

# S U C C E S S S T O R I E S



*Our Success Stories series was created as a way to communicate with our friends and donors in an efficient, inexpensive format. Each month, we feature one of our programs and the inspiring story of a child whom the program has helped. To be added to the Success Stories email list, add your name to the box on our homepage: [www.eliada.org](http://www.eliada.org).*

A.J. came to Eliada as a young man without a permanent home. A native of Baltimore, he was moved between various relatives before eventually living with his grandmother in Charlotte. There, he got into serious trouble. “My friends were not a good influence, and I got involved with a car theft,” he says of the circumstances leading to his arrival. Afraid and facing jail time, he was fortunate that his probation officer and case manager felt he could benefit from a different environment. Together, they decided that Eliada was an alternative that could work for the troubled young man.

Angela Moser, one of A.J.’s teachers, remembers his first days as difficult ones. “He originally began in my class with a low self-esteem and the thought that he would not be able to be successful,” she recounts. He had conflicts with peers, easily gave up on his assignments, did not complete homework, and argued with adults.

Now, Ms. Moser and others describe a very different student, one who accepts feedback and works hard to improve himself. “A.J. now gets along with his peers and has become an amazing role model. He provides them with real-world examples of how education can benefit their lives. He has the highest math percentage among the 8th grade students in the school, and is very proud about that. He is an absolute success story!” she says.

Since his placement at Eliada, A.J. feels he has learned a greater respect for people, as well as to think on his own. His goal is to be more independent and take caution with peer groups that could influence him in a negative manner. “I do not want to go back to where I was... always getting in trouble”, he says. “Here, I got to do things like be part of the winter formal and be on the basketball team. My picture was in the paper. It was the first time I was ever in the newspaper for something positive.”

A.J. will leave Eliada this week and move to Winston Salem to live with his Aunt and cousins. Although he will miss the staff, his friends, basketball, and the NYPUM minibike program, he is looking forward to this transition. He rarely sees his sister and 8 brothers, and hopes his Aunt’s home will be more like a family than other places he’s lived.

A.J. has learned from past mistakes and loves the positive attention he now enjoys. He has set high goals for himself, including attending college to study Psychology. Whatever he chooses to do, all of us at Eliada are confident that this young man has a bright future. Congratulations, A.J.!



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