



VILAS COUNTY JUVENILE INTAKE

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It Takes a Village

I'd like to introduce you to a remarkable young man who has essentially "beat the odds" after a three year period in the juvenile justice system. He has entered adulthood as educated, motivated, and has a very promising and exciting future ahead of him. Here is his story:

Steve began his involvement with the juvenile justice system at the young age of 14. He comes from a dysfunctional home that had many health and legal issues. Steve's home life lacked structure, discipline, and support. His parents were unemployed and often turned to the community for much needed assistance.

During his first year of being in the juvenile justice system, Steve began to experiment with drugs due to a lack of stability in the household. These poor decisions lead Steve to be referred to the Vilas County Juvenile Intake Department for multiple offenses. These offenses range from recreational use of marijuana to delivery of narcotics, and additional illegal behavior. Steve was placed on a Dispositional Order (basically probation for minors) for a period of one year with conditions. As part of this supervision, Steve was required to complete community service hours, pay restitution, attend AODA counseling, and mental health therapy.

A unique turn of events changed Steve's life. A staff member from Steve's former elementary school became involved in Steve's life. She and her husband both assisted

in not only providing a stable environment but also helping Steve with the things that his parents were unable to carry out. Steve continued to make poor decisions with his life and voluntarily agreed to go to an AODA treatment facility for 10 days. With a different outlook Steve successfully completed the program.

Again Steve relapsed. At this point, Steve wanted one last chance to prove himself. His intake worker took him back to court and negotiated a solution. Steve was going to Northwest Passage II, a 90 day adventure based challenge that provided a high impact, immediate response to young men experiencing problems at home, school, or the community. This program focused on academics, physical training, counseling (family and personal), and a 2 week hike for roughly 100 miles. With much determination, Steve successfully completed the program and with noted accomplishments for his efforts. Thanks to the program's guidance and staff leadership, Steve returned to his foster parents and felt more confident than ever.

Steve wanted to continue living with his foster parents without the risk of being returned to an unstable environment. He knew this was necessary for him to continue to be successful. His foster parents then became his legal guardians with the blessing of his parents.

Since his return, he has had no further involvement in the juvenile justice system and his intake worker petitioned the court for early release from his supervision; the court granted it.

After laborious work, while remaining in foster care, Steve was able to graduate from high school on time with his classmates and was rewarded with several scholarships to help further his education.

Currently at age 20, Steve has just completed his 2nd year of college. He is a Culinary Arts student and loves the program. He enjoys cooking for family and at a local camp, and helps with the household bills. Steve has decided to reside with his guardians while finishing his program and working part time. Steve admits, "Maintaining sobriety is no walk in the park, but it's essential to stay positive and to surround yourself with people who do the same." Steve has not had contact with law enforcement since his "juvenile days."

After graduating from the Culinary Arts program, Steve plans on studying abroad in Europe with the money he earned working two jobs. With the resources that the community provided, the obstacles Steve was able to overcome, the love of two families, along with sheer determination, Steve is a success.

Congratulations Steve!

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