

Fall 2022

IDAHO YOUTH SPEAK

College of Western Idaho



Success story

Interview: IDJC Success Story

By Annie

This is an interview conducted with an adult who was at one time an incarcerated youth, Derek. Derek is now 27, and a father of 2. He is a recent graduate of Northwest Lineman College. The point of his story is to share that even when you struggle throughout childhood, life isn't over. Hard work, determination, and utilizing your resources/support system can help turn your life around too.

When was the first time you were incarcerated?

I was around 14, for disturbing the peace following an argument with my dad. Often the cops would be called to our house, and my dad would point the finger at me to keep himself out of jail. I was in and out of juvie during most of my

teenage years, and finally was committed for just under a year at 16.

Were your parents with you through your stay in the system?

My mom died when I was young, and my father was not involved



during my court hearings. He did not make all my court appearances and would often come to not say nice things about me. I feel like my dad came just to show the court he was there, but it never meant much to me.

Newsletter Content



Page 1

Interview: IDJC Success Story, Annie

Page 3

Artwork– Submitted by IDJC student

Page 4

Dealing with Parental Incarceration & Tips for Currently Incarcerated Individuals- Danielle

Page 5

Searching Through the Depths- Danielle

Page 6

Self-Care Guide, Annie

Page 7

A letter from a recovering addict, Danielle

Page 8

Collaboration and Dedication

What did it mean to you to be committed?

I was brought to a sally port, like you see in prison movies. I felt like I was being banished from society. They give you a set of clothes, and you sign over your belongings. Then they take you through the process of intake, which started



with a tour before being shown my room. I felt like I knew that I wasn't going to feel normal for a long time. It really felt like a movie. I knew I couldn't move on in my life until I got through the program. I spent a year incarcerated undergoing intense therapy, programming, and physical conditioning. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done.

What programs were you sent to?

I was sent to outpatient drug programs when I was released from commitment. As well as vocational therapy. I was also paired with a counselor/med manager that I saw throughout my probation when I was released.

How has your childhood incarceration effected your current adulthood?

I feel like it was more the reverse: incarceration influenced my upbringing. I was in the system young, around 11. That was around the first time the police came around our house for my dad. From that time, I have felt a change in my life in a noticeable way. I think it would change anyone. Not being able to leave a room for extended amounts of time, take cold showers, and being around children that are aggressive messes with someone. I know when I was released, I felt like I was institutionalized.

Since adulthood how has your record impacted job searches?

Fortunately, in my case I don't feel like I have had any barriers getting jobs. I have a long track record of good behavior, and even though I still disclose past discretions from my youth it has not stopped me from moving up in my career field.

What are your current life successes?

My biggest success is refraining from recreational drugs. I have two beautiful, healthy children and I am an active parent in their everyday lives. Some parents are there but not fully invested, like my fa-

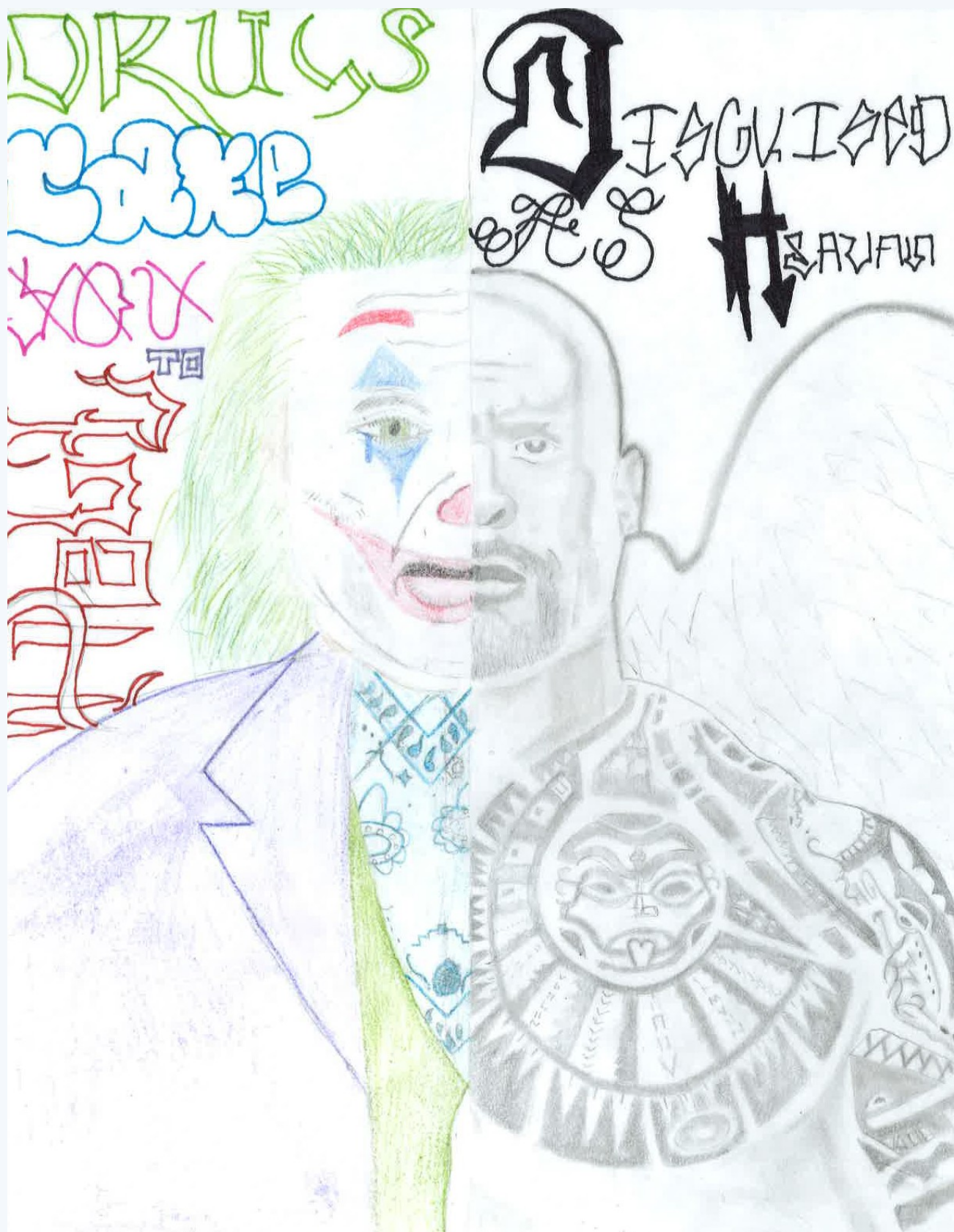
ther, and I am proud to change that for my children. I had a dad who wasn't present, and it feels fulfilling to be the dad I always wanted. In terms of life success, I have recently felt the payoff of being able to master trade skills. Carpentry gave me a purpose in the work field. I also have recently graduated from the Northwest Lineman School. So, from here it's all up!

What do you want juveniles in your same situation to know?

You are going to think about doing a lot of things like going to school and jumping into a career. There is a long-term game. If I could give any advice to a kid in my shoes, I would tell them to think harder about what life will be like in 5



years. When you are young it is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day life. I also would like to say that your parents, grandparents, and loved ones have your best interest at heart. It is hard to listen to reason sometimes, but those support systems sometimes have the best life advice, and I wish I would've listened sooner.



ARTWORK SUBMITTED BY IDJC STUDENT

Dealing with Parental Incarceration & Tips for Currently Incarcerated Individuals

By Danielle

Dealing with a parent who is incarcerated is a troubling time in one's life. You have feelings of anger, sadness, abandonment, and confusion.



Properly coping with this situation can be hard, but it's vital that you try. If you're able to have communication with your parent that is incarcerated, keep communication open with them. Be vulnerable and tell them how you feel and what you're dealing with now. This is a good way to start paving the road for a trusting, open relationship. If communication with your parent isn't possible, now may be a good time to reach out to a counselor. Having someone you can talk to through this will help you cope in a positive manner. No parent wants to be away from their child. They made mistakes that ended up with them being incarcerated.

Maybe they were battling substance use issues, maybe they were hanging out with the wrong people and did something they now regret. Parent Rachel Peterson, who spent time incarcerated and away from her five-year-old son, wants you to remember that: "Your parent will always love you. You are on their mind and in their heart every single day. They are filled with regret and remorse for what they have done and what they have put you through. You will always be the most important person in their life, and they are deeply sorry for hurting you and having to be gone." Here's Teddy Nelson's story, a parent who spent years off and on incarcerated and away from her son. Maybe reading it through a parent's eyes will shed some light on just what they are feeling.



Teddy's story

Although I never spent time locked up as a juvenile, I have spent much of my adult life incarcerated. I found out I was pregnant at the age of 19, while living in a car, addicted to heroin and meth. Fortunately, I was able to get clean and have my baby sober at the age of 20. Sadly, I wasn't ready to commit to the sober life. I then relapsed when my son was just a few months old. I ended up getting in trouble and getting locked up. I spent the next three years in and out of jail and prison. Because both me and my son's father were incarcerated, the state had to get involved. It pains me to say that this month I will be losing my parental rights. Despite getting out of prison and doing good, I blew my chances to be a mother. My son is almost five now. I just want you to know from the bottom of a mother's heart, if you are a child from a "broken" home, or are living with an addicted or incarcerated parent, please know that your parents' actions do not at all reflect the love they have for you. I love my son more than anything on this planet, but I wasn't able to love myself enough to stay sober.

You probably feel so alone in this moment. Rachel Peterson said, "Try to realize your parent is an adult who made some bad decisions and has to deal with the consequences. Just know this, their world isn't the same without you in it. Please learn to forgive them and stay on the right path to not follow in their footsteps. Learn to

Love yourself

That's the first step in your new life." Lean on a counselor or support person during this time. Talking it out instead of keeping all these emotions bottled up will help you tremendously. People can change. People do learn from their mistakes. Keep an open

heart while you try to navigate during this difficult time in your life.



Being currently incarcerated, you may be experiencing intense feelings of loneliness. Surround yourself with like-minded people who have the same goals as you. Take this time as an opportunity to better yourself. It's easy to 'sleep your time' away. Make it a point to wake up at the same time every morning. You can take this time to learn something and better yourself. Pick up yoga, working out, meditation, or explore spirituality. Having something to believe in makes you feel less alone, and prayer could be just putting positive messages out into the universe. If you haven't yet earned your G.E.D. now is a great time to do so! Getting your G.E.D. will open so many job opportunities for you when you get released. Having your G.E.D. also opens the door to going to college. Start planning for your future. You can start now, while you're incarcerated. It's never too late to change your behavior. Give yourself a chance to change; and it starts NOW. Remember, this isn't forever. You will be free again, and what you do with that freedom is up to you.

Sources:

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/60691/410627-Effects-of-Parental-Incarceration-on-Young-Children.PDF>



Searching through the Depths by Danielle

Today I feel the depth of my disease.

I feel the depth of me, who I am,

And who I'm trying to be.

Today I feel the depth of the darkness and the light, the depths of day and night.

I feel the depth of these contradictions.

Today I feel the depth of my mind

And my inability to unwind.

I feel the depth of all aspects,

Unanswered questions, fear of what's next.

I feel the depth of my soul

As it grows cold because how can one live in a soulless body? The voices taunt me.

Today I feel the depth of the past

And how I wish to shut the door on it. To move forward, go toward the future, but
the hinges are broken and there's cracks in the frame.

I think I hear someone through there calling my name.

Today I feel the depth of who I use to be, the things I've seen, the places I've been but
today I feel the depth of hope. I feel the depths of courage-the depths of my strength.

I feel the ability to see the sun after the rain, love after pain.

I feel the depths of where I'm going, feeling vulnerable, emotions showing, but to-
day I'm growing.

Today I feel the depths of my disease,

But I feel the depth of my recovery.

The fact that I'm recovering.

I'm facing my problems; I won't always be able to solve them.

Today I feel the depth of serenity,

No longer stuck in calamity.

Lost, but I'm finding solid ground.

Today I feel the depth of my purpose,

I know I deserve this.

Today I feel the depth of my willingness to let go, just be.

There's a reason I'm here,

I'm beginning to see.

Self-Care Guide

By Annie C

What is self-care?

We hear in the media that self-care is all bubble baths, and meditation. In all actuality self-care is the way we help ourselves in little ways on an everyday basis to ensure overall wellbeing. The purpose of this self-care guide is to give you some ideas to incorporate in your everyday life to promote a happy, healthy lifestyle. As you grow throughout your adult life, you will find different ways that work for you to feel good, productive, and healthy more days than not. The goal is to find a routine that fills your cup daily.

Scheduling

While it can be hard to have the forethought of scheduling out your days, this can help create stability, and focus. Even if the focus of the



schedule is just how you start your day. Scheduling can help support the creation of healthy habits. They say it takes 30 days to create a habit. However, it is important to still take everything one day at a time. You can use a device to set timers as a reminder throughout the day. Here is an example of a morning schedule someone might use while job searching or doing online school:

8 am: Wake-Up, make bed, do morning routine.

8:30 am: Eat breakfast

9 am: Get dressed

9:30 am: head to work/school/
start a job hunt

Rest

Additional rest for young men can help support healthy brain functioning, and body during growth spurts. Not only that sleep is important to help prevent depression.



Studies show that teenagers need 9 -9.5 hours of sleep a night, which is an hour more than a ten-year-old. Using a daily schedule can help maintain the ability to achieve a good night's rest. It may take some time to get used to sleeping on a certain schedule on your own, so don't beat yourself up if it takes some getting used to.

Be kind to yourself

There are many ways to "be kind to us." It can feel weird or cheesy at first, but it is important to check in with ourselves on a regular basis.

Some ways we can do this are:

-Take a walk

-Talk to a friend

-Read

-Watch a movie

-Ride a bike

-Exercise

-Listen to music



Local Resources that May Help Ensure Healthy Living:

Health Insurance: Medicaid Phone Number: (208) 359-4750

Website: <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/medicaid-health>

Same website, and phone number for food stamps, TANF, and other services such as housing vouchers

Terry Riley Health Services: Provides affordable accessible health, dental, and behavioral care.

Phone Number: (208)-344-3512

Website: <https://www.trhs.org/>

Pathways Crisis Center: A completely free mental health care facility that provides 24-hour stabilization, behavioral health services, and community resources

Phone Number: (833) 527-4747

Website: <http://www.pcccsi.com/>

The Idaho Foodbank: 3630 E Commercial St, Meridian, ID 83642

Phone Number: (208) 336-9643

Website: <https://idahofoodbank.org/>

A Letter from a Recovering Addict, Danielle

To start off, I'd like to tell you a little bit about my story. My name is Danielle, and I am a recovering drug addict. I used drugs from the ages 19-29. It first started as experimentation when I was in college. I was trying different drugs to see how they made me feel. Quickly, experimentation turned into prolonged use. I was using daily and I felt I needed to just to be able to cope with life and how I was feeling. Throughout the ten years of using, I did have periods of sobriety. I've been to inpatient rehabilitation, spent years in jail, and in prison. I am now almost 32 and have been sober for almost 3 years. I finally got sick of my freedom being taken from me and numbing myself. I had to change a decade of behaviors and habits, but I have finally turned my life around. I now have a house of my own, a nice car, a full-time job I love, a partner whom I adore, and am back in college. All these things would not be possible if I was still using. When I was using, my time and money went towards drugs. I didn't care who I hurt along the way; I was only ever thinking about myself. When you're dependent on a drug and stuck in your addiction you become the most selfish person you could be. Drugs are no longer a part of my life and for this I couldn't be more thankful. My days are now filled with gratitude, fulfillment, and happiness. I'm truly the happiest I've ever been, and I don't

have drugs or alcohol in my system. I'm here to tell you if you are suffering from drug or alcohol addiction, you CAN turn your life around and the struggle can come to an end. There is so much more to life than using every day. There is so much more to life than partying and numbing yourself from your emotions and feelings. Once you can see that glimmer of hope, doors filled with opportunity will open for you that you may have never thought possible. The path to sobriety may not be the easiest, but it is the most rewarding thing you can do for yourself and those closest to you. Your true family and friends want to see you lead a successful, healthy life.

They tell you in Alcoholics Anonymous using and drinking will take you one of three places: jail, an institution, or to your death. This sounds extreme, but it is the truth. Conquer this beast while you're young and strong because it only gets more difficult as the time goes on. If you're in a dark place and suffering from addiction, now is the time to turn your life around. Trust me when I say you don't want to spend years of your life in jail or prison because of drugs and alcohol. This life of using and drinking is not worth your freedom, or your life being taken from you. The first step is admitting to yourself that you have a problem. Once you've done that, it's imperative you reach out for help. There are more people and resources than you could imagine that will be there to help you and

gladly get you back on your feet. You are not alone in this. You are fighting for your freedom and for your life and you will be surrounded by supportive, loving people if you just speak up and ask for the help. Boise as a community is filled with success stories of people who have overcome the impossible when it comes to addiction, and YOU can be one of them. A quote I love is, "If you desire new outcomes in your life, you have to break up with old patterns." Starting your life of sobriety, you will have to change the people you hang out with and your routines. This may sound scary and uncomfortable but doing this will only lead you to succeed and thrive in life. The people you used or drank with are battling their own demons. Friends want you to be successful and healthy, not intoxicated and making poor decisions. I'm here to tell you there is hope for you. You can make the changes to create the life you've always dreamed of. You can overcome this and be a shining light for others that are still suffering.

If you're struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues or know someone that is, there are lots of resources in the Boise area that can help you. From in-patient rehabilitation (where you live at the facility for a set number of days) to out-patient programs (where you go to treatment groups and counseling a certain number of days a week), there is a program out there that will work for you.

Here are some resources that are available:

Intermountain Hospital, 303 N Allumbaugh St, Boise, ID 83704, Phone number: 208-377-8400.

They offer two different inpatient rehabilitation programs called the Journeys program and CAST.

Through the Journeys program, Intermountain Hospital provides 24-hour inpatient care for adolescents ages 12 through 17 whose acute symptoms require a secure and structured therapeutic environment. Our interdisciplinary treatment team includes child and adolescent certified psychiatrists, counselors, psychiatric nurses, case managers and mental health technicians who work closely with the individual and the individual's family. Our goal is to help each adolescent regain the necessary skills to be in maximum control of their emotions and behaviors and be able

to proceed through life with a minimum of difficulty. And because behavioral health issues vary, we tailor our inpatient services to meet the specialized needs of each patient.

Intermountain Hospital offers a co-occurring disorder treatment track for adolescents. Named CAST, this TRICARE-certified program focuses on the needs of adolescents who are facing substance abuse issues and have psychiatric or emotional problems as well. The treatment track requires hospitalization in a secure unit for 21 to 28 days. It features a curriculum created specifically for adolescents with co-occurring disorders.

Zelus Recovery, 2020 S. Eagle Rd Meridian, ID 83642, Call Jason at 208-449-0247.

At Zelus Recovery, their outpatient adolescent and young adult program focuses on the issues specific to young people battling addiction and mental health issues. It's never too early for young adults to receive the comprehensive outpatient addiction treatment they need and deserve. Outpatient treatment consists of one-on-one counseling, medication management, group and family therapy.

Ashwood Recovery, 7941 West Rifleman Street, Phone number: 208-584-8822.

At Ashwood Recovery, their outpatient treatment programs provide clients with the flexibility they need to maintain their family and work schedules while they receive effective treatment. They have treatment plans that are ideal for those battling addiction. They provide support for multiple substance use disorders and any underlying mental health concerns, such as anxiety or depression.

SAMHSA National Helpline, Phone number: 1-800-662-4357

Confidential free help, from public health agencies, to find substance use treatment and information.

Thank you to our partners for collaborating on the Youth Committee Newsletter Project

The Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission is a board of governor-appointed volunteers from each district working to represent the interests of Idaho concerning its youth. We, the Youth committee, are the heart and spirit of the Commission, made up of young adults who have experienced the situations that many Idaho youth currently encounter.

Contact the Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission Youth Committee through the Idaho Department of Juvenile Justice at (208) 334-5100.

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