



JASON

Jason was born with a rare congenital deformity which caused to have many surgeries and procedures as a child. When he was three years old, the pain due to the procedures was so severe that he was prescribed Demerol. Growing up was difficult as he faced a lot of discrimination from other children, as well as adults. At a young age, Jason started experimenting with alcohol, and even resorted to stealing it in order to get it. Over the years he experimented with other drugs and started dealing in order to support his habit. During this time he still managed to get a diploma in computer repair and kept up with what was happening in the field. Eventually Jason decided to sober up and checked into a residential drug rehabilitation program. For a number of years Jason worked for non-profits and attended Rutgers, receiving a certificate in Family Development. After budget cuts and layoffs, Jason shifted gears and worked his way up to a manager position at an I/T solutions company. He was there four years and was able to help families, refine his computer skills, and felt very positive about life.

Unfortunately, due to cuts Jason was laid off once again. Unable to find work in the computer field, in order to supplement his minimum wage job and pay his debts, Jason went back to the streets. This time he wound up getting arrested and spent 16 months in jail, followed by rehab

programs after release. While in confinement, Jason spent his days reflecting on his life and who he was. Asking himself important questions, including what was he going to do after getting out. He decided that when he got out he would make up for lost time and he wanted to build financial stability and have a retirement plan.

After speaking with a friend who told him about NJRC, he decided to participate—not because it was required, but because he wanted to take advantage of all the help he could get in repairing his life. At NJRC, the staff helped Jason connect to the internet and complete online job applications. They even provided him bus tickets to go to interviews. After 3 months of filling out numerous applications on a daily basis and coming to the Conservancy regularly to email his resume, he found out about an opening at the Conservancy. After interviewing for the Database Manager position, Jason was hired! He has been at the Conservancy since July and in addition to managing the database, Jason helps with graphic arts and has become the resident go-to guy for computer questions.

Jason sees this opportunity as the first step in achieving his long term goals. Next up he plans to start college for Digital Forensics and Cyber Security certificate, and will eventually apply those credits towards a computer science degree. Jason says that this is the first time in his whole life where he feels like he is actually going somewhere because he really knows what he wants.

Congrats Jason and much success on your future endeavors!