his confidence, self-belief and what was expected within the workplace.

"He is one of the best hiring decisions we have made" Jehan Fitisemanu - General manager Graeme Dingle Foundation Wellington.



**We want every child to know: What they have inside is greater than any obstacle.**