

The Future of Job Corps

This is an essay about the life of a struggling boy, who transformed into a struggling man that aspires to become a great man; this is the life of Elijah Thomas.

I was born in New York and as a kid, I grew up in poverty. As the youngest of the four males my mother produced, I watched close friends and family get drawn into a negative lifestyle, the "alluring" call of the street life corrupted their minds and personalities. I witnessed my old street, along with a multitude of other streets, crumble due to drugs, gang violence and police brutality. So in hopes to escape the road that was already being paved for me, my mother and father decided to move me and my older sibling to Connecticut when I was 9 but when we got there, it wasn't the "great escape" my parents had hoped for. Again, we lived in poverty, thinking a new change of scenery would improve my life, I had a rude awakening. Instead of being taken out of the ghetto, I was thrown back into the heart of it. I grew up watching kids my age rob other kids, went to a school that looked warm and pleasant from the outside but the inside was as mean and cold as walking the street, kids in 4th grade being disrespectful to staff, stealing from staff when they weren't looking and fighting almost any chance they had. Before Job Corps, I was destined to live the adolescent life my older siblings lived. As I grew up, the decisions I made as a teen and a young adult, inevitably caught up to me, bringing consequences my parents weren't prepared to deal with and we had no choice but to move to South Carolina with my second oldest brother, which was close to three years ago.

As a twenty-two year old man who has come across a bunch of positive influences with rich minds willing to pass on knowledge and wisdom to a lost soul, I took job after job, trying to find where I belong but nothing fit my criteria. I would lose interest easily and revert back to the old

me, change is never easy, even if it is for the better, so I decided to take the initiative and enroll in Job Corps. When I was younger, I thought about making this move but after hearing reviews from friends who went there, their family members who went there, it turned me off of the idea. "That place sucks, it's horrible, all they do is fight." "The rules are so strict, it's like being in a prison." "It's close to being a Hell on Earth." There were never any good words, so I dismissed that thought of coming but now as I'm in a new place, with no connections and no options, I figured "why not?" I can get my OWN outlook on it and assess it the way I see fit. I came here with the worst thoughts in mind "I bet someone is going to try me because I'm skinny." "I bet I won't make it a month here without getting terminated." "I bet this food will taste like poo too!" And everything but the latter was false (joke lol... not really) The environment here wasn't anything like I expected, the people here weren't either. Within the first week, I met some cool people and the introverted shell I encased myself in, slowly started to crumble, I let very few people into my circle, into my mind as a person and as a result, I've made friends who've become like family for life. There will be drama anywhere you go in life but it's what you decide to do about it that counts, you can let it slide off of you or you can confront it but there's always a consequence for what you do. I won't lie and say this campus is always fun and safe because it isn't but you can choose not to let anything derail you from living a better life than when you first got here. I had to change how I was as a person beforehand, to accommodate with campus living but it's all conducive to the bigger picture and that's what everyone should be thinking when they step foot into orientation. As an aspiring Computer Technician, I'm 90% in my trade on the verge of completion, I have only the CompTIA obstacle in my way and I'm ecstatic to get it over with and finally in my possession and as much as this place might get on my nerves at times, I am still the Future of Job Corps, an alumni in the making. From a struggling boy, to a struggling man, on

the verge of becoming a great man, I won't let anyone or anything stop me from achieving my dream; to finally become established, in a legit manner.

After my completion of Job Corps, I plan on joining the working force again, but instead of taking anything that might hire me, I intend to get into a job that's close to my field; Time Warner, Verizon, Sprint, Geek Squad, Best Buy or maybe even something more lucrative than that if the opportunity arises. After about two years of working and saving my money, I want to have a car and enough money to get an apartment first here in South Carolina, then enough to get an apartment in Florida and still enough for me to at least start my session in Full Sail University for Game Design. I've been writing a story since the age of 13 and I've had dreams of turning that vision I have, into a vision for the world to play and witness themselves. Before I decide to up and move, I will of course be looking for jobs in my related field and since I would have work experience, I'd also have references to vouch for me and to make things even better, I already have a reference from doing an excellent job in work based learning II from my mentor, Mr. Robert Corlain. My life has become intertwined with multiple people and they will forever be apart of any plan I make and execute, so as I grow and climb the ladder, they grow with me as a result and I wouldn't have it any other way. After my completion of School, there's a good chance I'll get my A+ certificate for computer Hardware, renew my CompTIA, which is a three year thing, and then start attempting to make my game explode. After that, the sky is the limit, traveling, adventures, broadening my horizons and obtaining knowledge. As a knowledge seeker and a person who's intrigued by intellect, I want to travel and gain knowledge about things that interest me, which I have miniscule knowledge about. I don't know about everyone else but me? I have skyscraper aspirations, a forest fire drive to pursue it and nonmalleable determination to

follow through, meaning my determination won't waver and it won't budge. I am the Future of Job Corps, I am Elijah Thomas.