

I am Ransome White, SGA President of Tulsa Job Corps Center. My nationality is Hawaiian, I am twenty-three years old, my gender is male, and my trade is Building Construction Technology. I am a high school dropout that had negative attendance and an underprivileged childhood. As I had no education or work experience, I could not easily obtain a stable job position and was on the brink of ending my own life out of stress and depression. The Job Corps program was suggested to me by a friend of mine that is a Job Corps graduate herself, my life was completely flipped around, I now have a successful career ahead of me, a strong resume, and the happiest life I can wish for. This is my story:

I was born on the island Oahu, one of the islands of Hawaii. My mother and father had a divorce when I was seven years old and my brother was three years old at the time. My father struggled to support him and me. My mother took my brother with her and married a man in the military and lived a middle class life. One year later, my father and I lived in a room that was a small extension of his cousin's house that he was renting out. My father, Randy White, could not afford cable, we had six VCR movies, four video games, and were lucky to have a can of ravioli and another meal to eat in a single day. My mother, Tisha Senensi, was taking child support from Randy despite us being close to being homeless and starving.

When I turned nine years old, my grandmother: Venus DeVance, called Randy and told him that he and I can move in with her in Las Vegas. Without hesitation, my father and I traveled by airplane to start our new lives. I enrolled into Decker Elementary School. Since I still had my Hawaiian accent, I was bullied in school because of it and I grew to put excessive effort into the way I speak, which causes me to stutter often in order to speak fluently.

At the age of twelve, I was moved to Lawton, Oklahoma and was enrolled in Central Junior High School in the seventh grade. For once I was starting to make friends, was becoming popular, and started to care less and less each day about academics. I slept through classes and irritated my teachers to entertain my friends because they meant the world to me. At the age of fifteen I was enrolled in Lawton High School. My negative behavior persisted and was expelled for missing more than ten days in a semester. After being expelled, I was losing touch with my friends that were like family to me. I stayed home every day playing video games and wondering what I need to do with my life. Through video games, I've mastered: math, critical thinking (ability comprehension and combo synergy), economics, and leadership (taking charge in group activities).

At this point, I am now 22 years old. I am engaged to one of my friends from Central Junior High School that I met when I was 13. My fiancée's brother was a manager at McDonalds and pretty much **gave** me the job I applied for. After 2 months my training was completed and I was fired because I had cash shortage once in a particular week and another in the following week when I was being trained to be a cashier. I was furious and confused because I was certain that I handled transactions accurately at all times. A few months later, my fiancé's brother told me that one of the other managers were stealing from the new trainees' registers and was a long pattern of theft before I came in, I however did not get the job back but it relieved me somewhat.

My fiancée and I decided to move in with her friend: Ardina. Ardina is the Job Corps graduate that I mentioned earlier. At the time, she was a single mom of a ten year old, living independently, had 3 jobs, a nice car, and her own purchased home. After a few months, I still could not find a job-in fact, I've been attempting to secure a job position for four years. I was giving up on life, I thought that I was forever going to be a loser and that my fiancée deserved to be with someone better, I was planning on committing suicide within around the following month if I still turned up with no job. A few days later, Ardina suggested that I enroll into Job Corps and that it's a great program that could assist me in whatever I could possibly need and it has helped her become the success she is now. I was a bit skeptical of the program but I decided to give it a shot, after all, what could I possibly lose?

Upon my arrival on the Tulsa Job Corps Center on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, I was terrified. I had no idea what to expect and I haven't had much Human interaction in seven years so I stayed in my dorm room as much as possible. At the time I was too shy to talk and didn't care about anyone; the only time people would see me was when I had to use the restroom, attend to CPP, eat, or smoke a cigarette. In February, 2015, there was a trainee here that is a former United States Army Ranger, so we called him Ranger. Ranger one day told me that I would make a great dorm leader and he would put in a good word for me to the SGA Advisors. I obviously didn't see what he saw in me but I didn't argue, if it meant that I get a two man room and be around less people, then I'd lovingly do the job. When I was a dorm leader, I was not trained or even really knew what it really meant to be one, but I worked as hard as I could by what I did know: I had to do chores and redirect my peers.

Over a few months, I redirected a lot of my negative peers-not by scolding, but by sharing my previous experiences in high school. From doing this, my peers highly respected me, I have changed more than a handful of lives, and I have even grown to give people a second chance. Even after all the hard work I've done, I still didn't have a two man room, but I didn't care because I was starting to love my job anyways.

In Mid-May of 2015, the SGA elections came around. There were 5 candidates. Near at the end of the campaigning process, I had to do a speech in front of the entire campus in the large auditorium which was the most intense moment of my life because I still had a minor case of social anxiety. The entire audience roared, cheered, clapped, chanted my name, and screamed "Ransome for President!" uncontrollably-it was deafening and the other candidates didn't hype the crowd nearly as much. For once in my life I felt important, proud, and like a winner. I won the election and from then to even now, trainees and staff alike proudly calls me Mr. President.

During my term as President, I have: Coordinated meetings from SGA to Youth 2 Youth: Partners 4 Peace, run business effectively and efficiently, managed the dorm leaders and built leaders, learned how to run a store, been a part of several on-center committees, volunteered for community services such as helping the local Girl Scouts with inventory, donated blood to the American Red Cross every two month appearance (six times!), independently designed electronic programs to run a few departments, became a peer tutor, became the center's Peer to

Peer Court Judge, Shop Foreman of my trade, consistently maintained a positive attendance, serviced this center's student body relentlessly, and even became a public speaker.

What I have accomplished academically during my time in Job Corps is: I have obtained a GED in a matter of four part time weeks despite my educational background, I have scored 614 in Reading and 652 in Math in the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), passed the OSHA10 test and received the respective certification, I am recently trade complete, I got a Driver's Learner Permit, and a Driver's License by learning how to drive in two weeks. I no longer have social anxiety, I love being around people again, I have a future career with tons of experience, certifications, and other qualifications under my resume's belt, I've had the opportunity to make professional relationships with employers and business owners, and a huge boost of confidence.

Just recently I have turned in my Advanced Training application (which is higher education in the career field you choose) and passed the exam. I am enrolling for the Smart Meter Instrumentation Technician trade in Oneonta Job Corps Academy at New York. I am very excited to meet with my new Job Corps family to further my education and also have the opportunity to share some of my positive influence and leadership experience with that center. Sadly, I must leave my student body ("my people" I call them) and my staff family in January 11<sup>th</sup>. My fiancée and I are no longer together, even though I have no place to go back to since my father still lives in Las Vegas and I don't plan on going back, Job Corps provides a graduation check and the given amount varies on if you came in with a diploma or not. I can use this money to start a home placement and even though I will be done with the program when I am finished, Job Corps will still have my back-should I need anything for a period of time. Once I have a great net income, I will save up to pursue degrees and work up to at least a master's in the electronics engineering category. My last step is to start and own my own business. Through all the challenges of academics, the pressure from social interaction, and the hardships of leadership opportunities that I have overcome through Job Corps, I know that I can do anything and I am worth everything.