

YBOD the year in reflection for Erin Hildebrand

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Erin Hildebrand is 14-years-old and is in Grade 8 at Christ Church College in Midrand, Johannesburg. She reflects back on the year that she served on Africa's youngest board, Bata's Youth Board of Directors (YBOD). A position that she served with pride and youthful enthusiasm, exchanging her fashionista insight and innovative thinking, for a real business experience from global footwear giant, Bata, as well as entrepreneurial know-how from Young Entrepreneurs (YE).



Erin's brightest highlight of YBOD was being around youth who have the same creative, trendy, inspired and curious point of view. Those who want to understand how business works and just how much work goes into creating and making a product.

If she could change the world she would abolish poverty, stop global warming, ban popularity contests and put an end to bullying. To really make the world a better place, she would bring unicorns into existence.

When asked what the wackiest thing she did was, Erin was sure that the tongue twister was in the top five. "The interview itself, it was a nice change of tone after the continuous quick thinking questions in the board room. The questions made me think about how many things we should be thinking of that aren't obvious or top of mind. The questions helped me remember my beliefs and to remind me I can start to change the world for the better even if it's changing one person's life at a time, a smile or helping them go to school in comfortable school shoes that could start them on the right track to success. One small step at a time."



During YBOD Erin's most valuable lesson learnt was of "the power of teamwork and how much work goes into doing or making something you are passionate about."

"It isn't in every project that you not only realise the outcomes you set out to achieve, but you exceed your own wild expectations. YBOD was one incredible journey, thanks to Erin and the other YBOD members. We set out to hear the voice of the youth, to improve our position as the hippest shoe company in the world and we have certainly heard what they have to say!" comments Swastika Juggernath, Marketing Manager Bata South Africa.

Through YBOD, Erin learnt that her opinions were much more valuable than she thought. She learnt to always share her good ideas even when she thought they weren't important as often they can lead to greater concepts.

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