

SPEAK UNITED Blog

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A 15-year-old father changed his life so his son could have a better one

Through coaching and workforce development, organizations like UTEC Lowell are empowering youth to better their lives and never give up.

As a young man, Victor knew he was not making the right choices – hanging out with a bad crowd, getting into trouble, not taking school or life seriously. Then – at 15 years old – he found out that he was going to be a father.



“I knew I wasn’t taking my life on the right path. I didn’t want my son to have the life I had growing up and I knew that if I kept doing what I was doing, I wouldn’t be able to give my son the life I want for him.”

As Victor worked to change courses, his path led him to UTEC, a United Way partner agency in Lowell that helps youth trade violence and poverty for social and economic success. Their programs include street outreach, pairing youth with a transitional coach, and helping them develop skills through a comprehensive workforce development program.

Victor was there for mandatory community service at the direction of his probation officer and was skeptical of another “program” that would try to tell him what to do.

“At first, I didn’t think I would like it. But I made a real connection with the streetworkers and people here. I liked getting to know new people and knowing that I could change my life and do things the right way.”

After a year at UTEC, Victor got his HiSET (GED) and started job training – learning technical skills like wood-working, as well as critical soft skills like professionalism and how to look for and keep a job.

Victor especially enjoyed and showed a talent for woodworking. So much so, that he is currently working as an intern with Keiver-Willard Lumberyard, a position he secured through UTEC.

“Victor started off really shy and quiet at UTEC, but you can see how much he has stepped out of his comfort zone based on where he is now,” said Tom Southerton, Victor’s former Transitional Coach. “He made a lot of good friends and is defining success for himself.”

“Before UTEC, I just gave up,” Victor said. “But since I came here, everyone kept pushing me to never give up, and that stayed in my head: to never give up, to keep chipping away, to keep trying no matter how hard life gets.”

Victor continues to learn and work hard at his internship and is saving money to get his own apartment for his young son and family. And no matter what, he won’t give up.

Author: [Katie Ward](#)

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