YOUR STORY MATTERS

Africano Waltham

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BOUNCE BACK

MAGAZINE



Stay Focused

Don't compare your seed to someone else tree

"Come Back Season"

It's never too late to try again.

AFRICANO WALTHAM

OUR EDITORIAL TEAM



MIREMBE BENGUI

Editor

Everyone's story matters! We all deserve to be heard!



JOVIA NAKALEMBE

Co - Editor

Dream boldly, pray faithfully, and trust that God is preparing what is meant for you.



JULIET NAJJUMBA

CEO/Founder: Africano Waltham

Life has a way of testing all of us. Not because we are weak, but because we are often stronger than we realize. I've learned that the goal is not always to avoid the storm. Sometimes the lesson is discovering that we can still smile, still grow, and even learn to dance in the rain.

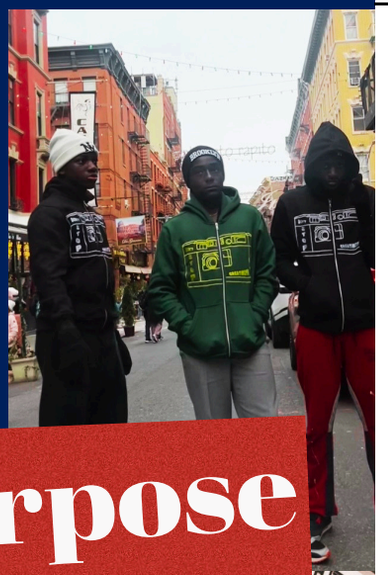
Wherever you are on your journey, I hope you remember this: you matter. Your story matters. Your experiences matter. Your dreams matter. Every challenge you have faced has helped shape the person you are becoming.

There is something valuable inside you that this world needs. Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep believing. And when you can, reach back and encourage someone else. The strength that helped you bounce back may become the hope that helps another person rise.

With love and belief in you,

JNajj's 4Ls: Lifelong Listener & Learner



Turning Pain Into Purpose

BOUNCE BACK IS A TERM USED BY PEOPLE THAT HAVE TAKEN LOSS AFTER LOSS BUT ARE STILL ABLE TO GET UP AND TRY AGAIN. THESE WORDS ARE NORMALLY IN THE CATEGORY OF MOTIVATION, ENCOURAGEMENT, EMPOWERMENT, AND INSPIRATION. THESE WORDS ARE SPECIAL TO ME BECAUSE THEY HAVE HELPED ME TO KNOW THAT THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE AND GOOD IN THINGS THAT MAY SEEM IMPOSSIBLE TO GO THROUGH, AND THE VALUE OF SUCCESS IS ADDED WHENEVER YOU GO THROUGH THE SUFFERING OF SOMETHING YOU LOVE.




BOUNCE BACK

TTHROUGH MY BOUNCE BACK, A VALUE HAS BEEN CREATED, AND THAT IS MY BRAND, JAYMES', THAT HAS HELPED ME KEEP SANE THROUGHOUT THE TWO YEARS IT HAS BEEN MOVING. I BUILT JAYMES' OFF A ROUGH TIME IN 2022, WHICH LED TO ME HAVING QUITE ALONE TIME TO MYSELF TO THINK. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY GOD MOST DEFINITELY PUT THE IDEA IN MY LIFE, AS THINGS WERE NOT REALLY MOVING WELL FOR ME LIKE IT APPEARED EVERYWHERE AROUND ME, WHERE IT GOT TO A POINT THAT I COULD NOT IGNORE IT AT ALL. SO THAT ONE DAY IN IHOP CHANGED IT. AS I BEGAN BRINGING THIS IDEA TO LIFE, I REALIZED I NEEDED PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS BECAUSE PHOTOSHOOTS ARE EXPENSIVE. SO, I DECIDED TO LEARN ON MY OWN INSTEAD OF CHOOSING AN EASIER PATH. I CHALLENGED MYSELF TO EXPLORING VINTAGE/FILM PHOTOGRAPHY, EVEN THOUGH I KNEW IT MIGHT COME WITH MORE DISAPPOINTMENT AND HIGHER COSTS.

Bounce BACK

The Goal of Bounce Back

The project bounce back is for the boys that allows them go to learn basic skills in our day to day life for example changing car tyre, doing oil changes, learning a few hobbies like fishing, learning to put on a tie, how to decide whether the car you would like to buy is in good condition or not, negotiating with dealerships, understanding dashboard lights, jumping starting a car, changing a light bulb, hanging shelves or pictures severely, how to use some tools like a screw driver, drill.





Jaymes' Edition







BOUNCE BACK

These skills will be displayed publicly on Instagram, where everyone can see them. Each session will begin with a short questionnaire that asks the boys what they expect from the activity, how difficult they think it will be, and how well they believe they will perform.





They will be recorded as they are being taught, and once the session is finished, they will complete an after-questionnaire. The results will also be shared on the Instagram video, highlighting how they felt about the activity.

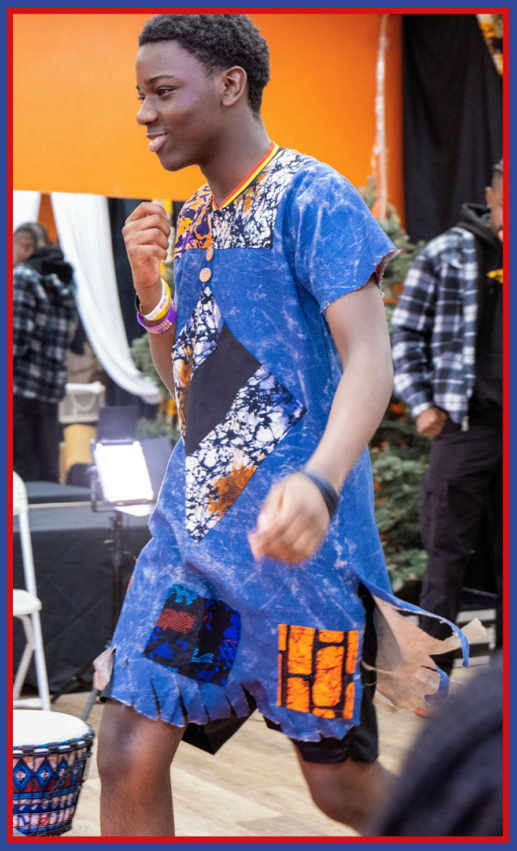
Jason SSENYONJO



STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Something that drew me into Africano was the fun events I saw going on, and all the fun people were having. I wanted to experience those events for myself, so I started attending Africano Waltham.

BOUNCE BACK



WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE LEARNING CHOREOGRAPHY?

Challenges I faced learning choreography was messing up a ton and wanting to give up, another challenge I faced was trying too hard to make it perfect and all I had to do was to do my best.

DESCRIBE THE ENERGY, THE PEOPLE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

The energy is amazing; everyone is always on top of their game when it comes to dancing and being part of any of the activities. The people are great, I'm glad I met all these new people, and they all have different personalities and that's what is amazing about them.



WHO HELPED YOU GROW THE MOST?

Someone who helped me grow the most were the dance captains, they helped me every time I messed up and were there when I needed to rebalance.

HOW DID YOU ADJUST TO THE DANCE STYLE AND TRAINING SESSIONS?

A way I adjusted to it was practice, practice helped a ton. It helped me catch up to some of the other dancers and has overall helped improve my dance skills.

WHAT DOES AFRICANO DANCE REPRESENT TO YOU PERSONALLY?

Africano dance represents culture to me because it helps us remember where we came from and how we shouldn't forget our cultural dances. Another thing it represents is history, I say this because I grew up saying this dances on TV, stages, streets, etc.

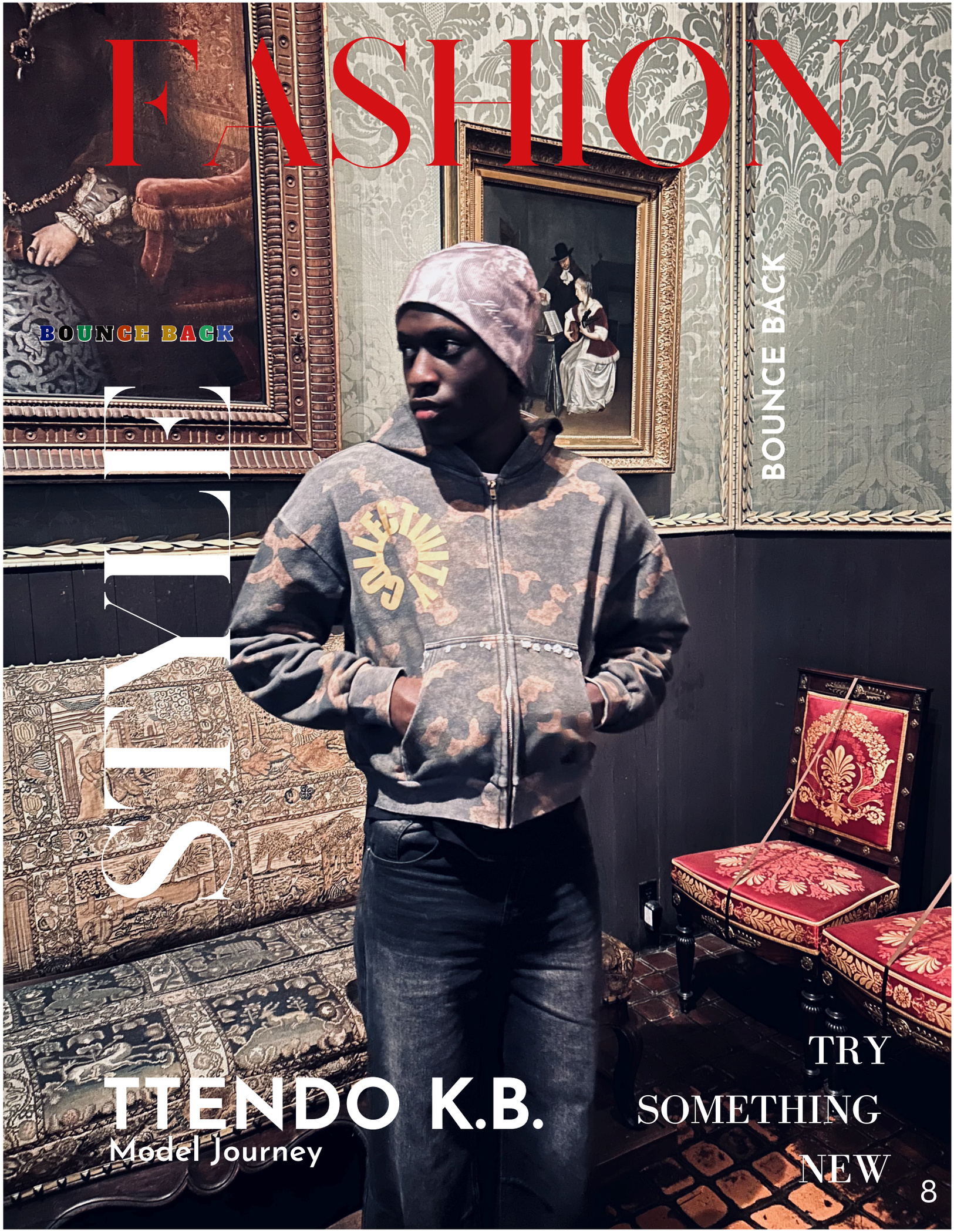
HOW HAS DANCING AT AFRICANO SHAPED YOUR CONFIDENCE?

Dancing at Africano has shaped my confidence in many different ways. It has helped me become more vocal, less shy etc, dancing on stage isn't as nerve racking as it used to be. I can go to a big stage knowing I won't be scared to show my talents to the world.

BOUNCE BACK

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION WALKING INTO THE DANCE SPACE?

My first impression was I didn't want to be involved with any of the dances but looking back at my first impression, I feel like I was just shy and I didn't really want to get out of my shell. Now I feel more confident than ever and I'm more social towards others.


FASHION
BOUNCE BACK
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TTENDO K.B.
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TRY
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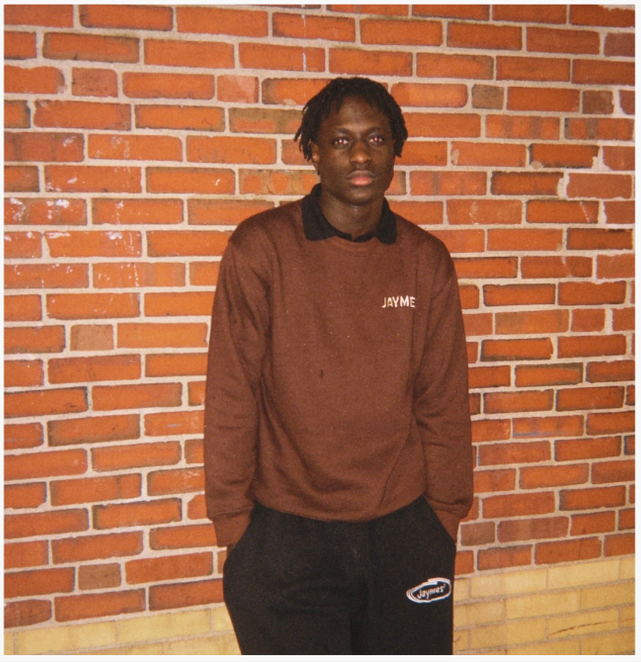
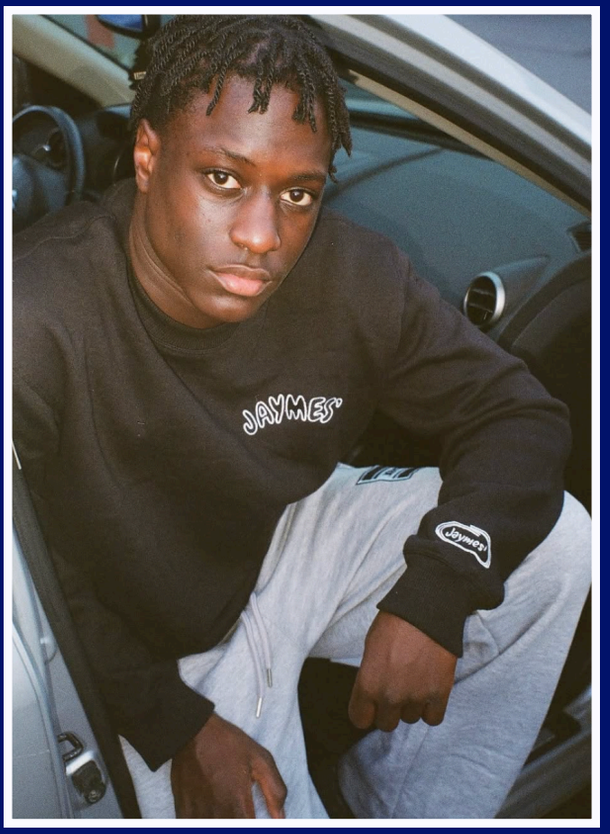


Africano Waltham provides many programs of a lot of different varieties. This tests your abilities to perform in many different areas. At first when I did programs like going out to play sports, fashion shows and writing reflections from time to time; I didn't see myself having a future in them because I wasn't passionate about them and didn't have much experience with them but as time went on, I did them more and more and started to like them because I became better at them as I progressed because I went at them with an open mind and a growth mindset which is something that I was taught to do at Africano. People supported me whenever I would express my intrigue in them, and so I continued to pursue these things to this day; I play 3 sports today, all of which I picked up after those Africano sports days.

I've learned to express my fashion more deliberately in how I dress on an almost daily basis, have been involved in photoshoots, and have really explored my fashion sense. My writing reflections are in action as I'm writing this and have been incorporated in a lot of other things I do. Apart from these activities, I have done my best to have a growth mindset in everything I do, and it has given me confidence. I've used my confidence to push myself to be exceptional and excel in the things that I want to. The growth mindset concept has also helped me to make better decisions and expand in many ways, such as using my confidence to help others to achieve as well, such as my friends, family members, and has helped a stranger or 2. For me, clothing is a lot deeper than what people think; I feel like the majority of the time, it is an expression. There are some regular clothes that, when people wear, don't mean anything and can sometimes just be worn randomly, but today's world has brought about more things like vibrant clothes with special logos, color usage, and just overall composure that have made things different.



There are clothes that are just for comfort because of their material, and one can infer that someone who wears them is laid back, relaxed, or chill. There are also trendy clothes like essentials hoodies that some people may buy because everyone else buys, but that doesn't apply to everyone, given that their clothes can fall under the category of comfort as well. There are also clothes, for example, ones from the brand Sp5der that can imply that someone who wears them can listen to Young Thug because that's his brand, but because it is comfortable, premium material that has been trending lately, that could be another reason why it can fall under those 2 categories, or they can just be hand-me-downs or being borrowed from someone else. That's why I feel like seeing how someone dresses on a basis really gives you the full picture because some people like to do it all.



My fashion sense used to be just simple, just random clothes on without any real intent. I got a bit older and started leaning towards always wearing shorts and shirts even when it wasn't the weather, and trying to express my sports passion through what I wear, from soccer cleats to basketball jerseys; I was trying just about everything in that area. I then reached the stage I'm at now, and I would consider it miscellaneous, I invoke in multiple different areas such as trendy, business casual, sports, designer, and comfort.

I have gotten some inspiration from influencers online and learnt to just explore what I like and go based on that, and that's what I still continue to do as time goes on. My style switch happens naturally, but it's initially inspired by my maturity and change in interests, and I happily influence myself and still continue to, while getting inspo from a few of my friends, things that are trending, and some people that I am inspired by as well, and like to incorporate because I feel it's good to keep an open mind.



Some people like to make bold statements and wear revealing clothes like tank tops or just clothes that are revealing of body parts, some people can be politicians or just of a certain elegance status, and dress kind of like business casual to express that. I feel like the amount of effort and exposure you put into expressing yourself through your clothing says a lot about you as a person.

Your mistake is not a tattoo.

In life we all make mistakes and that's a fact nobody should deny, not even the presumed holier than holy people, nor our parents who we respect or even mentors in our lives who we really respect and look up to. I have actually come to believe that making mistakes is part of human nature but what makes the difference is what we learn from them and how we get up and walk again after those mistakes are made.

I think the most important thing is to recognize and acknowledge the mistakes because that's the only way you can work on it, otherwise how can you work on what you don't know? One may say but how do you work on something when you don't feel ready and my answer is, getting up after a fall isn't about being ready, it's about getting up even when scared and not ready because it's that first step which will make the difference you didn't anticipate and assure you that yes you can still walk despite the pain. For example, If it's unfinished homework, do it even if with tears dropping on the paper, if it's a late assignment give it in late other than hiding for a week, if it's rejection on a job, show up even if you don't want to or if you hurt a loved one, a simple apology like " I know I was wrong" means much more than one never said and will give you so much relief even if you don't win your friendship back.

Actually bouncing back doesn't mean being perfect or making strong strides, it means getting into action even if the movement is inch by inch. You don't need a perfect come back because you're only human. All you need is action not stagnation so even when still scared get moving and when you do, that's the meaning of real bravery and victory 💪
Remember that when we make mistakes or when we come across obstacles in life that set us back we can always pick up the pieces and bounce back as long as we don't condemn ourselves nor let our mistakes define us. All we have to understand is that we don't have to bounce high, we don't have to bounce fast we just have to bounce back and take one day at a time without competition or comparison but with hope and belief in ourselves. Be your own cheerleader.
Grace Kamara
Mentor



NATHAN

RECLAIMING THE STAGE



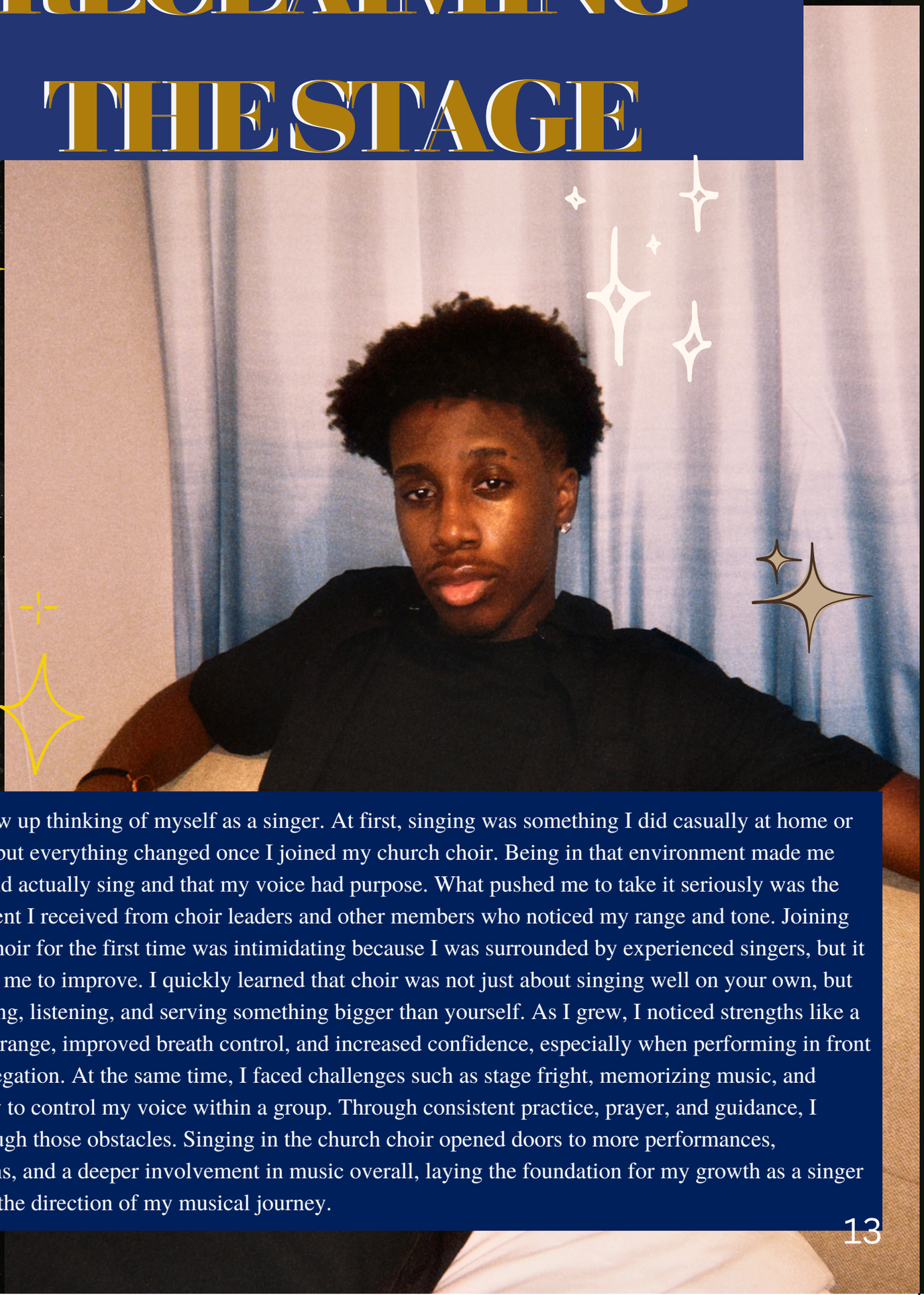




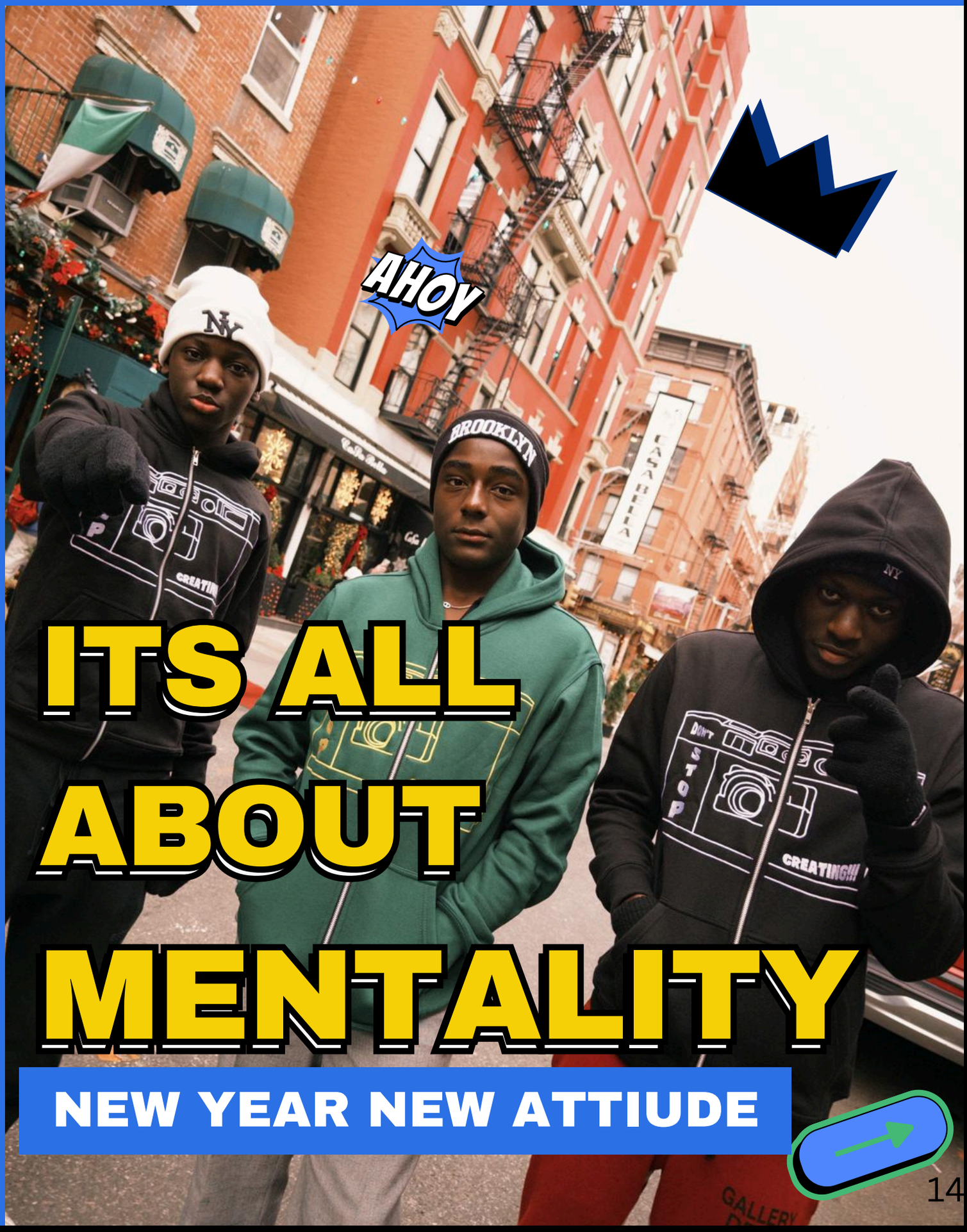


NATHAN

RECLAIMING THE STAGE



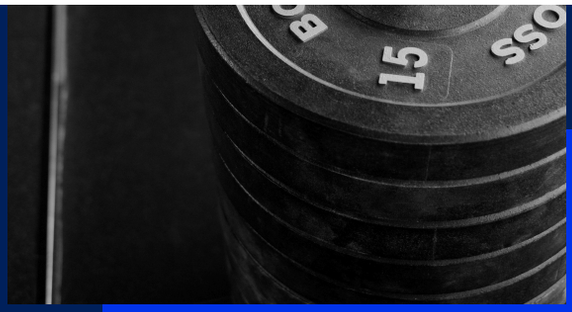
I did not grow up thinking of myself as a singer. At first, singing was something I did casually at home or just for fun, but everything changed once I joined my church choir. Being in that environment made me realize I could actually sing and that my voice had purpose. What pushed me to take it seriously was the encouragement I received from choir leaders and other members who noticed my range and tone. Joining the church choir for the first time was intimidating because I was surrounded by experienced singers, but it also inspired me to improve. I quickly learned that choir was not just about singing well on your own, but about blending, listening, and serving something bigger than yourself. As I grew, I noticed strengths like a strong vocal range, improved breath control, and increased confidence, especially when performing in front of the congregation. At the same time, I faced challenges such as stage fright, memorizing music, and learning how to control my voice within a group. Through consistent practice, prayer, and guidance, I worked through those obstacles. Singing in the church choir opened doors to more performances, collaborations, and a deeper involvement in music overall, laying the foundation for my growth as a singer and shaping the direction of my musical journey.



ITS ALL ABOUT MENTALITY

NEW YEAR NEW ATTIUDE





It's all about DEDICATION And CONSISTENCY

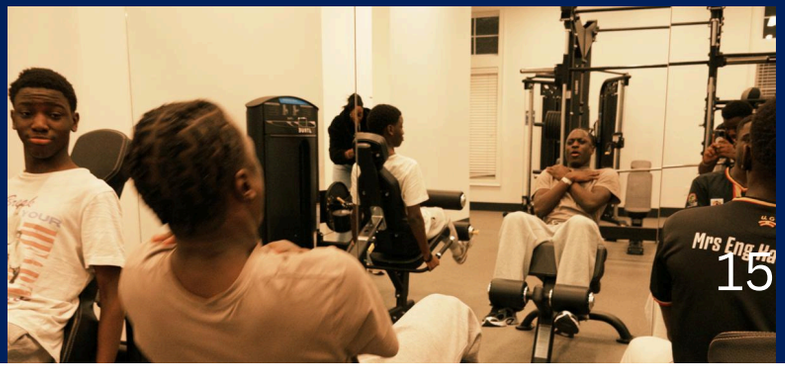








"You have to work hard in the dark to shine in the light."



BOUNCE BACK

BOUNCE BACK!



THE REAL WIN OF MENTORSHIP

"COME BACK SEASON"





This summer, my mentorship journey with the boys didn't start with a title or a plan it started with recognition. The moment I met them, I saw pieces of my younger self in almost every one of them: confidence mixed with confusion, talent mixed with impatience, and energy that could either build something great or get them into trouble real quick. That's what pushed me to step into the mentor role. I didn't do it because I thought I was perfect. I did it because I knew how powerful it is when someone shows up for you at the right time.

Day one was…interesting. You know how a group of teenagers size you up like you're trying out for their team? That was the vibe. Some were quiet, some were testing boundaries, and a couple were already trying to figure out if they could beat me in a race. I introduced myself by keeping it real, told them who I was, where I came from, and why I was there. My main message was simple: "I don't expect perfection from you, just effort." This helped break the ice.

The bond didn't happen overnight. It grew through consistency and real conversations. I made time to listen, not just talk. Whether we were doing activities, competing, or just cooling down after a long day, those moments mattered. I showed up on the good days and the tough ones, especially when someone was frustrated, angry, or doubting themselves. Over time, they realized I wasn't going anywhere. That's when trust started to form.



MORE THAN ADVICE

As the summer went on, the growth became impossible to ignore. I saw boys who barely spoke start leading the group. I saw confidence replace fear. I saw effort replace excuses. There were real breakthrough moments where one of them finally believed in himself or chose discipline over distractions.



THE LIFE-CHANGING INFLUENCE OF A MENTOR

Of course, there were also days that tested my patience: attitude shifts, missed expectations, and moments where I had to lead without raising my voice. Those situations pushed me to become a better leader, not just a louder one.

Mentoring them ended up shaping me just as much as it shaped them. It taught me patience, empathy, and accountability. I learned how to guide without forcing, motivate without yelling, and lead by example. That's where that thing of me being a motivational speaker comes from. My source isn't just books or quotes, it's lived experience. It's my own struggles, my own growth, and moments like this summer where I saw firsthand how words, presence, and consistency can change someone's direction.

By the end of the summer, we weren't just mentors and mentees, we were a team. And while they may say I helped them grow, the truth is they helped shape the leader and speaker I'm becoming. That's the real win.





Dj Jordan

BOUNCE BACK



COOL!



Jordan Ssekimpi

Growing up in the then suburbs of Luzira, Uganda, A place full of life, rhythm, that shaped who I would become. From a young age, music was always a part of my world. It played in the background of daily life - at home, in the streets and during parties. It was a natural adoption.

STEADY PROGRESS



I realized I wanted to go deeper than just being around music and listening to it. I would watch Bukedde TV and see DJs control music in a unique format, and I would get inspired and motivated. I was very curious and wanted to be close to the DJs at every event I attended, until one day I asked a DJ to teach me how they mix songs together. He told me to purchase the DJ software known as Virtual DJ, a catalog of music, and install them on a computer. I did, and I started training with the DJ.

BOUNCE BACK

At first, it was very complicated because it was new to my eyes and brain, but I kept picking up the idea as time went on. I remember practicing every day during the evening, and my neighbors would wonder if we had a party every day. Learning how to DJ opened a new chapter in my life, which I didn't realize until I came to the United States. I spent hours learning how to make smooth transitions.

I remember my first gig like it was yesterday. I played a massive opening set and left heads turning, wondering who this young man was. I got a lot of exposure and opened up many connections in the music industry. At some point, I thanked God—who would have thought that I would earn hundreds of dollars while just doing my hobby?

bounce back

13 ↓ 13 A ↓ 14 ↓ 14 A ↓

FILM NEGATIVE

FILM NEGATIVE

ALL AGES

It's Never to Late to Try Again

FILM NEGATIVE







Culture.



IS.





Back.





RunWay





BOUNCE BACK

#bounce back #bounce back #bounce back #bounce back #bounce back













FASHION MODE







MODEL

EXPRESS YOURSELF

2026

EMPOWER





BOUNCE BACK

BOUNCE BACK

Chimaobi



Working in a congressional office for a US senator.



This is about my experience working in a congressional office for a US senator. I applied over the summer before the fall. Season on an internship app called Handshake. I saw that they were hiring and that their applications were open, so I applied with an open mind not thinking I was gonna get a reply at all. But I randomly let myself know that I made it through the first stage, to have preliminary interviews. I applied for the internship primarily because I was looking for experience and something of substance to add to my résumé. Being a senior in college, you have to begin thinking ahead. I was originally shocked and I couldn't believe it because it felt like impostor syndrome. I kind of felt like, who was I that I was considered for such a highly sought after position? Upon completing the interviews, I remember going in for my first day, I was extremely excited, but also equally nervous. The security in the building is highly sophisticated, the building is extremely tall with a lot of floors, but I was reassured that God didn't bring me this far to fail now.



The office atmosphere was very nice, my coworkers and fellow interns were all excited for the internship to begin, but I also noticed that on our introductions, there weren't any other students from public universities? They all either went to Harvard, Boston College, or Suffolk, which made me feel even more out of place going to UMass, but I looked at it as the uniqueness to my own story. Majority of what my job was was to take policy comments from the constituents of Massachusetts, or assist with congressional inquiries to federal agencies that constituents needed help with I.e if someone needed help with the IRS, they would contact the senator's office and reach me, who would contact the IRS on their behalf, but then apply that to multiple different agencies. From the first day, I was confused about a lot of things and I would say looking back now, I have learned so much about politics and the government in a way I didn't think I could.

TTENDO IBANDA





BECOMING BEFORE BEING

THERE IS A SILENT WEIGHT MANY BOYS CARRY — THE PRESSURE TO BE STRONG, COMPOSED, UNSHAKEN. GROWING UP IN UGANDA, I LEARNED EARLY THAT MANHOOD OFTEN MEANT ENDURANCE. BUT TRUE EMPOWERMENT BEGINS WHEN WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE STRUGGLE AND STILL CHOOSE GROWTH.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I MADE A DECISION THAT STRETCHED ME BEYOND BORDERS. I ENROLLED ONLINE AT ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY IN OKLAHOMA — BEGINNING MY COLLEGE JOURNEY ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CONTINENT. STUDYING FROM UGANDA REQUIRED MORE THAN WI-FI AND TEXTBOOKS. IT REQUIRED DISCIPLINE. WAKING UP WHEN OTHERS SLEPT. MANAGING TIME WITHOUT SUPERVISION. TRUSTING A VISION BIGGER THAN MY CURRENT ENVIRONMENT.

RELOCATING TO THE UNITED STATES BROUGHT NEW ADJUSTMENTS — CULTURE SHIFTS, INDEPENDENCE, FINANCIAL PRESSURE, AND TEMPTATION. FREE TIME TESTS A YOUNG MAN. THE WRONG CIRCLE CAN DELAY YOUR DESTINY. THE RIGHT HABITS PROTECT IT. I'VE LEARNED TO GUARD MY MIND, CHOOSE FRIENDS WISELY, DEVELOP HOBBIES THAT BUILD ME, AND REMAIN FOCUSED ON GRADUATING AND PURSUING MY FUTURE IN THE ARMY.

EMPOWERMENT OF THE BOY CHILD IS NOT LOUD. IT IS DISCIPLINED. IT IS INTENTIONAL. IT IS REMEMBERING WHO YOU ARE — EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING.

YOU ARE NOT BEHIND, YOU ARE BECOMING.

Hudson Jr.



BOUNCE BACK

LIFE EXPERIENCE IN UGANDA

To start, Uganda is a country where things are often complicated, but it is also my home. Life there had a lot of stress, and money was very difficult to get. Even with these challenges, it shaped who I am today.

I went to a very local school called Namataba All Saints. It was not the best, but I tried my best every day. I didn't really have friends because no one was interested, and that hurt me. Instead of giving up, I used that pain as motivation to keep going. I was a boy with big hopes of being the best. Even though I failed many times, I kept trying. I was also very prayerful.

Many of my friends did not care about learning because we all believed that nothing good would come from where we lived. The only thing we saw every day was the chalkboard with math equations, and teachers who were very strict. Life there was truly complicated.
Then came a moment I never expected. When I heard that I was coming to the United States, it felt like a dream come true. I didn't want to leave my friends behind because they knew me more than I knew myself. But I knew I had to go, so I could have a future I once thought was impossible.

I was a shy person who struggled to speak loudly because of my shyness. My dad often told me that I needed to be my own man, and I tried to follow his advice, but to be honest, it was challenging most of the time. I would sit down with him and ask questions like, "Do you think I take the time I need, or do I rush things?" He would respond, "Listen, my son, America is a first-class country, so you should be moving forward and staying sharp." He often reminded me of how he started, which inspired me to do things my own way.

When I came to Waltham at Africano, it was my first time seeing so many children, and I felt scared because I was shy and nervous. I saw a lot of new faces, and all I could think was, "When is this day ending so I can go home?" I wasn't comfortable being around everyone because I was still shy. I noticed some boys named Ryan and Tendo speaking quickly in English, which I couldn't fully understand. It was English, but I didn't grasp what they meant because of how fast they spoke.

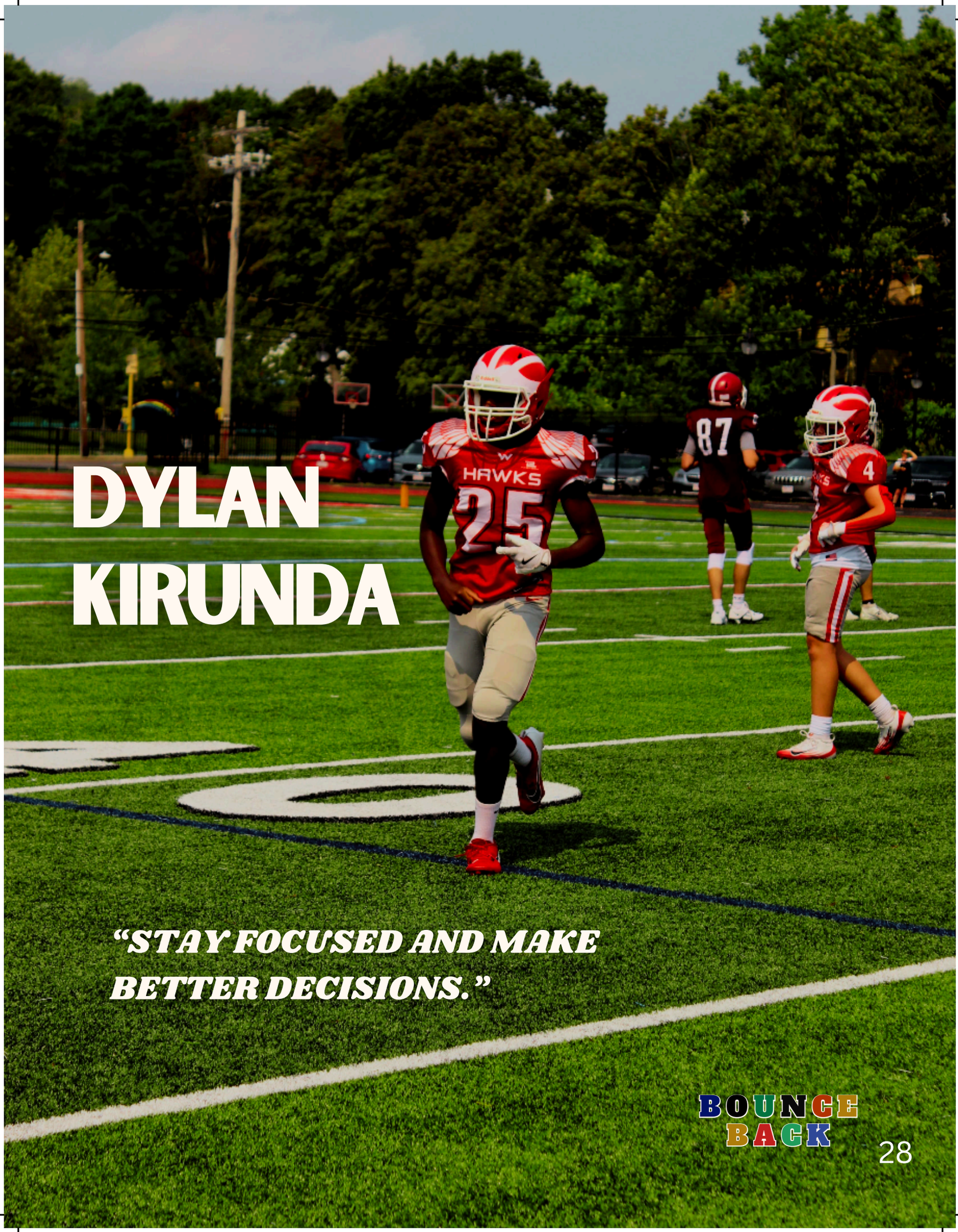
They were playing a game and invited me to join. In my mind, I felt I had to participate to make friends. However, it was not easy because it was a game I had never seen before. They encouraged me to join, so I did. I wanted to come out of my shell.

Then, a kind lady named Auntie Julie called me over in front of the prize wheel. I barely knew her, and I felt nervous, but I decided to give it a try. I went up and ended up winning a gummy bear. However, I didn't eat it right away because I was shy and unfamiliar with the candy.

One day, Auntie Julie was paying us for the work we had done. I didn't approach her because I felt I hadn't done anything to earn it. But she called me over and asked, "Did you do anything?" I honestly replied, "No, Auntie, I didn't do anything." To my surprise, she handed me $20 in cash. I said, "Auntie Julie, this is too much! Even $3 would have been enough." I felt a bit scared and considered leaving the money there, but she insisted that I take it.

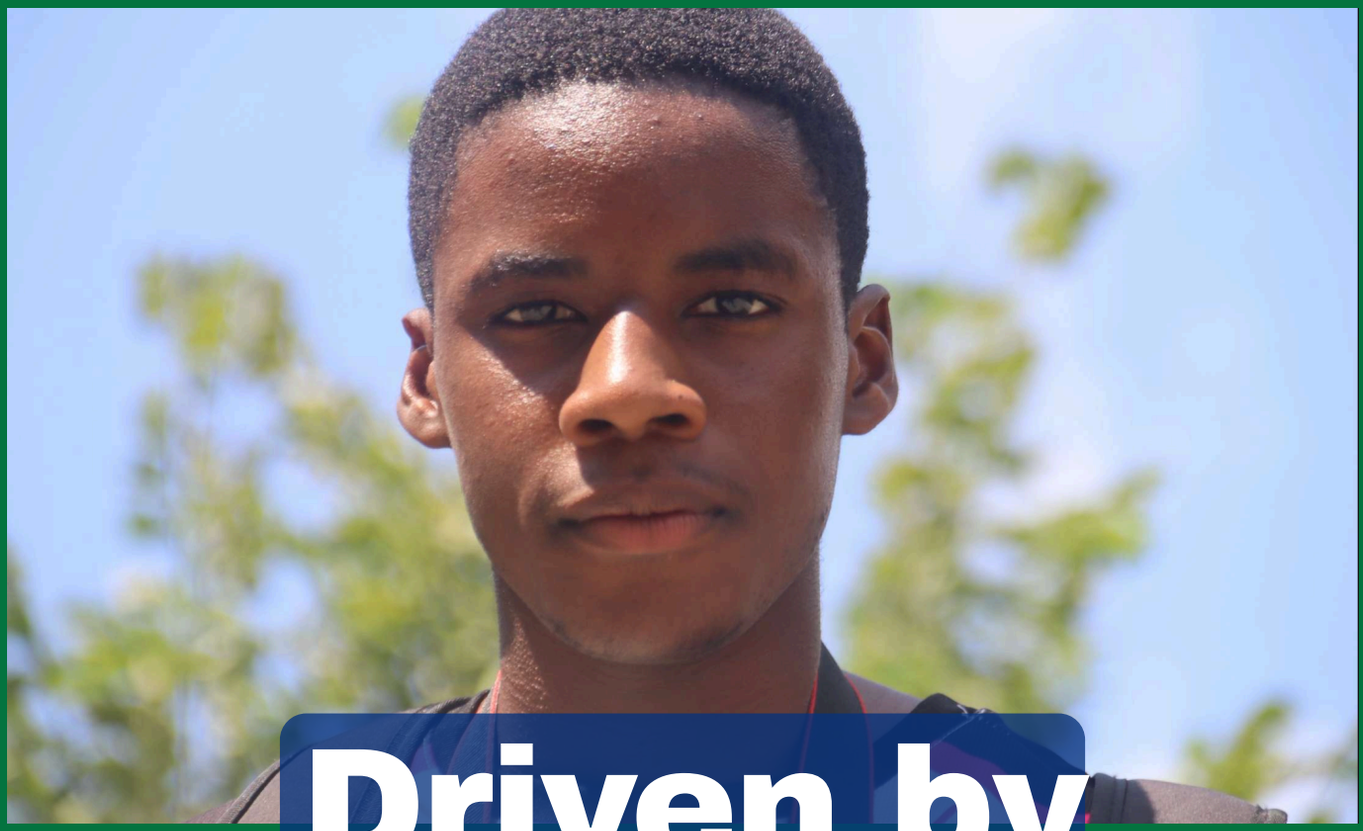
I wanted to tell my dad about the money Auntie Julie had given me, but I also felt guilty about accepting such a large amount. My dad advised me to just save it, so I did. On my way home, I found a broken one-dollar bill on the ground. I thought it wouldn't be worth anything, but my dad told me that the bank could exchange it for a new one-dollar bill. So, I picked it up, and now I have $21. The following Saturday, I went to thank Auntie Julie for her generosity and for believing in me.

With that money, I went shopping the next Sunday for some clothes. I wanted at least a shirt since all my other clothes were Ugandan wear, which I didn't find appealing anymore. I ended up buying a nice white shirt. After that, I checked my balance and promised myself that I would buy clothes more often in the future.



DYLAN KIRUNDA

"STAY FOCUSED AND MAKE BETTER DECISIONS."



Driven by DISCIPLINE

BOUNCE BACK

My name is Dylan Kirunda. I am 15 years old and I am in 10th grade.

Some skills I am good at are working out, being responsible, staying organized, being disciplined, and football too. I love to stay active and push myself and others toward a better future because I believe anyone can be successful if they can push themselves toward their goals.One of my goals is to get better at football, and what I do to help me improve is watch film, go to football workouts, and participate in programs. A mindset I believe that helps me strive toward this is that hard work and dedication help you grow and become better over time.

My advice to young boys out there is to stay focused and make better decisions. Most importantly, surround yourself with positive people who benefit you and help you work hard toward your goals. Never give up when things get difficult because challenges help you become stronger and wiser than most people.

Being part of Africano has helped me understand the importance of culture, family, hard work, and, most importantly, being yourself. Every time I go to Africano, I feel at home and more like myself than I usually do in other places. I learned to respect others, stay connected to my roots, and always push myself to succeed. These values have helped prepare me for my future and motivate me to make my family and community proud.

Bounce Back
Confidence.01

COOLMAGAZINE

JOHNATHAN



INSPIRATION
FOR YOUR STYLE

TOP 10
FASHION TREND 2026

REFRESH YOUR **STYLE**

FASHION
FOR SUMMER

BOUNCE BACK

CREATED TO INSPIRE

JOHNATHAN B.

BOUNCE BACK

JOHNATHAN'S ADVICE



Some skills that I am good at are playing soccer and communicating with people. I have been playing soccer since I was the age of 10, but didn't start playing competitively until 7th grade, when I was around 12-13. My position is goalkeeper, and my goal is to get the starting goalkeeper spot on Varsity for my school because I'm used as a backup keeper on varsity. I have plans to train hard this summer and try out for a soccer club.

Some advice that I have for younger boys is to stay focused and to take things in life seriously, even if it has no meaning to them or if something is hard or boring, because the habits that you build now are the ones that you will carry on into your future. So it's important that you listen to your teachers, coaches, mentors, and anyone who offers wisdom because they are trying to help you become a better person. It's also important to never be afraid to ask for help and always ask when you need it.

Being part of Africano has helped me prepare for my future in many ways. It's taught me discipline, responsibility, and to stay focused on my goals. Throughout my time at Africano, I learned that you have to build yourself up to be successful and to get to the spot where you want to be. It also taught me how important it is to respect others, follow directions, and to be a leader instead of a follower. Africano has broken me out of my shell and made me an open-minded person to be able to try new things.

When I was new to Africano, I had never danced in front of big crowds. I would never even dance at home. I never saw dancing as an interesting hobby I wanted to pick up, but after my second or third time at Africano, I was encouraged to do a performance, and I realized that it was actually fun to do. Being able to do it with my friends made the experience better, and now I've been doing performances for Africano without hesitation.



MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

We have always been the only ones capable of creating our own happiness or unhappiness, our own joy or suffering.

That doesn't mean people and circumstances don't affect us — they absolutely do. Life can hurt us, disappoint us, and sometimes knock us down. But even when we cannot control what happens around us, we still have power over our mindset, our actions, and the choices we make next.

And to me, that is both comforting and empowering. Because it means difficult moments do not get the final say in who we become.

For young people especially, it's important to remember this: setbacks are not the end of your story. Bad days, failures, heartbreak, rejection, anxiety, and struggles are all part of life, but they can also become opportunities to grow stronger, wiser, and more resilient.

This is why mental health matters so much. Mental health is not about pretending everything is okay or never feeling pain. It's about learning how to cope, heal, ask for support when needed, and keep moving forward even during hard times.

We all get knocked down at times, but the real strength is in getting back up. We can bounce back from difficult times. We can heal, rebuild, and rediscover hope. What happens to us matters, but how we respond to it is what truly shapes our future. And sometimes, the strongest thing we can do for our mental health is simply refusing to give up on ourselves.

Victoria Nabunya BSN, RN

MAKANGA

BARBER



HAIR BY ZZIWA



My name is Denis Makanga, a professional barber from Uganda with three years in the game, and I have made barbering my passion. I am a barber because I love art; it builds my confidence, and I earn a living from it. It is also a door opening skill that earned me Barber of the Year 2024, a participant spot in the Wahl Barber Battles, and Team Player of the Year (2023). To round it up, I get to meet new people and travel to new places as well.

JEREMIAH

FEBRUARY 2030
2ND EDITION



INSPIRED WARDROBE

BOUNCE BACK ✦ BOUNCE BACK ✦ BOUNCE BACK ✦ BOUNCE BACK ✦ BOUNCE BAC

BOUNCE BACK

MODERN STYLE

CLEAN LIVING

BACK ✱ BOUNCE BACK

Bounce Back!

JEREMIAH

I was first introduced to graphic design through my interest in digital art and the visuals associated with music. Album covers, promotional graphics, and clothing designs made me curious about how those visuals were created. Over time, I started paying more attention to typography, layout, and the way certain designs could communicate a mood or aesthetic. That curiosity eventually pushed me to look into the tools that designers use and try creating visuals myself.

What motivated me to start learning apps like Adobe Illustrator was the desire to turn my ideas into something tangible. I would often think about clothing designs, logos, or graphics, but didn't have the skills to actually create them. Illustrator seemed like a tool that professionals used to bring those ideas to life, so I wanted to understand how it worked. Learning the software allowed me to experiment with shapes, typography, and digital illustrations, which helped me better understand the design process and develop my own creative style.

The first thing I got that made me feel stylish was a grey Nike Tech. I've sold it by now, but at the time, it was my favorite hoodie I owned. I appreciated its simplicity and how it paired with the rest of my wardrobe. I was swayed to tracksuits and clothing that didn't require an elaborate outfit to pair with.

I fell out of liking clothes for how much money they cost, or even how popular they are, but rather now I have my own personal style dictated by my own taste. Gone are most of the clothes that I bought when considering how popular they were, SP5DER hoodies, Nike Techs, as well as 3 pairs of Air Force 1s I used to put on unsparingly. I consider my current fashion sense to be more experimental than it's ever been.

I think my personal style has been influenced by the artists I listen to. I wear neutral, muted colors (black, grey, white, green), which is similar to those of most popular artists of today. Monochromatic color schemes and darker tones tend to dominate their wardrobes, and I gravitate toward that same simplicity. Music culture also pushes a lot of fashion trends, especially in hip-hop, where artists often set the tone for what people wear. At the same time, I try not to copy anyone directly. I take inspiration from what I see online or in music culture, but reinterpret it in a way that still feels authentic to me.



My early fashion was heavily inspired by the people I surrounded myself with. I entered my freshman year of high school and quickly gained an interest in the clothes I wore. I was enamored with others' personal style, as well as the lengths some people went to achieve it, spending large amounts on singular pieces of designer clothes.

One of my school friends, who was a clothing reseller, that same year I started caring about my clothes, I learned that they were a clothing reseller. They sold what is considered hypewear; brands and pieces that are at their peak popularity. I didn't purchase any clothes from him, but rather exchanged ideas on how I could improve my fashion sense and build a proper wardrobe.

Bounce Back!

SUFFER NOW, ENJOY LATER

HAIR BY ZZIWA

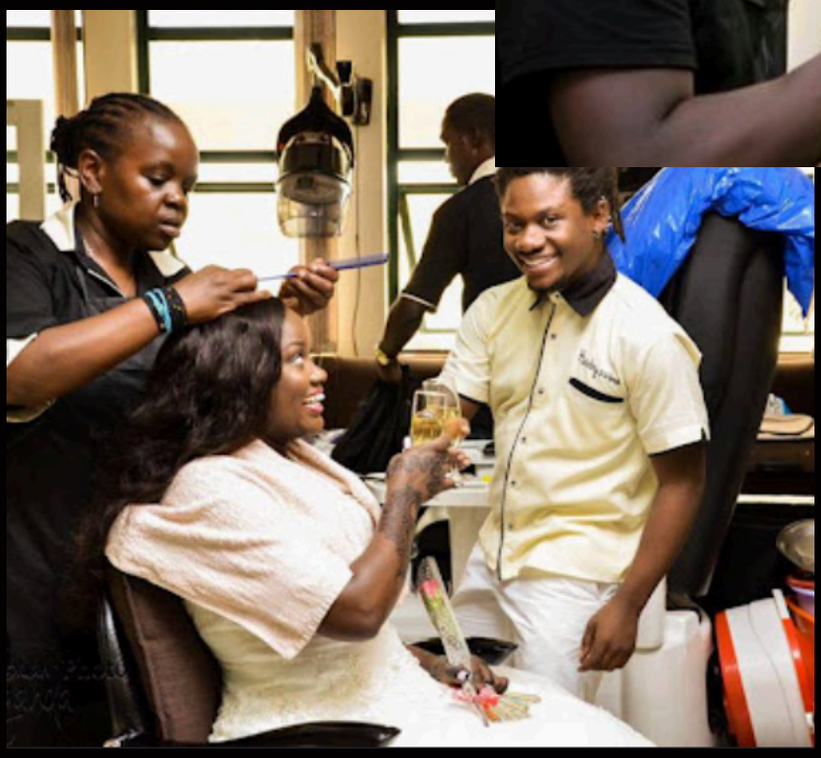


Zziwa started his business in 2015. It didnt happen over night. He worked hard, and planned diligently untill the results became satisfactory.

Today, he has a thriving hair bussnesss with excelling hair accademys as well.

He believes that if you want your bussiness to run efficently, you must pay your taxes and emplloyees on time.





SUFFER NOW, ENJOY LATER

TRENDS, TIPS, AND SECRETS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP

It didn't happen overnight. Since launching his hair business in 2015, Zziwa has built something remarkable through relentless work, careful planning, and a refusal to let the people counting on him down.
Today he runs a thriving hair business alongside acclaimed academies — and he has a few things to say about how he got here.





IN HIS OWN WORDS

On getting back up from a low point —

"Family and business kept me going by force. If I hadn't worked on myself, I would have lost everything. I couldn't afford to disappoint."

On what drives him —

"I'm scared of failure. That fear keeps me doing the right thing even when nobody is watching."

Always do the right thing – even if no one is watching.
– ZZIWA • FAVOURITE QUOTE

BUSINESS TIP #1

Pay your taxes on time.

Stay clean, stay credible. Tax compliance is the foundation of a trustworthy business.

BUSINESS TIP #2

Pay your employees on time.

Your team is the backbone of everything you've built. Honour them.

THE FORMULA

Taxes + employees = a thriving business.

These two things, done consistently, keep the engine running.

"If you want your business to run efficiently — honour your taxes and your people."

— ZZIWA

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OPPORTUNITES

THANK YOU SO MUCH HAIR BY ZZIWA

STEPING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE





BOUNCE BACK



Cool!



Mirembe and Joyce had the amazing opportunity to intern at HairByZziwa this past break. They expanded their knowledge on customer service and hair care.

THANK YOU ALL PARTNERS AND SPONSORS!! WE CAN'T DO THIS WORK WITHOUT YOU!!

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BIG THANKS!!

Watertown Savings Bank

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Boston Children's Hospital
Until every child is well

mass HUMANITIES

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METROWEST HEALTH FOUNDATION

KAMPALA UNISEX SALON BOSTON


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BACK
AFRICANO WALTHAM
CELEBRATING STORIES.
BUILDING COMMUNITY.
DISCOVERING THE POWER WITHIN.