

Meet Alumbeni, a valued new addition to the GetTIN2Dance Friday group. He has thrown himself into the fun and hard work involved in the lead up to his first ever Best Foot Forward performance. Best Foot Forward is an annual showcase at the Gala Theatre, featuring work created and performed by artists with a learning disability or who are autistic.



Alumbeni felt nervous about his first big performance as there were going to be lots of people watching and he was worried that he might get stage fright. Rehearsals went well for him, but they were also hard at times (although he felt able to keep up!). Alumbeni really enjoyed dancing in his classes and looked forward to beating his nerves and enjoying the cheers from the audience when he finally performed.

One of Alumbeni's dance teachers, Rachel, remarked on how his confidence had grown in the group after initially starting out quiet and shy. With a curious nature, he could sometimes be easily distracted. Each week, however, Alumbeni displayed more maturity and a larger



focus on his dancing. This led to him creating his own solo to perform at Best Foot Forward and also helped enhance his awareness of music and visual cues. Despite this, in the last session before Best Foot Forward, Alumbeni was anxious about his solo, so the TIN staff immediately adapted. A fellow group member learned the dance and performed with him in the rehearsal, which made him feel more comfortable when doing it alone on the actual day. Rachel said that overall Alumbeni managed everything in the Best Foot Forward dance really well!

Alumbeni thought that his dance in Best Foot Forward was good. Although some nerves kicked in before the show, he enjoyed being on the stage in front of people once he got settled. Rachel described how he was 'totally in the zone when dancing' and that he was 'amazing at hitting most of his music cues'. Alumbeni did Rachel and the whole

team proud! Performing in next year's Best Foot Forward is definitely a yes from him. Rachel hopes that Alumbeni's confidence in his ability will continue to grow and that he will be able to lead other members of the group.

For Alumbeni's parents, it was one of their proudest moments to see him perform on stage, with his self-confidence having evidently grown. They reflected on how the support with the development of his language and both gross and fine motor skills have helped improve his speech and initiation of conversations. Overall, they believe this experience brought out the best in Alumbeni!



*“Small steps make a big difference in one’s life like Alumbeni’s.” - Grace, Alumbeni’s Mum*