

## **DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA, ALUMNI FEATURE: ANINA PEENS**

*Meet the young and dynamic eNuus anchor and co-founder of the eCAP community engagement project.*

I grew up in Machadodorp in Mpumalanga where my father was the local lawyer. My family moved to Pretoria and later to Rustenburg where I finished high school. After matriculating, I moved back to Pretoria to study BA Drama at the University of Pretoria. Of all the things I have accomplished, my proudest moment was receiving my drama degree; I wanted to follow this career path since I was seven years old. The years at UP were the best years of my life.

After I graduated, I moved to Johannesburg to start working on my planned television career. After a few months of doing freelance jobs and pursuing a career in modelling, however, I realised that my dreams were bigger than the reality I was living. The financial rewards that my modelling career brought did not satisfy my innate curiosity about the world and the way in which people engage with the world: modelling wasn't something I could pursue as a long-term career.

At the time a vacancy for a radio presenter became available at a community radio station in Pretoria. Initially, they were looking for someone to host an afternoon drive show and the applicant had to have five years' experience in a news environment. On top of that, the applicant also needed an honours degree in journalism: it seemed that the door was closed for me, but I see a closed door as something to be kicked open! Thanks to Estelle Zeeman's radio classes, I felt I had an appropriate base of knowledge and skills take on this position and I have always had a huge interest in news and current affairs. Radio Pretoria employed me and so my journalism career took off.

I worked at the station for more than two years, learning everything I possibly could, and reading as much as possible. I also made a lot of connections with people in the industry and networked my way into television. I started my first television job in January 2010, working for Sunrise on eTV without any pay. But I was eager to learn and I was willing to make financial sacrifices in order to build my career. After three months, I was employed as an Afrikaans news anchor on the breakfast show – with full pay.

From there my career snowballed and before I knew it, I was one of the founding members of eNuus, South Africa's first independent Afrikaans news bulletin, airing during primetime on KykNET, every day of the week. I was employed as one of the four main news anchors.

After a year or two I started doing field work, learning more and more about this challenging and dynamic industry. In my third year of working at eNuus, I found eCap, eNuus' charity project. The initial idea behind the charity was to present a Christmas party for disadvantaged children so that they could share in a moment of celebration and community building that the harsh realities of their lives would not otherwise allow. The reaction from the KykNET viewers was overwhelming. Their support was so fantastic that we managed to adopt three crèches and two orphanages. We also registered eCap as a non-profit organisation and it's now fully operational within eNuus.

In 2013, we joined forces with Gautrain, the Gauteng government's pride and joy. Gautrain are facilitating a campaign for us on all their platforms to collect blankets and raise awareness of the project. We are also supported by KykNET as a channel and our promotional material is spread across the DSTV platform. Other companies endorsing our project are the Gauteng Provincial Government, the union Solidarity, ABSA and Holiday Inn hotels. Visit eCap's website for updates on projects and further information, [www.childrenatplay.org.za](http://www.childrenatplay.org.za). If you or your company would like contribute to any of our projects, you can email me on [enuus@enca.com](mailto:enuus@enca.com).

When it comes to my career, my philosophy can be summed up in my mother's words: 'You can't keep a good man down'. If your heart is pure and your intentions are good, you will be a success. But success doesn't come that easily in the media industry. Hard work, long hours, focus and courage are the key to any success story.

On the other hand, I am spoilt and determined – I never take no for an answer. Once I believe in something, I fight for it. Through all the projects and challenges, the one thing I have learned is that you are always alone. People support you, but people do not make your dreams come true for you. Your dreams and realising them are fully your own responsibility.