

How Job Corps Changed Who I Am

I feel that I try more often now than I ever have to remember where I came from and how hard I had to work to be here. I find myself forgetting way too easily being so far away from not only home but so far away from the life I use to live, but God Gives me constant reminders. Before I go on with my story; I'm appreciative of what God has given me, the opportunities that were granted to me to do more with my life, that God privileged me to see what it was like to not have the things I do now and more than ever I'm grateful that he allowed me to see that all this time I had the ability to do so and the future I wanted and craved so bad was always nothing more than an arm reach away. Everybody at Job Corps has a story, one of the reasons why I love this program is that every individual here knows a little something about life, I believe that everybody has this bubble, some people are stuck in it their whole lives, but our bubbles, they've been popped, we're able to see things a bit differently, this makes us vulnerable, this makes us strong, and the fact that all of us have been exposed, makes us united in some way. This may not be what you see but I do. We each have this beautiful bitter sweet story that led us here to the point we are at.

Job Corps saved my life, I was desperate, I had officially hit rock bottom. We were in our first week of December, it was about 5 in the morning and it had just started hailing. I was on my way to the mall but not to shop, I knew they opened up the mall to the joggers around 7am and I was looking for water, warmth and somewhere safe to sleep. I had just turned 18, I was in my senior year of high school and instead of thinking about things like Prom or boys I thought about things like where I would sleep tonight. Do I need to eat today? Where haven't I applied for a job at? Who could I call to let me shower? I can't go to Jane's, I showered and ate there yesterday. I got to the overpass, and stood looking at all the cars that were passing by on the freeway and thought to myself, how did I get here? A car stopped and asked me if I needed help, happiness filled my insides for a moment. Maybe they'd offer me a ride or could actually help me? But Pride would take over I knew and I wouldn't accept it anyways. Then I realized that it didn't even matter, I thought about what this looked like, and knew they didn't care any way. I put the knife I carried in my hand while I walked, inside of my pocket then I replied "I'm not going to jump." The guy in the car drove away.

Maybe I should jump? What reason do I have to not? I'm trying to be something and I can't even get the opportunity to do so. I stood there, I'm just another statistic, a waste of space and tax dollars. What am I even good for? I stood there for a few hours trying to decide if I should end my life or not. It was a battle I fought every single day and every day the wrong side got closer to winning. Just one more day I told myself, just one more day, maybe today will go differently. It did. Later that day, sometime in the afternoon, someone explained what Job Corps was to me, at first I thought it was a scam but I hoped so bad it wasn't. As I made that phone call to the center, I hoped, with every bone in my body, that this would be the thing that changed my life and it was. The recruiter told me she would meet me at the library, that's the day my life changed. That's where I was and I will make sure I don't ever go there again.

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It's been about two years since that day. Job Corps gave me the opportunity to do things I never had the opportunity to do before. I believe this program is a rehabilitation center for life. I started off in San Bernardino, California. My first center was there. I worked hard, I was the president for the student government while I was there. I worked with the city and shadowed the CEO of the chamber of commerce. I got my high school diploma and GED while I was there along with the Business trade I had completed. When I was there I found myself still trying to keep up with my friends, I still was wild and made very reckless decisions. There was points where I would come stumbling in from a long night of being with my "friends" but I always had a good support system there that included my center director to help me get back on track. To remind me how easy it was to end up where I've been. Eventually I realized that my friends were still doing that same things, I wanted a purpose. I want to live with a cause and they just wanted to party. At the end of the day, I loved them but nobody in this world is ever going to do anything for me but myself.

I loved my job, I loved my school and I was really beginning to love my life but I still wanted more than that, I wanted to broaden my horizon with a better education then what I was getting. I moved across the country to New Jersey and continued on to the Advance Training Program for computers. It was a bit of culture shock when I got here, the people were different and the weather was colder. Since I've been here I've seen the most beautiful things, I fell in love with New York City. Time Square was unlike anything I had seen before. More importantly, I also fell in love with my line of work as an IT technician. I look at everything now and think, how did I get here? How did I go from that reckless girl on the bridge, with no purpose or direction, to who I am now?

After everything Job Corps has already given me, I can leave here as is and live a very comfortable life but in no way, shape or form I want to stop here. I have this drive to continue my education, to continue my career. I don't want to live a comfortable life, I want to live life with a purpose. Job Corps was a stepping stone to put me on a path to where I want to be. I plan on joining the military to fulfill the purpose I believe I was made for. The dreams I have for my future are extensive, I'll continue with college while I'm in the military and in about ten years I hope to have (at minimum) my bachelor's degree in business and computer engineering, along with a very successful career in the IT field and military. After those ten years are up and I complete these things, I hope to then start the process of becoming a foster mom to troubled youth and children of war from third world countries.

Have you ever wanted something so bad that when you slept, you dreamt of it and when you weren't sleeping you were thinking of it, consistently trying to make that want become tangible? You're practically breathing it because of how hard you're working to get it, to be at where you want to be. Have you had I that burning fire inside of you to keep going further in life, to be something great? I have, I believe that everybody that's at Job Corps has, I feign for a life better than the one I use to live, something great, and I refuse to stop until I've reached that greatness.