



Mark D.

Legal Studies
St. Louis Community College

Mark grew up in a typical family in St. Louis. He had always been a happy kid with lots of friends, played sports, and enjoyed being outside. When his family moved to California, everything changed. Mark became withdrawn and depressed. He did not feel comfortable in his own skin, became suicidal, and started using any substance he could get his hands on. “I felt out of place and like I didn’t belong,” said Mark.

When Mark graduated high school, his apartment became a party house. Almost every night, he drank or used, or both. During this time, Mark found opioids, and his addiction progressed to heroin. He stopped trying to get an education, and his habit got out of control. Mark became a five-time convicted felon in less than a decade and served almost thirty months in prison.



I’m getting closer to my dream of becoming a lawyer.



While incarcerated, Mark began attending meetings and found a love for the law, setting him on his current educational journey. Since being released in October of 2017, Mark found a measure of serenity through the twelve steps. He has a job, attends school, is no longer on probation, and is grateful for his sponsor and sponsees. His family relationships have been rebuilt, including a wonderful girlfriend and daughter.

Mark is a few credits from getting his Associate’s degree in legal studies and plans to transfer to a university in the fall to pursue his Bachelor’s degree. “The gifts I have received from the program and from school cannot be put into words. The Next Step has helped me to get closer to my dream of becoming a lawyer and helping those who struggle in the same way I did.”