Thanks to You, Another Student is Saved

Carlos, who missed roughly sixty days of school each year, truly believed that he didn’t need to graduate. Carlos was in with the wrong crowd at school. If lunch was a class, he would have received straight As.

GSIL’s Earn and Learn Program (E&L) convinces our students of the importance of a high school diploma. In fact, 93% of all E&L students either return to school, graduate or get their GED, which is an outstanding success rate.

Carlos and his case manager sought out Earn and Learn in conjunction with the Manchester School District and NH Vocational Rehabilitation as a way to reengage him with his education. When our teachers interviewed Carlos, he said, “If I graduate, I will be the first one in my family.” From that point on, Carlos used this special status in his family as a motivation to do everything in his power to graduate. He entered the program in Fall of 2015 to obtain high school credit, explore career options and earn his high school diploma.

Carlos received almost a year’s worth of credits through Earn and Learn and returned to school for his final semester. In June of 2016, he donned cap and gown and graduated from Memorial High School. His dream was achieved and he now has his “ticket to life”, his high school diploma. Armed with an education, he now qualifies for, and has found, full time work with benefits!

“Education is the key to success and ticket to life,” says Carlos. “If I graduate, I will be the first one in my family.”

Hooray for Carlos – he gets it! With your continued support, more and more students in our Earn & Learn Opportunities Program will come to understand the importance of finishing school, and from there, maybe even begin to dream of a future.
Happy Holidays from GSIL

We wish you a safe and happy holiday season! Your support has allowed seniors and people with disabilities throughout New Hampshire to live life as independently as they choose. Thanks to you, they will be home for the holidays.

Special thanks to the Pearl Manor Fund of the Mary & John Elliot Foundation for their $8,000 grant.

These funds will allow us to transition two Manchester area seniors from nursing facilities into homes of their own.

Already one woman has found refuge at home. Back with her son and three dogs, she will be celebrating the holidays from the comfort of her own home. We are all very grateful to our funders for making this happen.
Many articles have been written for this publication about our highly successful and innovative Earn & Learn Opportunities Program. Thanks to your support, our creative and dedicated staff have helped ensure that 231 students have either returned to school or have received their diploma or GED over the past six years.

Because of this success, GSIL was recently awarded a $2 million contract from New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation to expand our unique brand of re-engagement and student transition services to six regions around the state. This program, IMPACCT Academy, combines school and work experience with an eye to each student’s future and is now offered in 45 school districts. And, we are working to establish programs in dozens more. Because the model has been so successful in Manchester, we expect to replicate the 93% success rate we have achieved in the Earn and Learn Program.

Jacob is a good example of the type of student for which our programs make a difference. Though Jacob lives with both mom and dad, they struggle financially. The family lives in a distressed part of town, and Jacob and his mom share a cell phone. He has been left on his own in many ways. Add to that a cocktail of learning disabilities and it’s no surprise that a traditional school setting failed him. Behind in both reading and math, daily tasks were daunting. He felt angry at school and had a difficult time getting along with others. When he began to act out, he was referred to Littleton Academy.

Then Jacob learned that he was about to become a dad.

With the support and involvement of his parents, Jacob enrolled in IMPACCT Academy. Because of the one-on-one attention he received, as well as a personalized plan for life after school, Jacob finally had the motivation he needed to learn and to succeed. He began to understand why a high school diploma was important. His new teachers have been immensely impressed with Jacob’s one hundred and eighty degree turnaround. He transformed from a surly and argumentative teenager to a respectful and hardworking young man. Jacob is bound to succeed, and now has a good reason to be proud.

“He has come VERY far and is now very respectful. I have seen such huge growth,” says Lynn, his teacher. “Jacob has worked diligently throughout the first half of the Academy, and his hard work has resulted in increased academic ability, a strong sense of self-confidence, and a commitment to create a successful life for himself and his family.”

A partnership between Littleton High School, GSIL and the NH DOE Teen Dad program overseen by Peter Durso made all the difference. Jacob worked hard and completed a year’s worth of credits in one semester. Now recognizing the necessity of a high school diploma, Jacob will graduate early and be home with the baby so his girlfriend can finish school too. Jacob’s son, Jason, will have two parents who have finished high school. But Dad has even bigger plans.

Jacob was recently welcomed by the team at Calex Ambulance in Littleton for a work experience that has proven both invaluable and enjoyable. Jacob’s goal is to enroll this coming June in the EMT course offered by Calex Ambulance as a first step to becoming a Certified Paramedic. His supervisors have been impressed by Jacob’s desire to learn and his commitment to the program. With the guidance of the EMT and Paramedic team, Jacob is gaining fundamental knowledge and skills that will give him a jump start when he enters the certification program. Jacob is on a path.

Maybe not every student we serve will succeed beyond our wildest dreams. But without the program, they have a high chance of failure. As part of our GSIL community, we will continue to rely on you and your generosity to give kids like Jacob a second chance, and feeling proud and independent.
Winter in New England brings images of skiing, snowshoeing – and ice skating. Building on that tradition, GSIL will host its first ever Skate Night on Saturday, March 11, 2017. We will be holding this family-friendly event at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Coliseum in Manchester from 4:00-8:00 p.m. All ages and skate levels are welcome.

To participate, you can either secure $100 in sponsorships (like any walk-a-thon) or pay an entry fee for you and/or your family. We will have a DJ, prizes, pizza, hot chocolate, raffles and more. Skates will be available to rent for $2.

All proceeds will benefit our Access Modification Program, which helps consumers with home and vehicle modifications, like ramps and lifts. If you are interested or want more information, contact Terri Voth at tvoth@gsil.org or call 603-228-9680.