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WRJC Writing Contest

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### Where I was vs. Where I am

My life hasn't always been this good. I was born a statistic from a single mother who was seventeen. I was placed into the foster care system in Florida as a new born. My birth mother at the time was addicted to crack cocaine and marijuana. My parents already had one child and could not handle the responsibility of a second. Imagine starting a life off where you feel in your soul that the ones who are supposed to love and actually want you around, just don't. That is where my life starts.

I now have the best adopted parents anyone can ever ask for. My parents have always been there for me, especially my mother. My mother is my rock and my everything. I have mad respect for my mother. Even in a house where everything still seems perfect, boy was it a ways from perfection. I grew up in a house where my dad worked extreme hours. Mom was able stay home, and she made sure that my brother and I had everything we needed. She made sure that my brother and I had the best education, food in our bellies, proper clothes on our backs, and that we had character. But even mothers can't shield their children from everything.

In elementary, I was bullied badly. I didn't fit in at school with all the other little boys and girls. I was a nappy headed, brown skinned, 4'5 midget girl who was in desperate need of a friend. I wanted to join the cheerleading squad, but the girls were so nasty to me that I didn't even bother. I wanted to be a Girls Scout, but my mother wouldn't let me due to bad things she

heard about the Boys Scouts. So then I turned to sports. Soccer to be exact. I began playing soccer at the age of ten as a way to cope with the emotions and the social stress.

Six months ago I graduated from High School. Graduating was one of the most important things in my life that made not only my family happy, but made me realize that I was not all those things that I grew up hearing. Graduating made me realize that I am somebody important. Graduating from High School was just the first step. After graduation, I was toiling with what direction I wanted to go in to begin my new life as an independent woman. I thought of college, but I didn't have the money and did not apply for grants and scholarships. So for my first year, college was off the books. Then during my graduation party, my grandmother came down to visit, and as we were catching up on life, she told me all about Job Corps. That thought got me thinking.

Today I am in my trade at Wind River Job Corps. My trade is Accounting. My instructor, Michelle, is just the best instructor I can ever ask for. I am learning Accounts receivable, payroll, check stubs, QuickBooks, and Microsoft Office. In class I receive certifications in Microsoft Office, Filing, typing, 10-Key, and many others. I have an awesome dreamcatcher, Crissy, who is just, words can't even describe. I see Crissy every day. I check in with her, and we have heart to heart conversations. When we have our chats, I can see that she really does care about what is going on in my life here at Job Corps and outside of Job Corps. Here at Job Corps, I actually have friends, and I fit in. I am a basketball manager for R.A.T.T Pack. I am student of the month for North Dorm, and I am on a silver level. By achieving these things mentioned, I had to practice my Career Success Standards. For Student of the Month for North Dorm, I had to practice Independent Living. I am currently a dorm leader as well. I and another dorm leader inspect chores amongst other things. I am doing really well here at Job Corps.

My life after Job Corps is going to be my own. I would like to get a job in accounting, but I will not stop there. I will go to college to get my degree, preferably a masters in accounting. From there, I will go to law school to become a Family Lawyer or a Child Advocate Lawyer. My younger sister and I will have our own Law Firm and possibly a shelter for single parents and children. I plan to be married eventually with three children, and to just live my own “American Dream”.

Many things in my life have changed, but what I choose to do with those changes is what will make or break me in the long run. Being here at Job Corps, I have improved many traits that will guide me into being a well-rounded employee. Job Corps has taught me the right and wrong way to communicate in the work force with emails, telephone calls, letters, and many other things. I have improved on my workplace relationships and ethics, the ability to work with those I don't necessarily get along with, but most importantly, to stay focused on the big picture. I have to keep reminding myself not to give up on me. I am not doing all of this for my family, my parents, or even my biological parents who may have not wanted me in the beginning, but I am doing all of this for me. I am the V.I.P in my own life until I have my own family. I am the girl and that can do anything I put my mind to. I am unstoppable.