

MEET LONA

THE LEADING INTEGRATED FRUIT BUSINESS

BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW, TODAY ...



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WHO IS LONA?

As one of the largest integrated fruit businesses in South Africa, the **Lona Group** is involved in activities across the entire food value chain, such as farming, aggregation, and packaging fruit (citrus, mango, grape, olives, and stonefruit) to cold storage, logistics, marketing fruit for export and domestic consumption, as well as fruit and vegetable processing. This involvement allows **Lona** to have tight controls, traceability, and renowned reliability amongst customers.

Established by CEO Spencer Johnson in 1996 from his parent's garage, **Lona** now exports 5 million cartons of citrus, in addition to a significant volume of other fresh produce each year worldwide. Beyond their fruit production, **Lona** also provides an integrated platform for other producers. Additionally, the business has expanded to value-added products, such as dried fruit, through its two M-Pak facilities: Veggie Crisps and a local leader in table olives - Cape Olive. More recently, it acquired a majority stake in the Unlimited Group – an integrated producer, packer, processor, exporter, and importer of fresh fruit, vegetables, and nuts.

Further to their farming and packhouse operations in the Western and Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Zimbabwe, **Lona** has developed some of the most advanced automated cold storage facilities on the continent. These provide **Lona** and their customers with a state-of-the-art and efficient cold chain, thus ensuring fruit has a longer shelf life and reducing food waste.

LONA'S COMMITMENT TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SA

Lona Group has embarked on these learnerships with their own employees, empowering them on the work front, even in their family structures. Lona has seen a willingness in their staff to want to pursue their learning and create pathways for their children in the same process. They believe having a more skilled workforce will ultimately lead to improved productivity.

Learning is an integral part of growth, empowerment and leadership. **Lona** took their philosophy a step further and has sponsored learnerships for the unemployed youth. The learnerships provided in collaboration with **Signa** gave many previously disadvantaged individuals the opportunity to upskill themselves which, has statistically increased their chances of attaining meaningful employment. Many learners have found employment that **Lona** are extremely proud to have been a part of.

Lona Group has sponsored 104 learners in 2019, with 49 of them being disabled learnerships, and 64 abled learners. 110 learners in 2020, with 50 disabled learners and 60 abled employed learners. 75 disabled learners in 2021,



MEET ANELE

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERAL MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

This bright young man learned about Signa through a friend. At the time, he was working at a local retailer. Anele is now a proud holder of an NQF Level 4 qualification in General Management from Signa Academy.

MY ADVICE

"Through hard work and faith in yourself, you will achieve your goals."

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

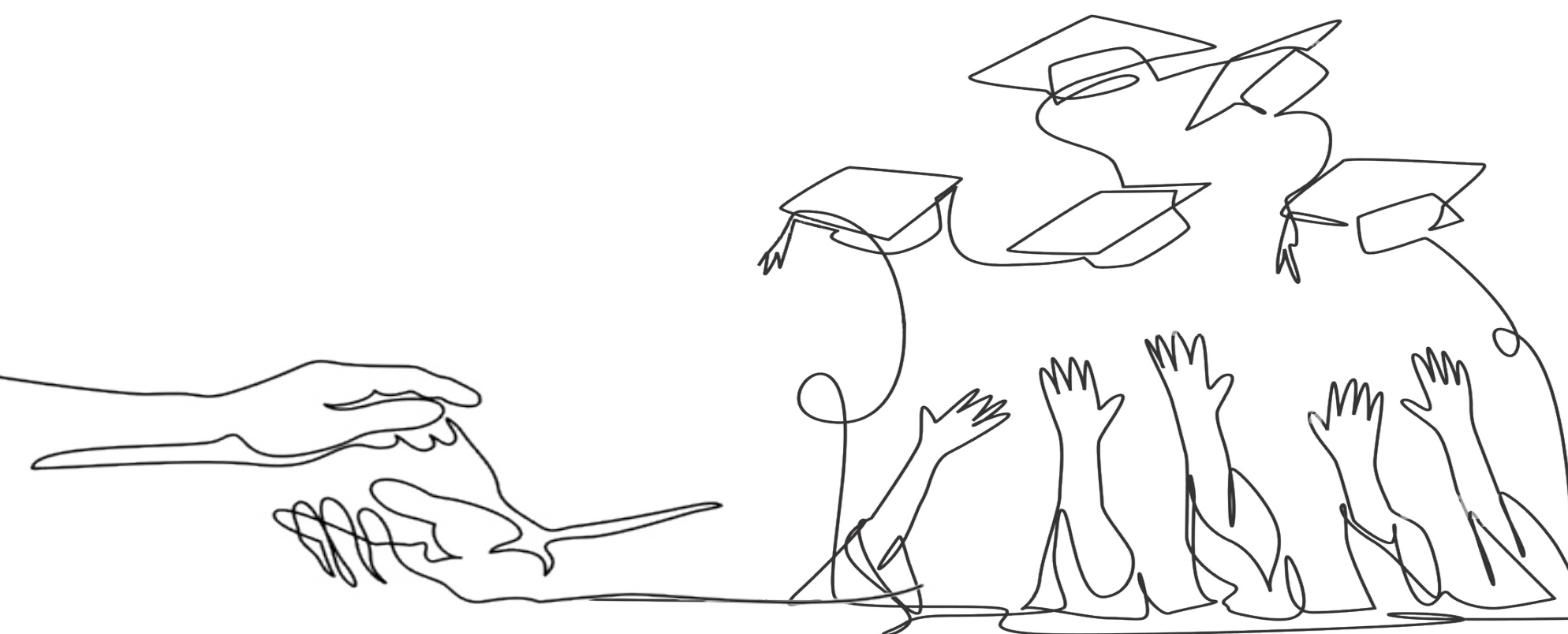
I now have a qualification that gives me more opportunities to find a better job.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa and my sponsor, Lona, train young people and make them fit for the working world.

MY FUTURE

Anele plans to secure a good job and work towards his goals. He also wants to pay the Power of One forward by telling everyone how Signa is changing the lives of young people through its sponsors.



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MEET AVELA

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Avela Tomose is an aspiring entrepreneur carrying an NQF Level 2 qualification in Agri-Trade Processes from Signa Academy. He found out about Signa through a mutual friend and was unemployed and depressed at the time.

MY ADVICE

“Always work hard, and opportunities will open up for you.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

Signa changed me spiritually and emotionally. I have become more confident and patient with myself.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa and Lona, my sponsor, mean a lot to me, because they gave me the knowledge and skills to move forward in life.

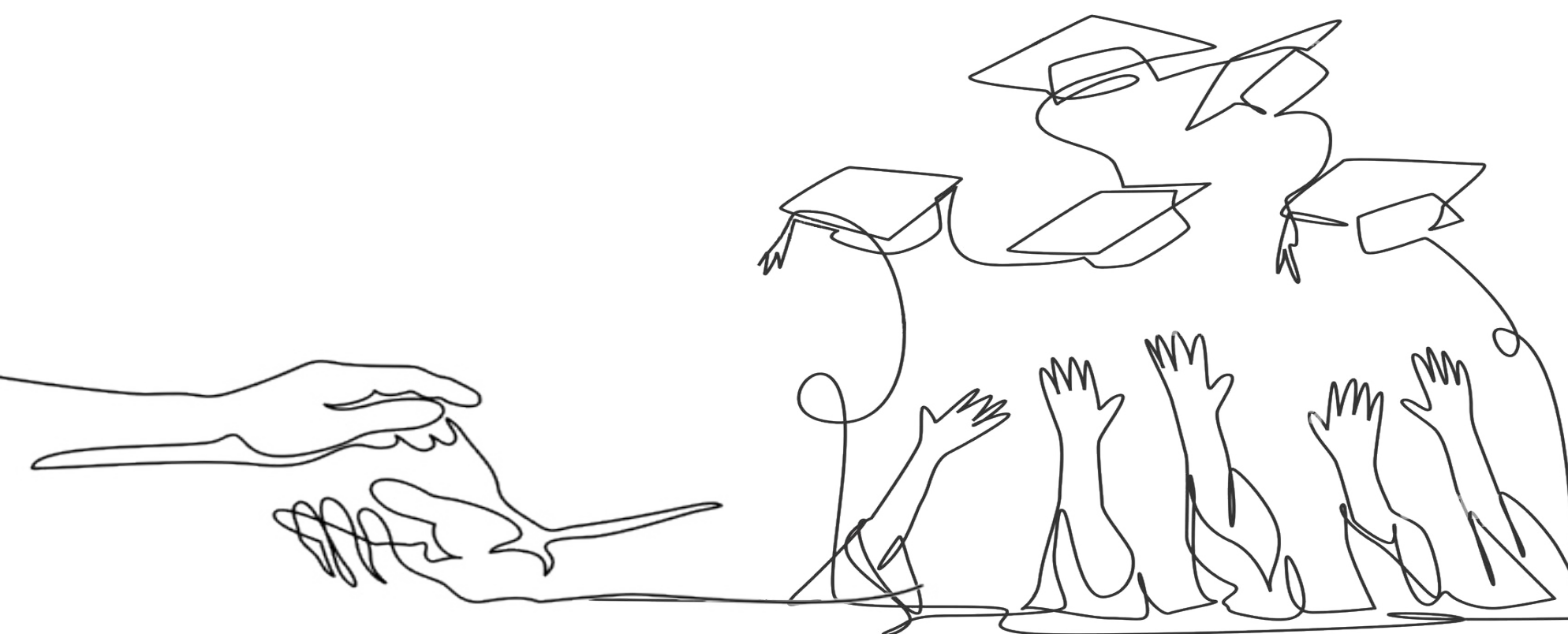
MY FUTURE

Avela has big plans to start his own business and achieve his life goal of becoming a successful entrepreneur. He plans to pay the Power of One forward by helping others in his community to overcome depression. He advises young people to apply to study at Signa and gain the experience that will open up new opportunities for them.

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MEET BAYANDA

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Bayanda Nokoyo is a determined young man who learned about Signa from a neighbour who advised him to apply for an apprenticeship. Bayanda was unemployed at the time. Today, Bayanda is a proud holder of an NQF Level 2 qualification in Agri-Trade Processes.

MY ADVICE

“Be humble to yourself, be open to always changing, and most importantly, follow your dreams.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

My life has changed so much; I have a qualification that will benefit me, and with the experience I have gained, I can secure better job opportunities.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa means a new beginning and an opportunity that opens your eyes and puts you on the right path to achieve your goals. Without my sponsor, Lona, none of this would be possible. I am so grateful to be able to feed my family for twelve months, and after that, I will be equipped with skills and experience to successfully enter the workforce.

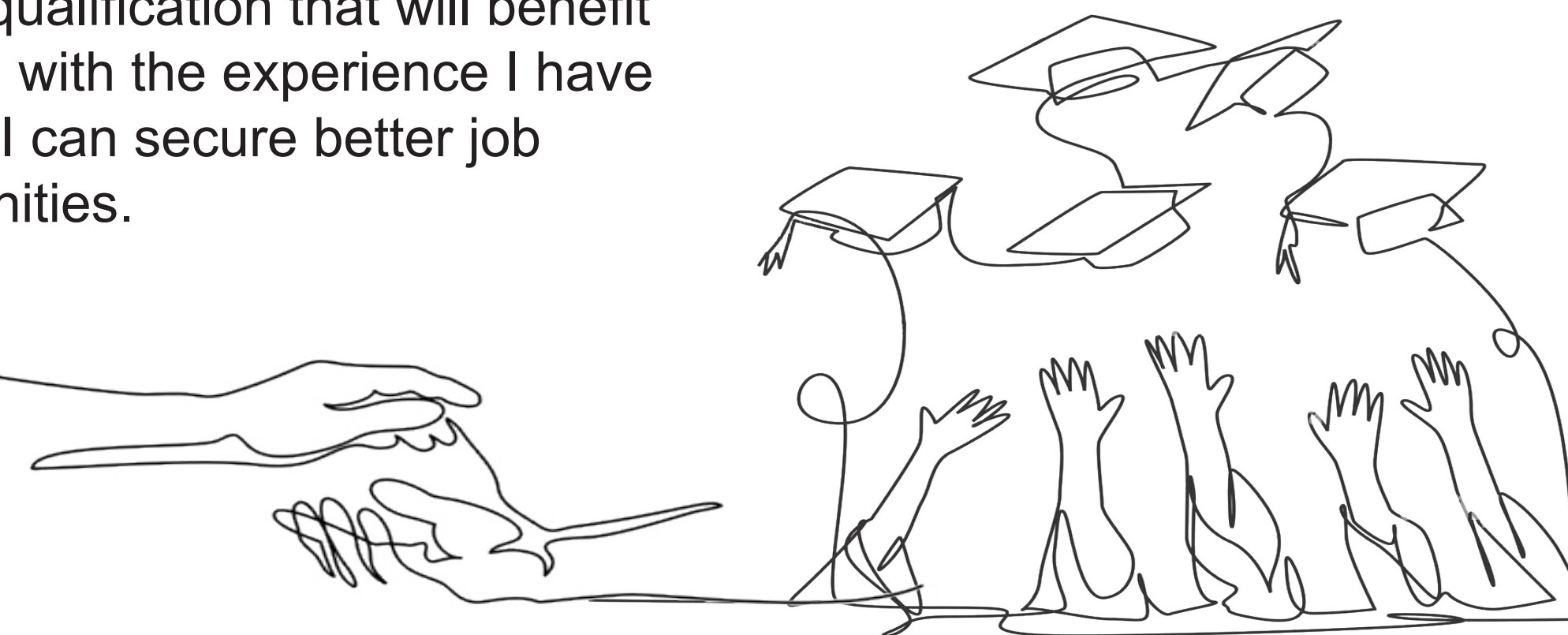
MY FUTURE

Bayanda plans to become an independent businessman and wants to pay the Power of One forward by uplifting his community in positive ways.

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MEET CHUMANI

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERAL MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

Chumani Jonginamba is a headstrong young woman who learned about Signa through a friend. She was unemployed at the time and eagerly applied. She now has an NQF Level 4 qualification in General Management sponsored by Lona Group.

MY ADVICE

“Never give up on your dreams, always stay positive and recognise that you deserve everything good in life.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

I have become more independent, motivated, and driven to achieve my goals and live my dreams.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa is a safe environment that helps build a sustainable foundation for learners with disabilities and empowers them to make something of themselves.

MY FUTURE

Chumani is an aspiring manager and plans to use her acquired knowledge to help others in her community. She also plans to pay the Power of One forward by telling everyone how Signa helps disabled people.

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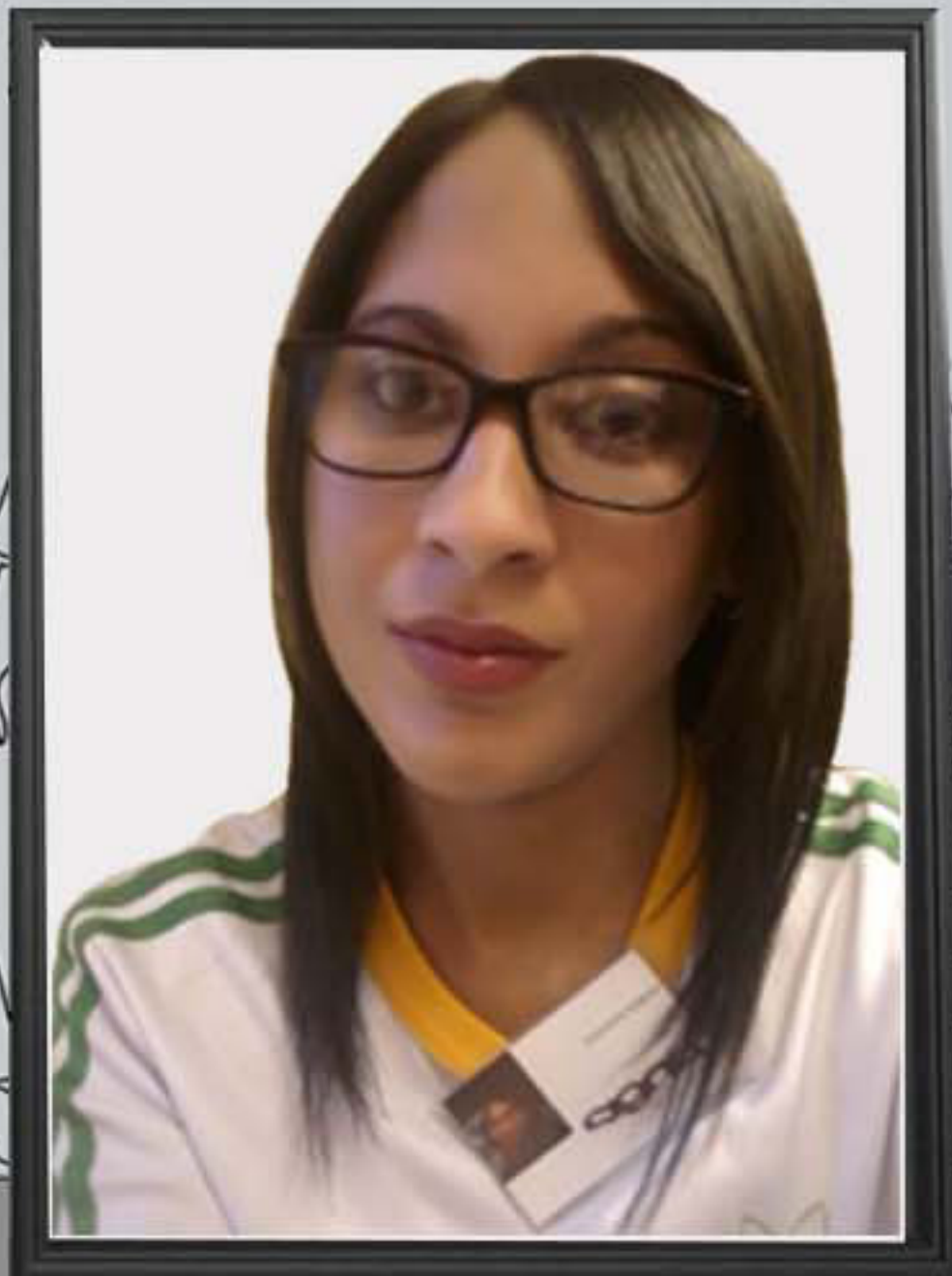
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MEET EMERANCHE

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERIC MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

Emeranche Koopman is an enterprising and hardworking young woman who became aware of Signa through a friend, when she was at home with nothing to do. She now holds an NQF Level 4 qualification in Generic Management.

MY ADVICE

“Never give up, always be positive and focus on the things you want for yourself.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

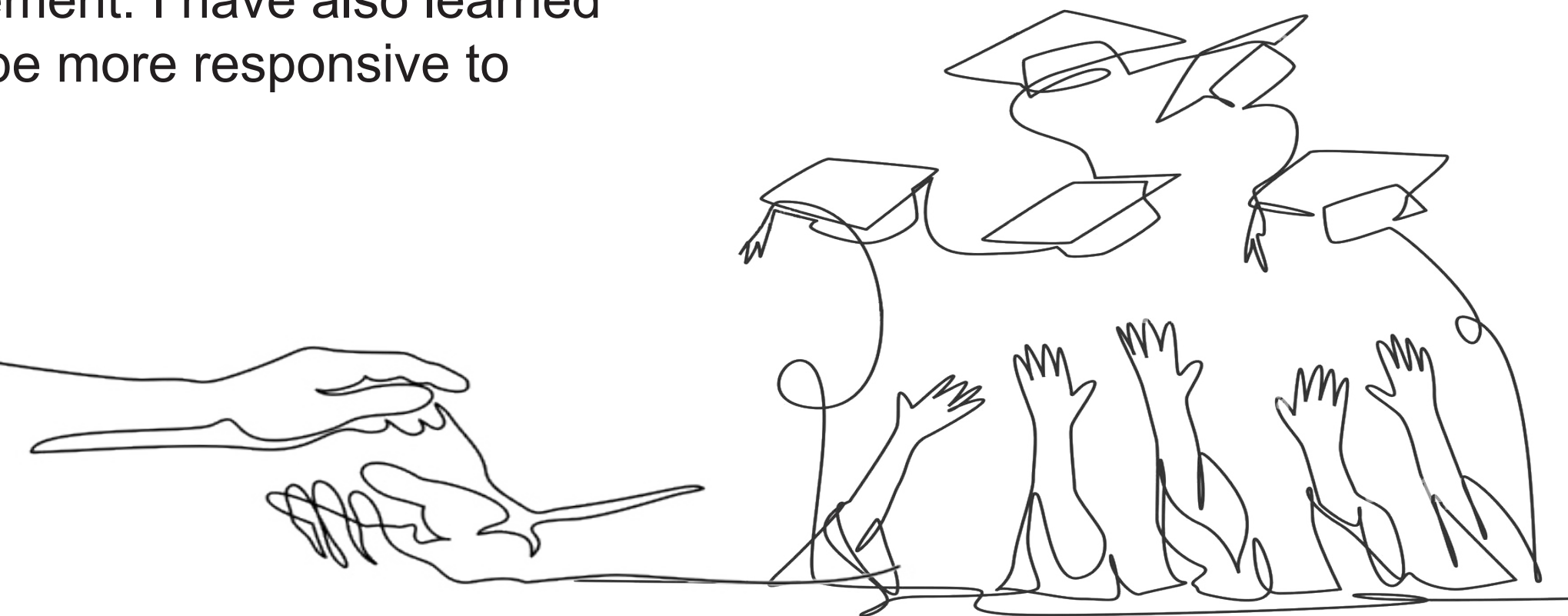
I have acquired many skills and knowledge about leadership and management. I have also learned how to be more responsive to people.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa means everything to me, because this opportunity has made me a better person. I am so grateful to my sponsor, Lona, for giving me a chance and funding my studies. I will be forever grateful.

MY FUTURE

Emeranche is an aspiring entrepreneur and plans to start a travel company to help people with disabilities to explore the world. She also plans to pay the Power of One forward by telling everyone about Signa and how the company provides skills to people with disabilities.



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MEET KAMVALETU

HOLDS A QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Kamvaletu Mxokozeli is a dedicated young man who found out about Signa through internet and eagerly applied for a learnership opportunity. Now he holds a qualification in Agri-Trade Processes that was sponsored by Lona Group.

MY ADVICE

“Grab every learning opportunity with both hands and work hard to become successful”.

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

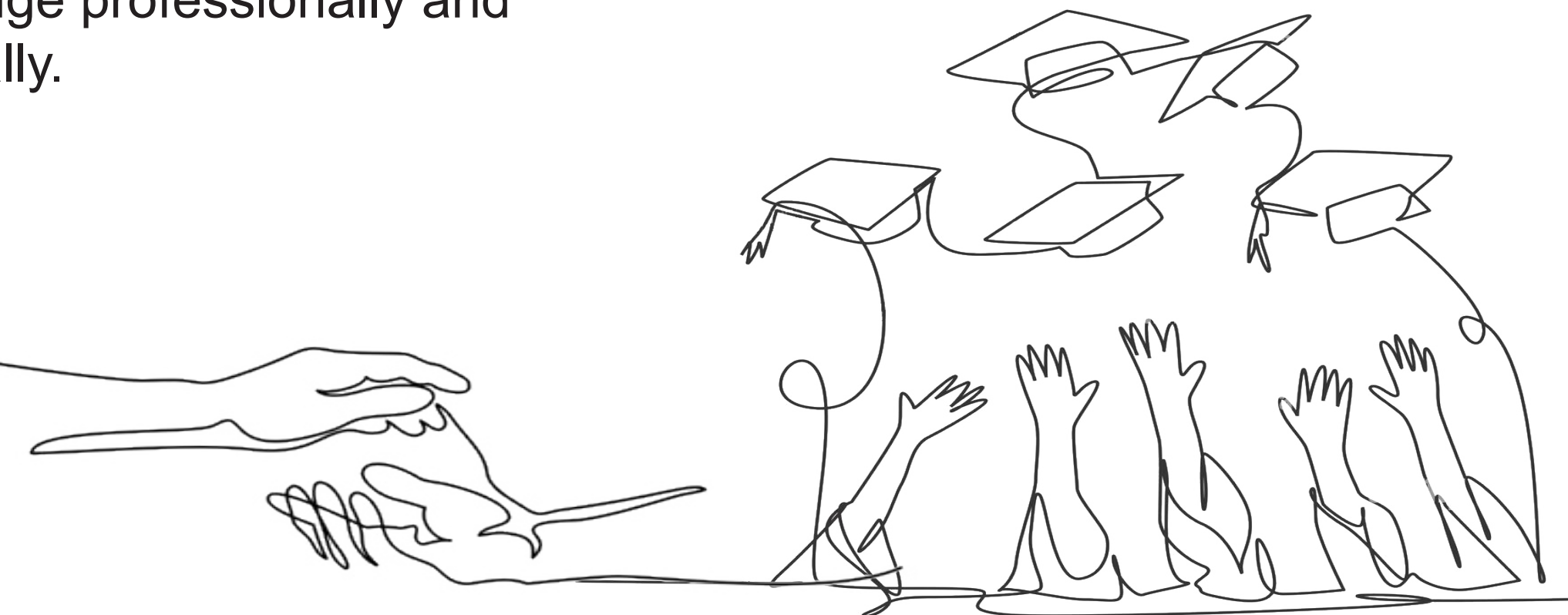
I learned how Agri-Trade works and how to apply those skills and knowledge professionally and personally.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa is a place where disabled youth are welcomed and have the opportunity to come together and learn skills to find better employment opportunities.

MY FUTURE

Kamvaletu is an aspiring engineer and plans to use the skills he learned at Signa Academy to create a better future for himself. Signa not only taught me but supported me. I plan to give back by achieving my goal of becoming a South African engineer, and by supporting educational programmes for the disabled like this one.



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MEET KHANYISA

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERAL MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

Khanyisa Bolisiki is a determined young woman who came across Signa via the Internet, although she was neither studying nor working at the time. She applied eagerly and excitingly, now has an NQF Level 4 qualification in General Management.

MY ADVICE

“A disability is not the end of the road. It does not mean you can’t achieve a qualification that will help you build a future. Don’t let your disability to become an inability, but commit to pushing your limits to reach your goals.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

Signa Academy has given me more than just professional skills and experience. With their help, I was able to develop my self-confidence,

and I am so proud to say, who I am today I owe Signa.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa is everything to me and has become like a second home. I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn about Signa Academy. None of this would be possible without the help of my sponsor, Lona. Thank you so much for giving me the chance to improve my skills.

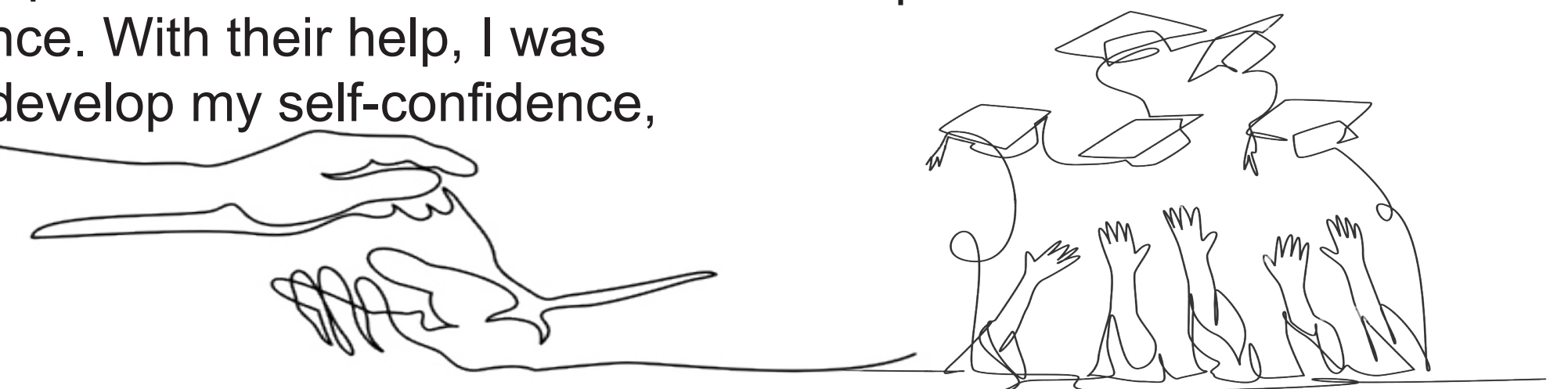
MY FUTURE

Khanyisa has a vision of finding a job as an administrator or receptionist in a prestigious company, and she wants to pay the Power of One forward by spreading the word about Signa and how the company is helping the disabled community develop their skills.

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MEET KIREN

HOLDS A QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Kiren Dawraj is a young go-getter who became aware of Signa through a mutual friend while he was finishing his studies at the time. Kiren excitingly holds an Agri-Trade Processes qualification from Signa Academy.

MY ADVICE

Kiren's advice to the youth is, "Never give up, even when things are bad, there is always hope."

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

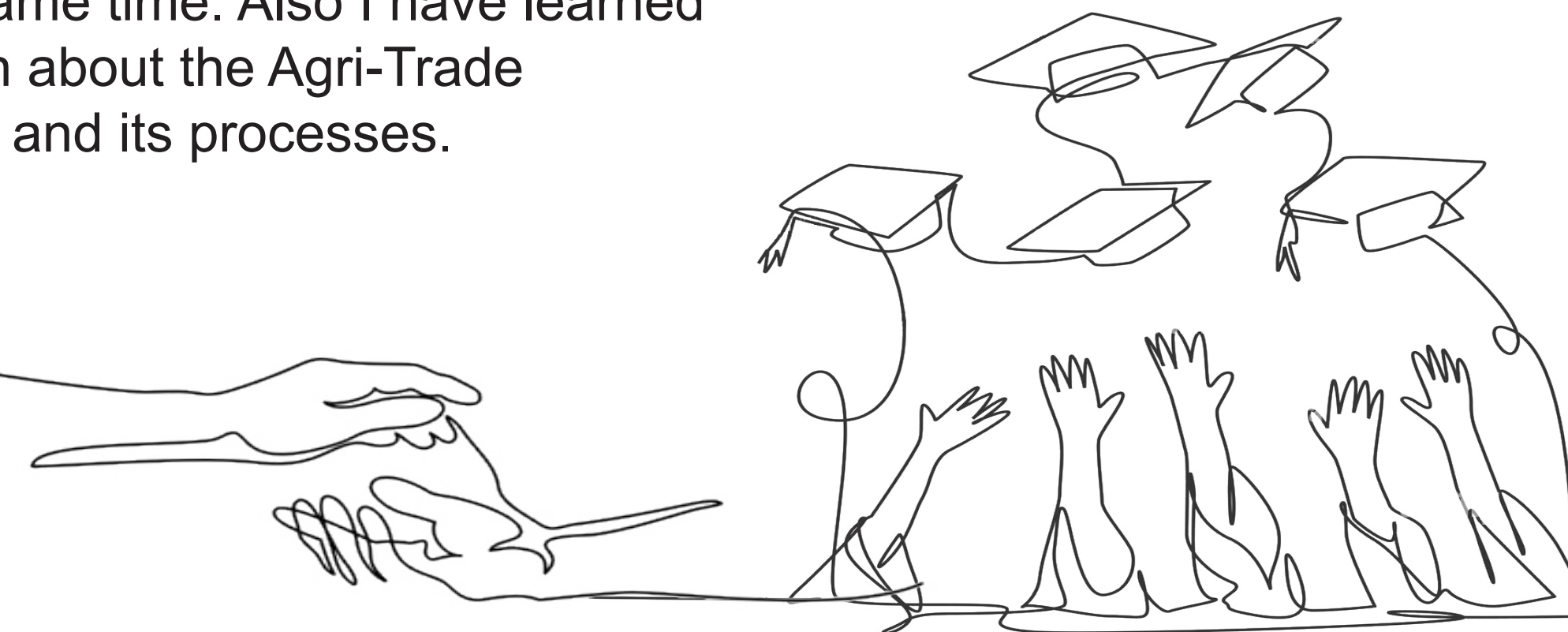
My life has changed so much; I am able to study and receive an income at the same time. Also I have learned so much about the Agri-Trade industry and its processes.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa Group means a lot to me. It is a place where I can develop my skills to get ahead in life. I am so grateful to my sponsor, Lona, for this opportunity. Thank you so much for giving me a chance.

MY FUTURE

Kiren is an aspiring entrepreneur and plans to open his own business. He also plans to pay the Power of One forward by creating jobs for people in his community.



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MEET KREOLIN

HOLDS A QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Kreolin Govender is a head strong young man who learned about Signa through a friend who explained how they help underprivileged people further their education and gain experience. Now, he is the proud holder of a qualification in Agri-Trade Processes.

MY ADVICE

Kreolin advises young people to “set attainable goals and work as hard as you can; because it pays to be different, and show people you are more than what meets the eye.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

My life has changed for the better. Thanks to Signa, I can achieve my goals in life.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa became my hope for a brighter future, and I am really grateful to Signa Academy and most importantly, my sponsor, Lona, who took a chance on me and provided me with an invaluable opportunity to learn new skills.

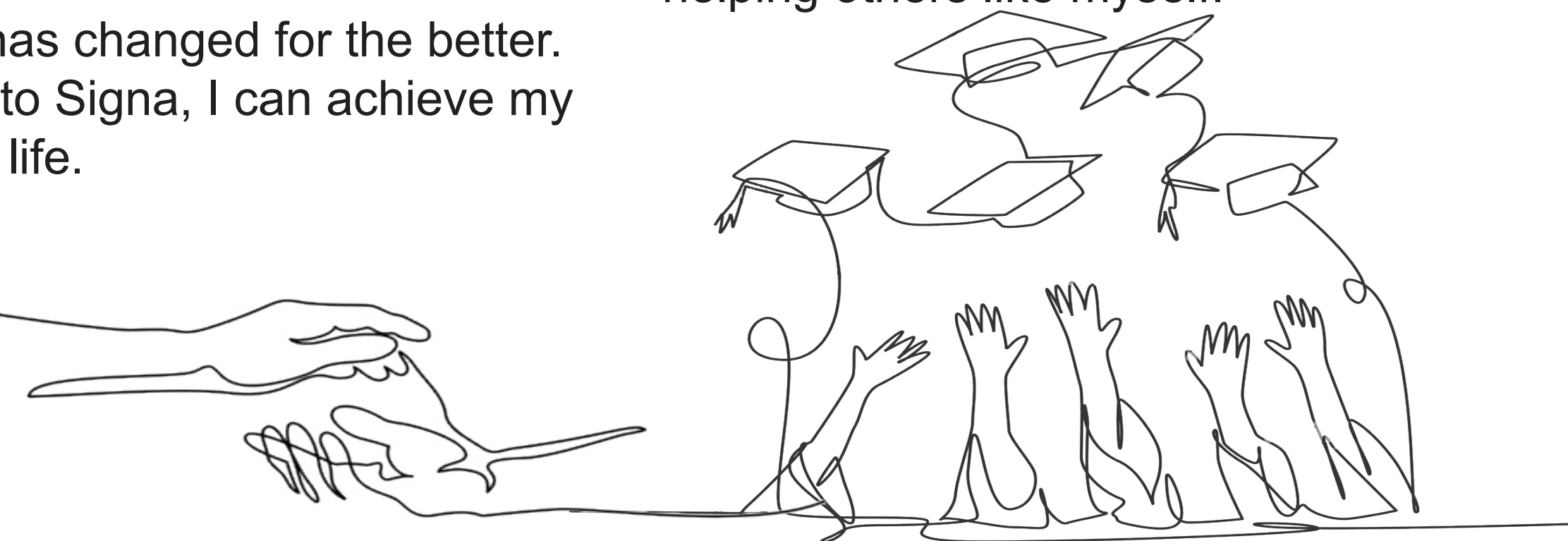
MY FUTURE

Kreolin is an aspiring entrepreneur and plans to start his own transportation company, considering his qualification as an advantage. “I am honored to be a part of this Power of One initiative, and I plan to take advantage of my opportunity by telling more people about Signa and helping others like myself.”

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MEET LUZUKO

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERAL MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

Luzuko Mqhele is a young, ambitious man who learned about Signa through a mutual friend. He is currently studying towards an NQF Level 4 qualification in General Management.

MY ADVICE

Luzuko advises the youth to “visit Signa to apply for a learnership programme so that they can learn new skills to secure a job.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

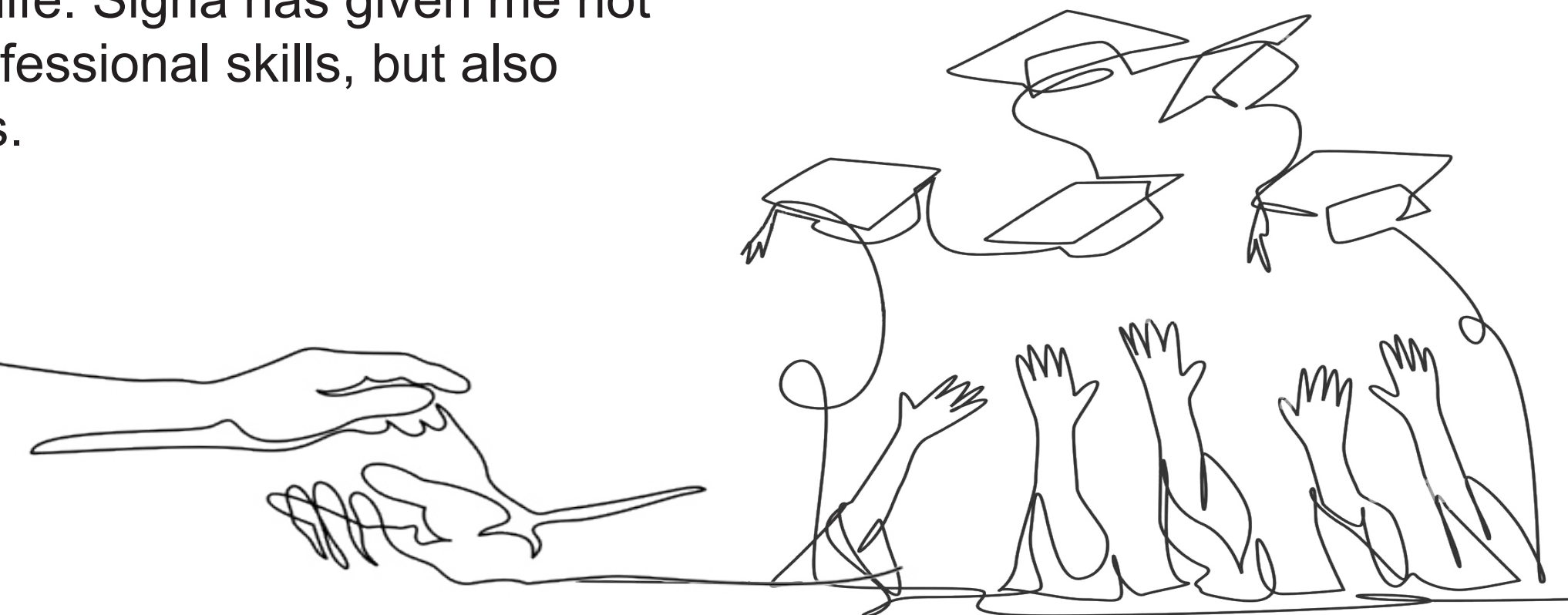
My life has changed positively. I now know where I am going and what I want in life. Signa has given me not only professional skills, but also life skills.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa means a lot to me as they have played a very important role in my life and have shaped me into a better person. I would like to thank Signa for this great opportunity, as well as Lona, my sponsor, for funding my learnership and giving me a chance to better myself.

MY FUTURE

Luzuko aspires to become a leader and plans to start his own business. He also wants to pay the Power of One forward by helping his community create jobs to help feed families and ensure the well-being of households.



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MEET NAMHLA

HOLDS A QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Namhla Ntlukaniso is a dedicated young woman who found out about Signa through a mutual friend. At the time she was unemployed. She now has a qualification in Agri-Trade Processes from Signa Academy.

MY ADVICE

“To get to the top, you have to start from the bottom.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

I have learned so much about the Agri-Trade industry and its best practices. I also learned life skills, such as self-motivation and the importance of setting goals.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa is very important to me, because I have acquired many skills and knowledge. I am so very grateful to my sponsor, Lona, for investing in the development of my skills.

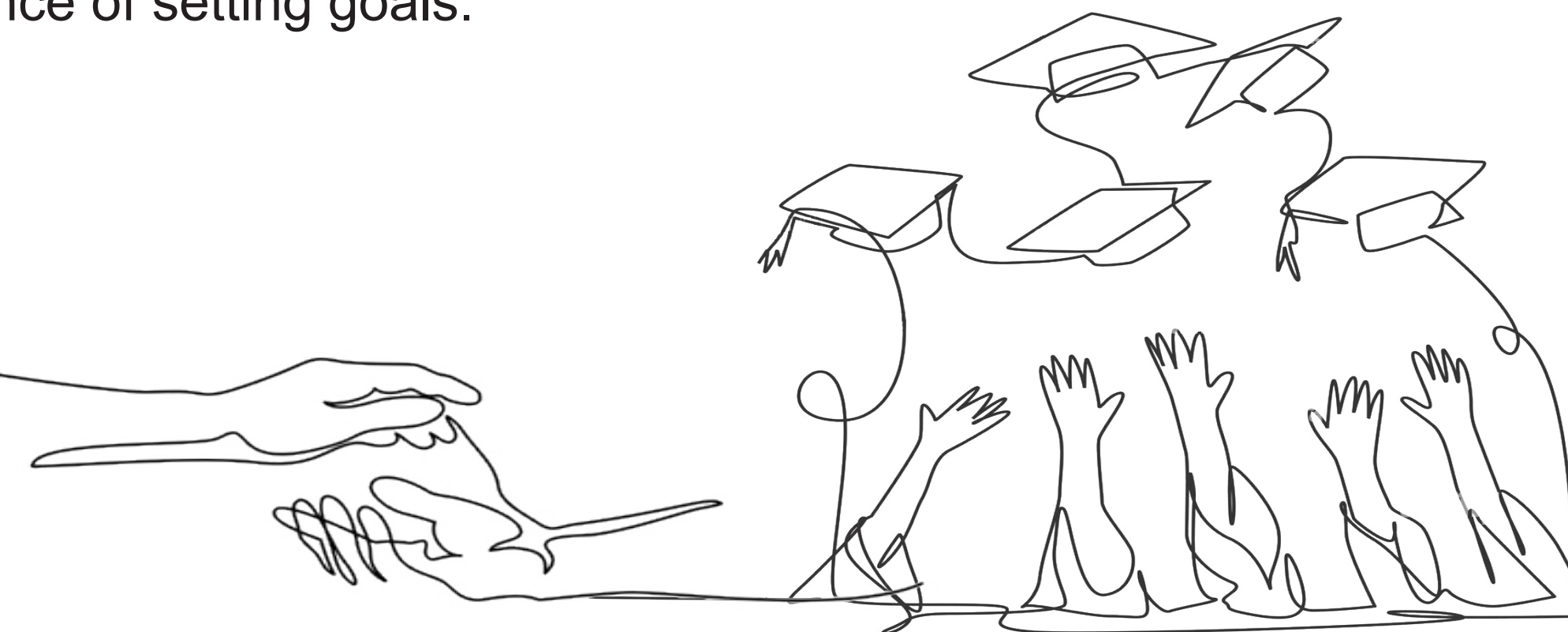
MY FUTURE

Namhla plans to secure a permanent job and save up to start her own small business. She also wants to pay the Power of One forward by telling everyone she knows about Signa and how the company empowers youth.

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MEET SINAZO

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Sinazo Sogayise is a tenacious young woman who found out about Signa through a friend. She was unemployed at the time. She is currently studying towards an NQF Level 2 qualification in Agri-Trade Processes sponsored by Lona.

MY ADVICE

She advises young people to never give up on their dreams and always celebrate the small successes.

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

My life has changed so much. I have developed better time management skills, and I am motivated and inspired to work hard to achieve my life goals.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa means everything to me because I've learned so much about work and life. I have learned how to handle difficult situations, what employers expect, and how to conduct myself in the workplace. It has made me a stronger woman.

MY FUTURE

Sinazo plans to work hard to achieve her dream of becoming a successful businesswoman. She plans to pay the Power of One forward by making it known how Signa equips the youth with invaluable skills and knowledge.

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MEET YONELA

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERIC MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

Yonela Sitwebile is a hardworking young man who came across Signa when he was searching for learnerships on the internet, and was unemployed at the time. He now holds an NQF Level 4 qualification in Generic Management, from Signa Academy.

MY ADVICE

“Never underestimate yourself because of your disability.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

I learned about business administration and sales management, which equipped me with the right skills for my future career. I also learned about time management and leadership.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa means motivation and hope for a brighter future for me and others. They provide the disabled community with chances to study and gain work experience. Their ICAS programme helps people through their problems with counseling. I am so grateful to my sponsor, Lona, who funded this opportunity for me and helped me provide for my family.

MY FUTURE

Yonela is an aspiring entrepreneur and wants to start his business using the skills he has learned from Signa. He aims to specialise in administration, and he wants to pay the Power of One forward by employing people from his community.

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MEET ZAQERA

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 4 QUALIFICATION

IN GENERIC MANAGEMENT.



MY HISTORY

Zaqera Sauls is a bright young woman who lives with a disability called Spina Bifida. She learned about Signa from her secondary school, where she was finishing her high school diploma. Zaqera now has a Generic Management qualification, an NQF Level 4.

MY ADVICE

"Apply to Signa Academy, work hard and show your worth."

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

I have learned a lot through this learnership, both professional skills and personal skills, and I am so grateful for this opportunity.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa Academy means a lot to me. With the support of my sponsor, Lona, the stipend helped me to put food on the table and made me more independent and confident with my finances.

MY FUTURE

Zaqera plans to find a job in administration and work her way up the corporate ladder. I will always complete tasks to the best of my ability because I am so proud and grateful to be given this one chance. She plans to pay the Power of One forward by spreading the word, about how Signa is helping unemployed youth gain invaluable work experience with new skills and knowledge.



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MEET ZIZIPHO

HOLDS AN NQF LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION

IN AGRI-TRADE PROCESSES.



MY HISTORY

Zizipho Tshathsu is a dedicated young woman who heard about Signa through a friend and then applied, as she was unemployed at the time. Now, she has a qualification in Agri-Trade Processes, an NQF Level 2.

MY ADVICE

She advises other young people to “come to Signa Academy and apply because Signa continues to educate the disabled community.”

HOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

My life has changed so much because now I have a qualification to help me find a job.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Signa means a lot to me because it gave me a great opportunity to improve. To my sponsor, Lona, thank you for investing in me. I will always be grateful.

MY FUTURE

Zizipho wants to become an entrepreneur and start a small farming business with the skills she has learned during her learnership. She also plans to pay the Power of One forward by spreading the word of how Signa teaches disabled people skills that enable them not only to survive, but to succeed.



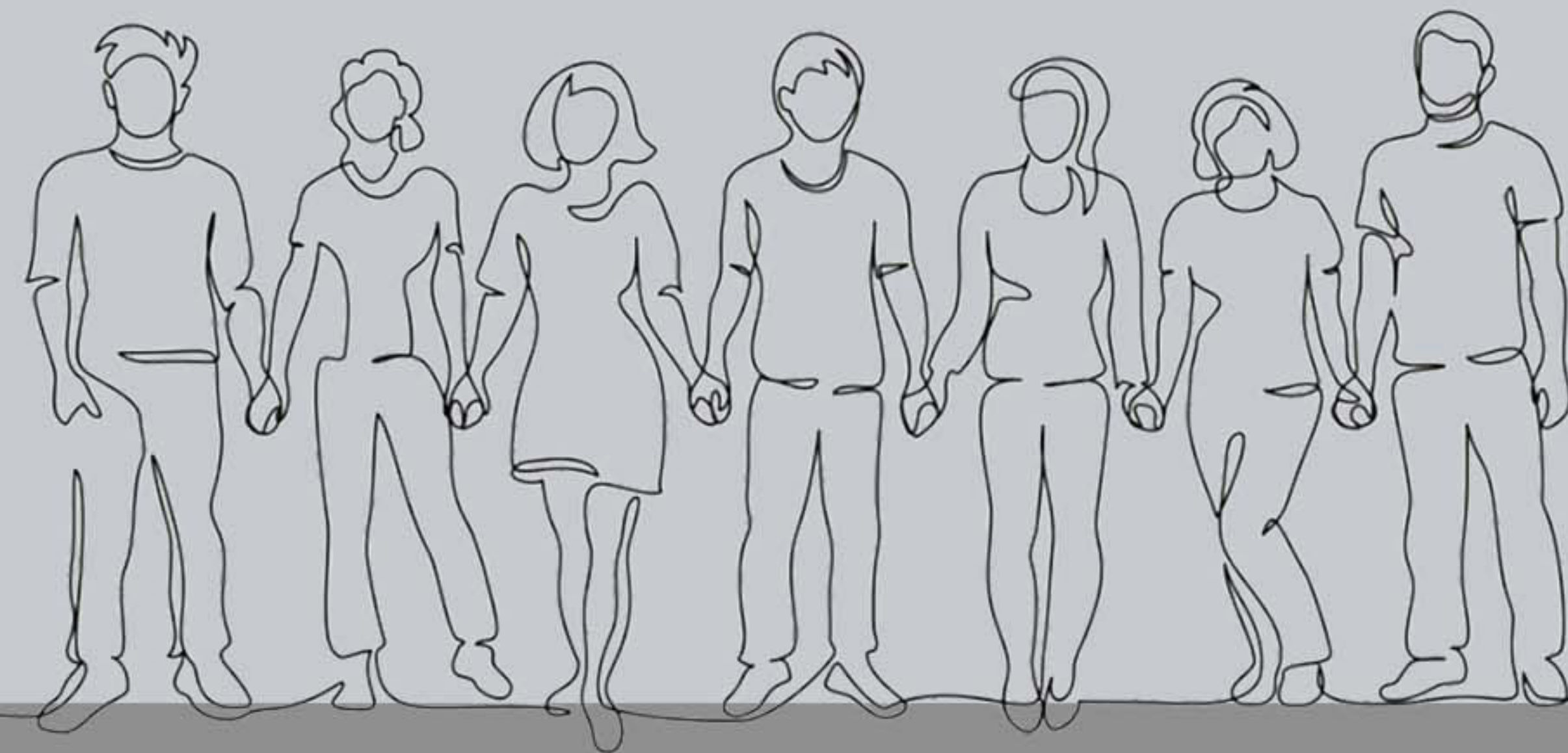
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MEET THE LEARNERS



AKHONA TYESI

“Focus on learning new skills, and opportunities will come.”

ANDIPHA KALIMASHE

“Don’t overlook the opportunities provided by having an education because they provide real skills and knowledge that will help you get started in life.”

APHIWE MENEMENE

“Seize every opportunity that comes your way and take one step at a time.”

ASIVE MATOMELA

“You can do anything you put your mind to. Go chase your dreams.”

ASIVE NZONGA

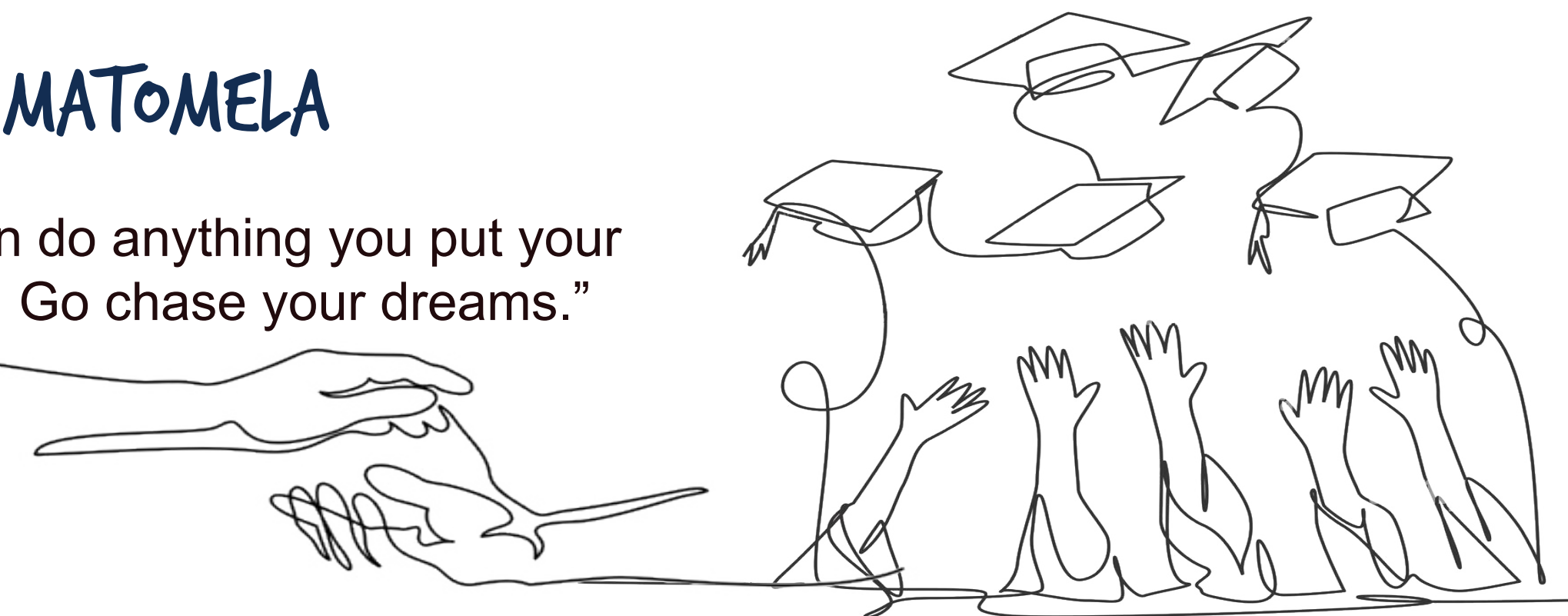
“Stay true to yourself and be open to every opportunity to learn.”

AVUYISIWE HOYI

“Come to Signa, get education, training, and work experience for a better job.”

AYANDA MAKUTOANA

“Take learning seriously and work hard to become successful.”



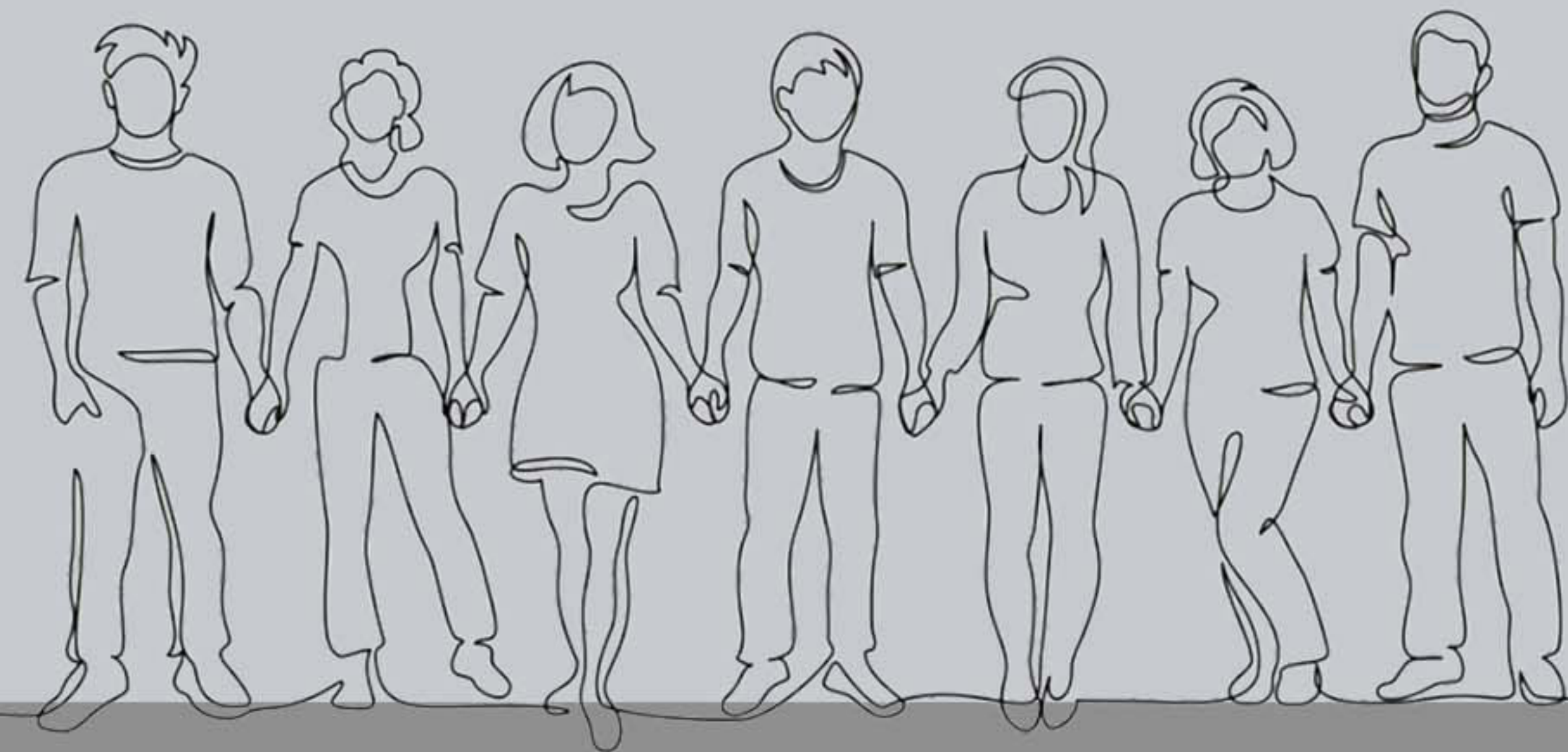
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MEET THE LEARNERS



(HARILENE MELEI

“Never give up, and always do your best.”

FUZILE SINETHEMBA

“Always stay positive through everything.”

KHANYA STOTO

“Always be eager to learn and work hard.”

KHANYA BRANDON MERANA

“Go out there and look for opportunities to learn.”

LELETHU LUBAMBO

“Apply for a Signa learnership, and they will support you to grow and succeed.”

LIYABONA NTLANTSI

“Don’t get distracted by people, get to know you, and use your strengths to reach your goals.”

LUMALELA NGOLOTHI

“Do whatever it takes to make something of yourself and to continue trying even when you fail.”



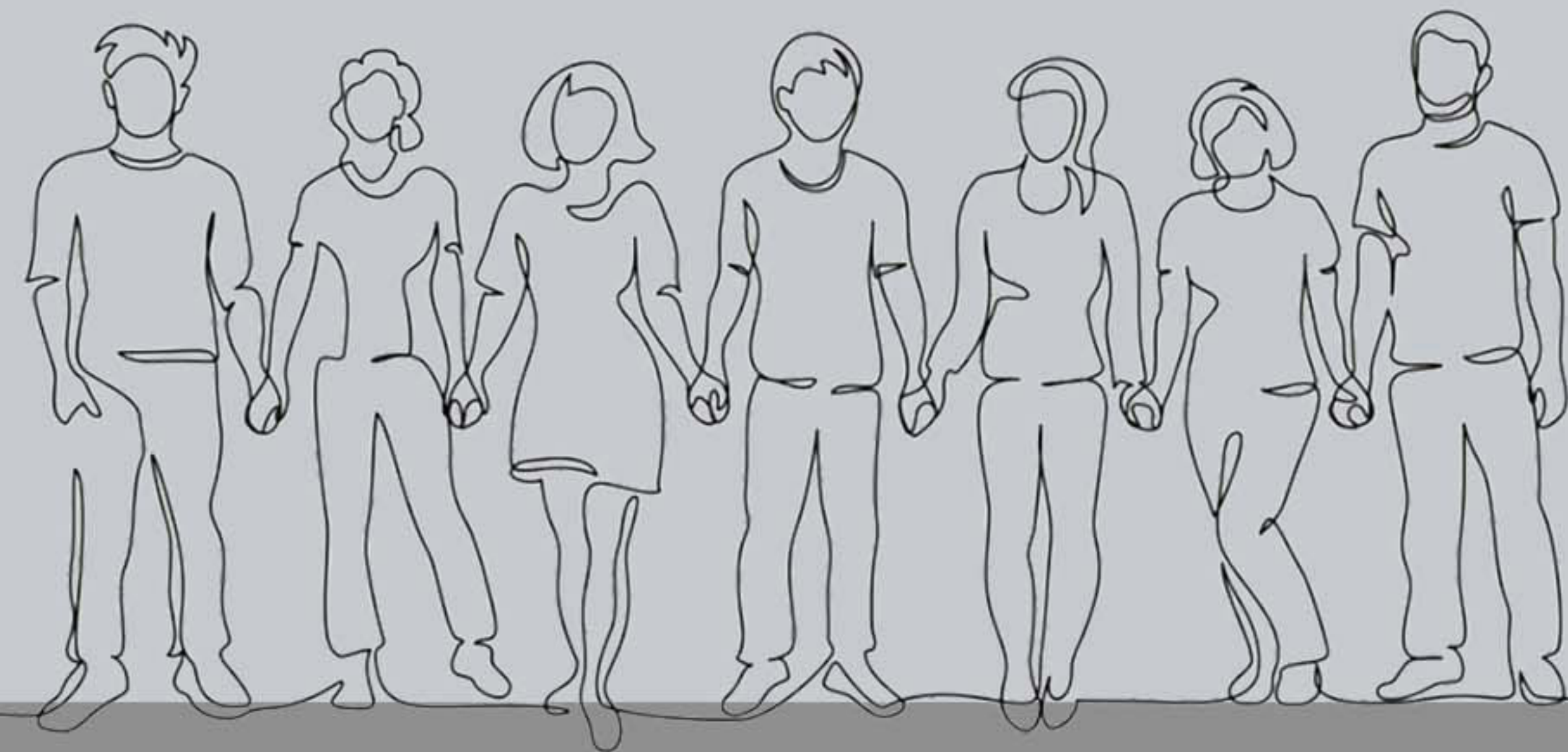
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MEET THE LEARNERS



MEKEDLEA SWARTBOOI

“Don’t let your past determine your future, and always do your best to be better than you were yesterday.”

MKUSELI FODO

“Continue to learn new skills to become unstoppable.”

MOGAMAD JOSEPH

“Be kind to others and always think and feel positive.”

NKO SINATHI MVELA

“Stay strong and be humble.”

NKO SIVILE MATSOKO

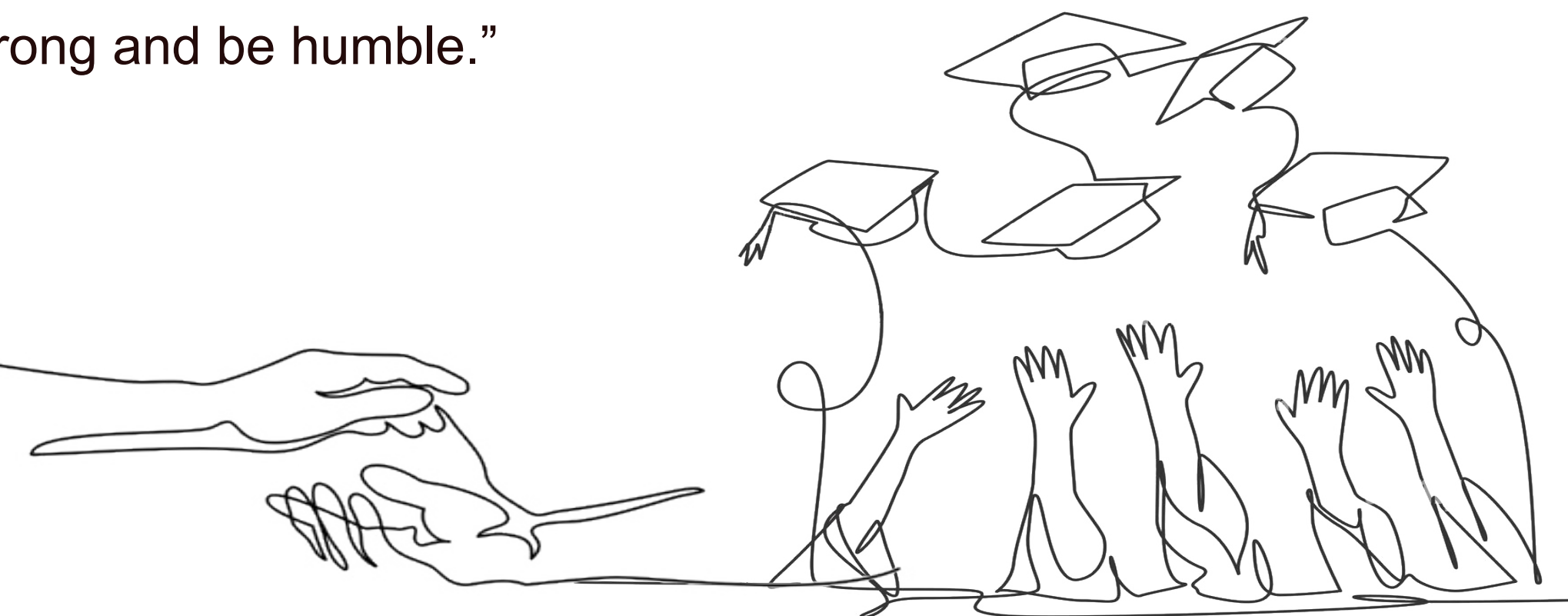
“Always stay true to who you are.”

NOKUBONGA NDEVU

“Apply at Signa and work hard to succeed in life.”

NTUTUZELO GIFT MAQUNGO

“Be strong, your life is changing for the better.”



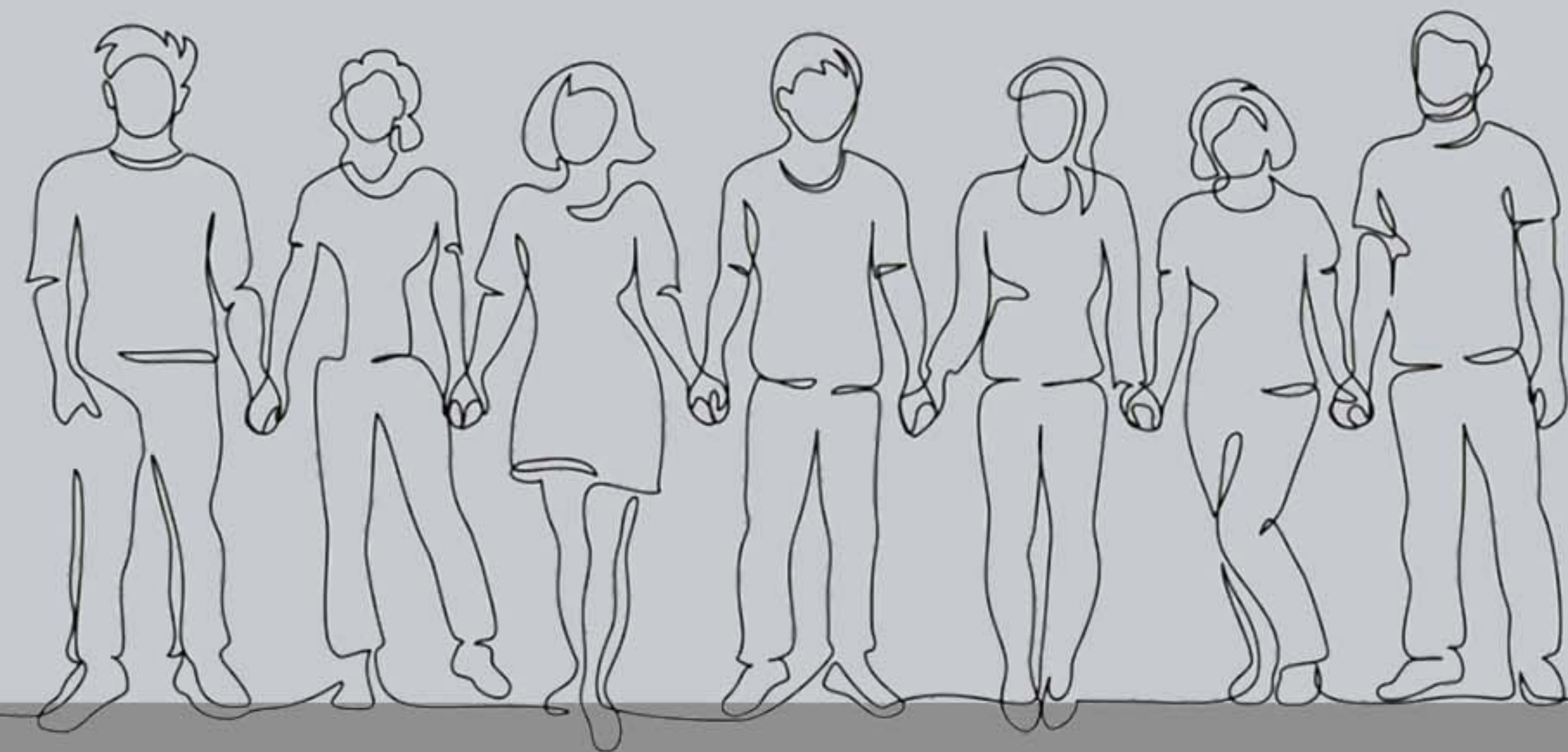
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PHUMLA SHEILLA MAQWARA

"Apply for a learnership at Signa and work hard towards proving your worth."

REILLY GROSS

"Stay focused on your goal and work hard to achieve all you want."

SANDISIWE MAPONYA

"Visit Signa Academy and apply to get qualifications that will help you in the future."

SANGE NJENXA

"Seize every opportunity that comes your way so that you can become better."

SBABALWA KALENI

"Always be open to learning and changing."

SINAZO NXANA

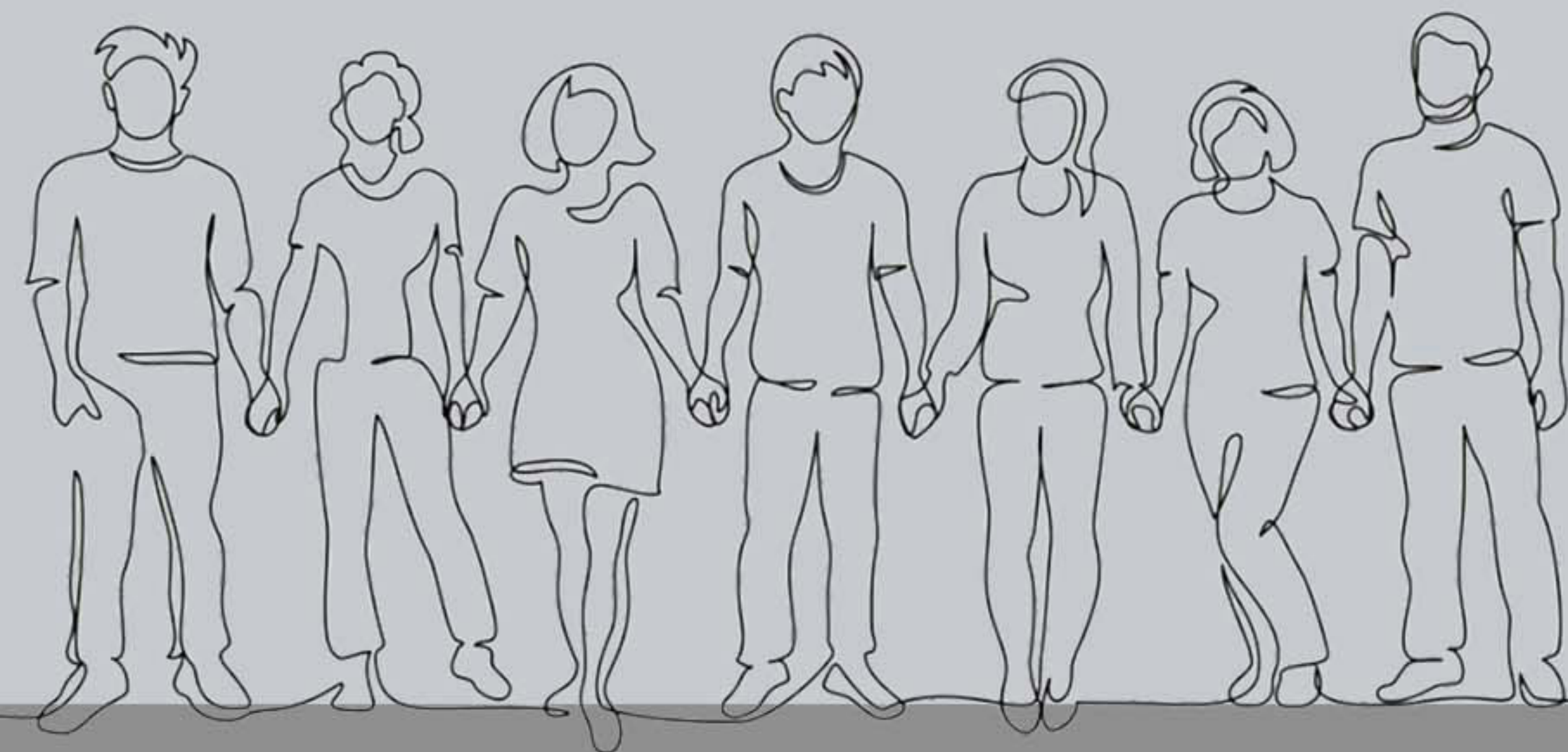
"Change your attitude, change your life."

SIPHE TYULU

"Commit to learn new things every day."



MEET THE LEARNERS



SIPHELELE NGININGINI

“Take every opportunity that comes your way with both hands, be grateful, and be humble.”

SIVUYISIWE MFENQE

“Apply for a learnership with Signa, it’s a great opportunity to learn new skills.”

SIYABONGA GQADA

“Trust in yourself, patience, and hard work can build a meaningful career.”

THAMEEN RIDDER

“Be strong and never give up on your dreams.”

THAMSANQA ZAMKANA

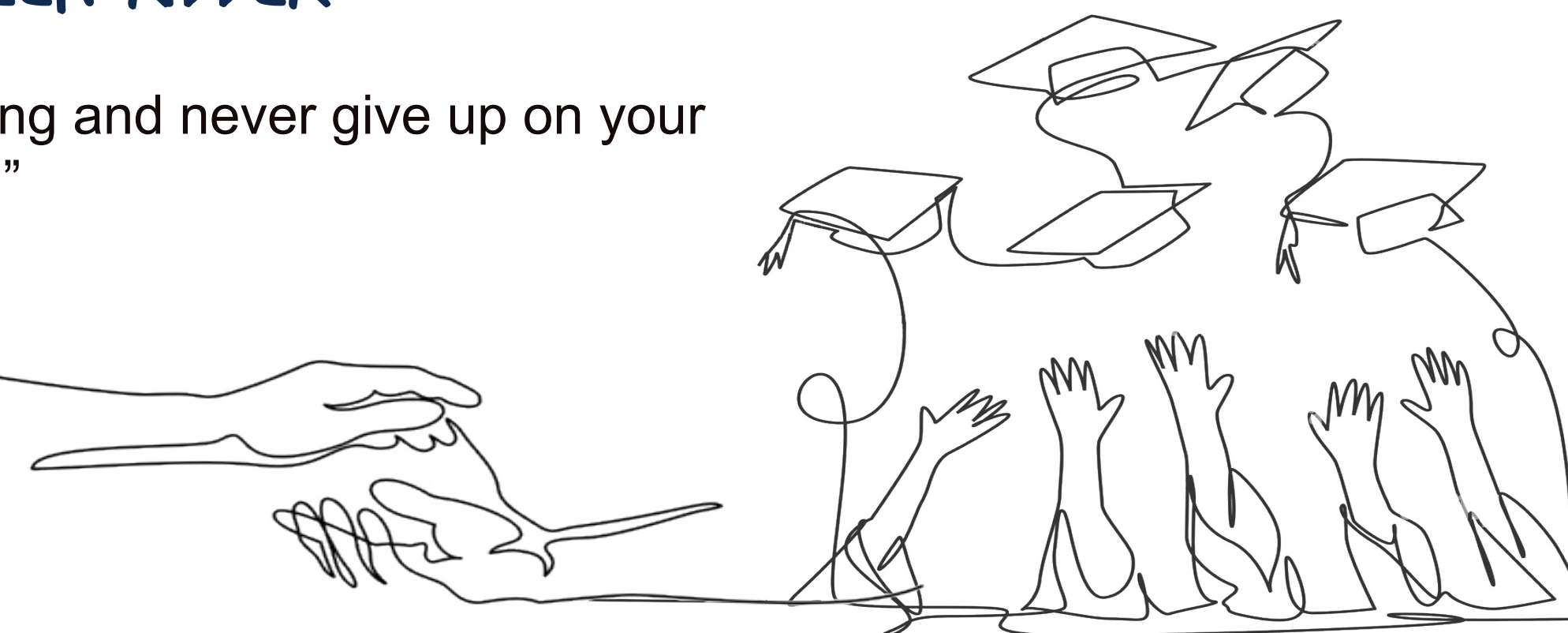
“Allow only good things to come to you and let the bad filter its way out of your life.”

THANDISWA KALENI

“Apply at Signa to learn important skills.”

VIRGIL SOLOMANS

“Trust in yourself and everything will work out for the best.”



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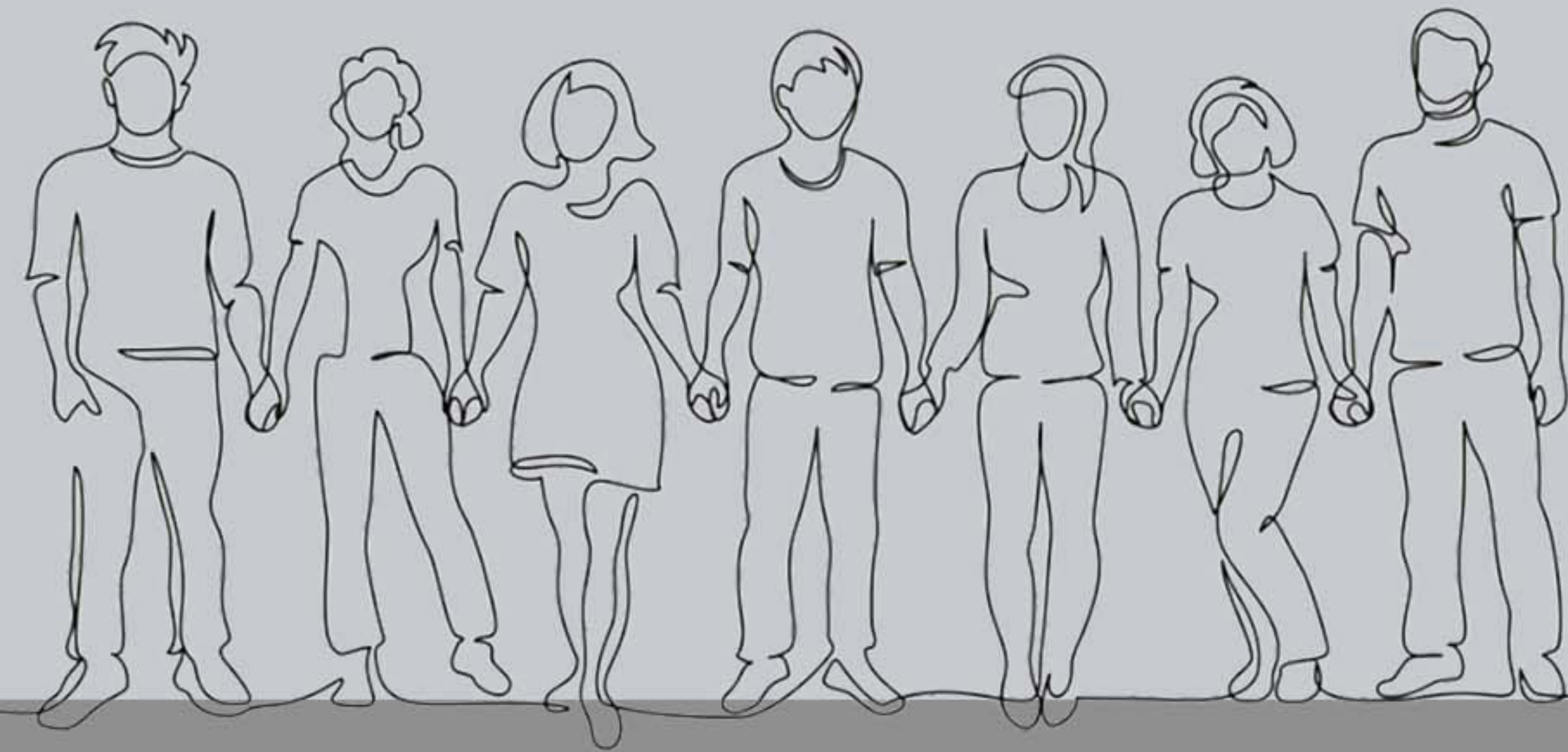


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MEET THE LEARNERS



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XOLA MKHETSHANA

“There is nothing you cannot do in life, and never take anything for granted.”

YAMKELA MBELE

“Take every opportunity to learn seriously and work hard towards your dreams.”

YANGA PEYI

“Take every opportunity you get and work hard.”

YARRICK MAY

“Believe in yourself, you are important.”

YONELA ZWAKALA

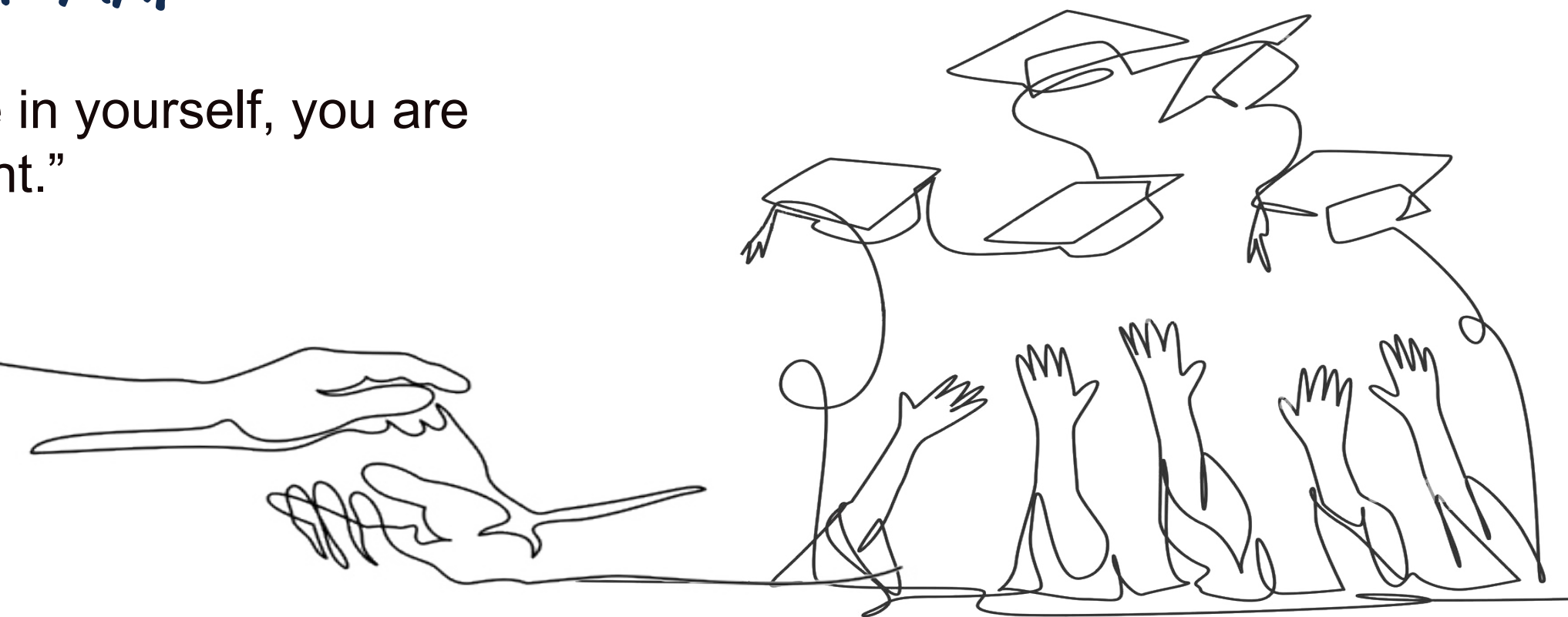
“Grab any opportunity to better yourself.”

YONELA DELIHLAZO

“Apply at Signa to gain experience.”

ZANTAY REDDY

“Learn how to cope with challenges and learn from your mistakes.”



MEET THE LEARNERS

ZINTHLE MKETSVU

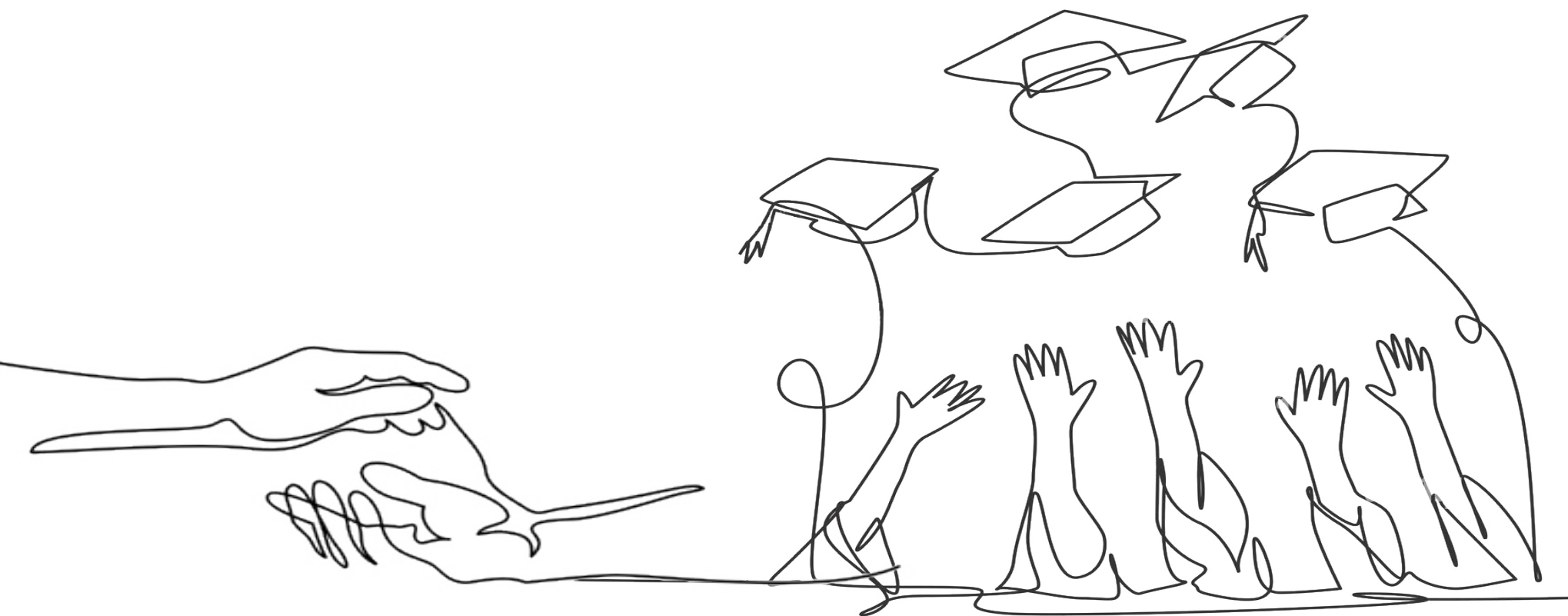
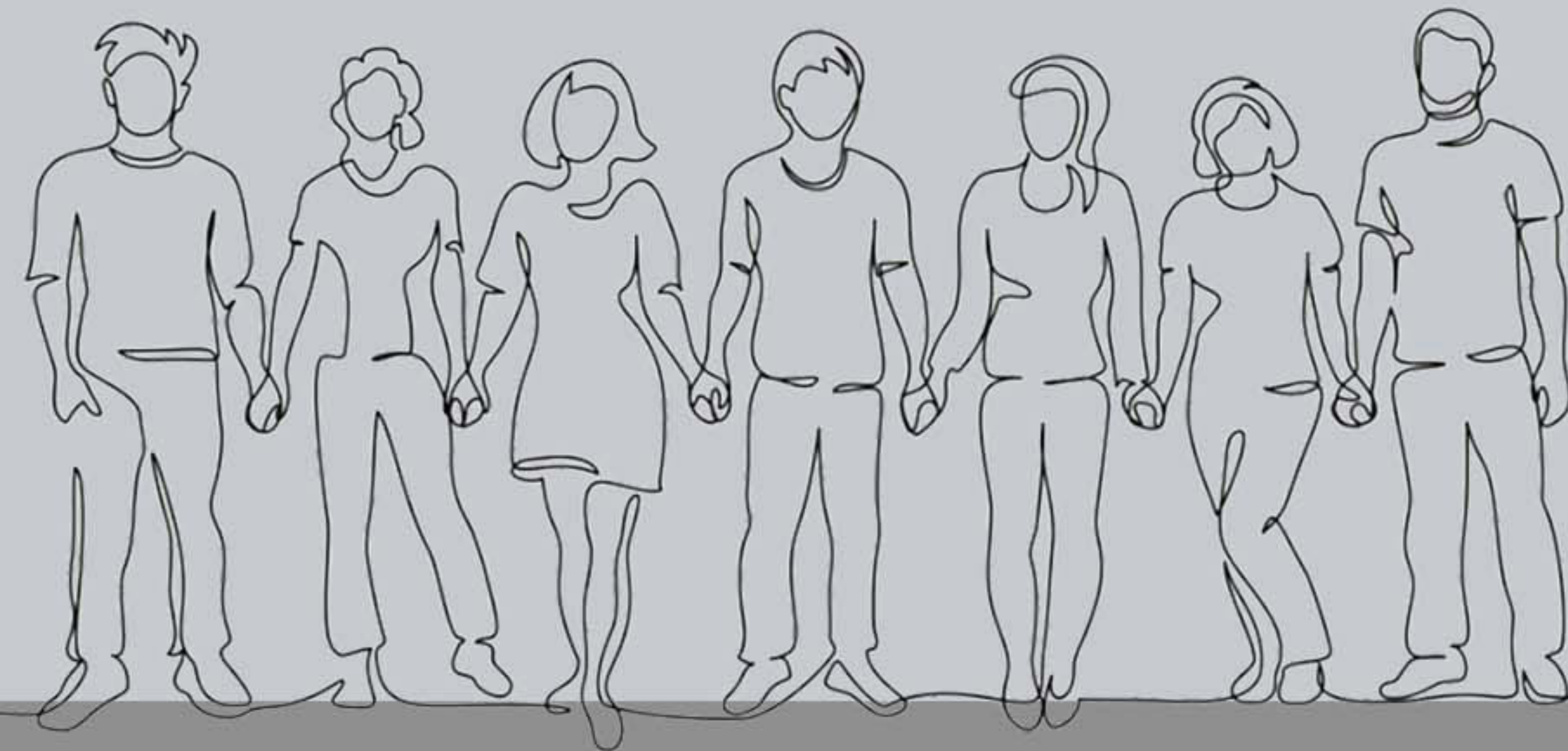
“Believe in yourself, and whatever your dream, it is possible.”

ZIZWE KALIPA

“Learn to deal with setbacks and get back up every time.”

ZUSIPHE MFUNYANA

“Apply for a Signa learnership, and they will help you to learn and grow.”



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