

The Arkansas Valley Community Center Shares Danny's Story....



Danny enjoying OJC basketball.

Success is defined by many as obtaining wealth, holding a powerful position or becoming famous. But success in it's simplest form is a desire to achieve and then attaining that achievement. The following story tells of the success of Danny Yost. Success that is not finished but ongoing even with impossible odds. Here is Danny's success story:

Danny was born to family that beat him and caused him to suffer brain damage from serious blows to the head. The state took him into protective custody when he was three months old. Three foster placements later, he came to live with the Stover family when he was 22 months old. As described by his new parents, he was cuter than a bug and they were delighted to adopt him. Even with the delight and excitement of this new baby,

Danny was a handful. As he grew, the small community which the family lived stepped forward to help raise him. Because of the brain damage, his behaviors were difficult to correct and by the time he was fourteen, he had grown aggressive. Always a big boy (he weighed over 200 pounds by then) Danny would become violent toward his mother and other family members. By then, he had been in trouble with the police, had been isolated in his own classroom at school, and was being attacked by classmates who were really tired of his challenging behaviors.

The county social services office agreed to help find Danny a residential placement. They called thirteen agencies that all declined to take him because of the brain injury. Finally, the state stepped in and placed him in the only state-run institution at the time. His mother's heart broke as she drove away from the state-run institution.

After a few months, Dan was moved out of the institution setting to a different residential home. He did fairly well there, but his behaviors still didn't change significantly. As an adult, he was moved to a facility which specialized in brain injuries. He was treated with too much medication -- their solution to these bothersome behaviors which would not change. Danny came to know ambulance drivers and police officers in this area of the state by their first name. Finally, the agency refused to take him back after he ran away. He was left at the hospital for 3 weeks. Daily, the threat to his mother was that he was going to be put on the street because they had no reason to keep him. His mother was frantic and trying desperately to wade through the Medicaid waiver system and available agencies to find him a place to live. In the meantime, the hospital took him off the anti-psychotic drugs and he became Danny again.

It was at this time that his family became aware of the Arkansas Valley Community Center (AVCC). Representatives from the AVCC came seeking Danny out. At the time AVCC

intervened, Danny was in a locked-down treatment facility in a large metro area. Danny's family visited AVCC sites and saw the unique housing system as well as their work locations and caring staff. The family interviewed with staff for over two hours in which staff learned that Danny was brain injured. Danny's mother emphasized to AVCC that Danny could not change his behavior due to his brain injury. To be successful with Danny, AVCC would need to accept Danny's brain injury. More importantly, staff learned about Danny's dreams and desires. They discovered that he has always been fascinated with costumes-that sport mascots terrified him unless he was wearing them. In the costume, his behaviors became amazingly gentle and patient. Danny is a walking sports trivia machine and that his dream was to be a sports announcer. Danny wanted to live in a home environment with a family atmosphere. Danny quickly learned how to run a mower and had a good work ethic related to yard work. Danny dreamed of going to college and being a sports announcer at sporting events.

Within the first few months of Danny being in service at AVCC, staff developed a plan to work with Danny to manage and redirect his negative and challenging behaviors. Staff learned how to work with him in a loving and affirming manner. Danny is the happiest he had been in years. Eventually, he began to take college classes. He was an employee at the junior college in the sports department and grew to know the athletes by first name. AVCC's Executive Director worked with the college's baseball coach, who allowed Danny to conduct a trial sports broadcasting job. Danny was a hit! Suddenly Danny realized one of his dreams of being a sports announcer. Subsequently, he announced baseball games for the La Junta Recreation Program and high school basketball games. Danny even looks forward to AVCC dances where he gets to make announcements and be the DJ or work with the DJ. He loves to be involved with AVCC events and has shined by singing at karaoke events. Danny was placed with a Host Home Provider in a family setting. Danny loves being in a family setting. AVCC purchased a Santa Claus suit so that Danny could play Santa at agency events and in the Parade of Lights at Christmas time. Except for the fact that he was promising to children whatever they wanted (there was resultant Santa training), he's done very well in that role. What a wonderful time the children spent with Danny!!



Consistently, Danny has been treated with respect by the AVCC staff. Danny speaks highly of the staff that works with him and states that the staff treats him as his peer. Even with temporary behavior backsliding by Danny, the staff continues to be encouraging and always moving forward toward his next success to achieve.

Danny loves his family who live in Northern Colorado and Kansas. He looks forward to their visits and phone calls. Danny enjoys the success of attending college and being involved with

college athletes. Danny loves his involvement when announcing whose up to bat next or what song was just played. He does well living in his home with his Host Home Providers where the environment is family focused. Danny wanted to achieve things that he had not been given the opportunity or environment to succeed until he found his permanent home at the Arkansas Valley Community Center.

Danny – hats off to you for your hard work at success! We cannot wait to see what your future successes will include...

Arkansas Valley Community Center

Serving People

Creating Relationships

Expanding Opportunities

Fulfilling Dreams