

Apache County Jail Education Program – A Success Story

“I’m not like all these other guys here – I’m different – I’m really serious about getting my GED.” Sam proved this true only by his obvious commitment and determination, and the substantial amount of class work he completed while attending the *ACSO Jail Education Program*.

GED classes at the jail began with a *Learner Interview*. Then academic skills pre-tests helped to determine which subjects to select while setting education goals. Sam chose to improve his academic skills in the subjects of Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies, Critical Thinking Skills, and Essay Writing – a sizable task to undertake during a short, two-month time period.

Sam worked regular day hours as a jail trusty. So, during the late afternoons after work, he attended GED classes at the jail. He was diligent about attending class, and always completed his homework assignments at night. Throughout the entire time he attended classes, he remained motivated, and always asked for assistance on problems that he did not understand. During the morning of the day he was to be released, he insisted on getting help to edit and rewrite his essay. He said that he did not know how to write an essay, and wanted to do well on that portion of the GED test. Even though he had a reserved disposition, Sam maintained his sense of humor. He laughed at the idea of using his experience as a jail trusty on his next job application.

During the week before his release, academic skills post-tests were administered and goals re-examined. The *GED Test Guidelines* were reviewed, and Sam was given a list of GED test sites and contacts near his home community. He was provided with additional resources and contact information to help him accomplish his transition from jail to independent living. They encompassed military, job and housing, continuing education, and support services from outside agencies. The day of his release, Sam was provided with a *GED Class Progress Report*, and awarded a *GED Class Certificate of Achievement*.

At age 17 – four years prior to incarceration – Sam dropped out of high school with only a tenth grade education. A few months after his release, his mother reported to jail staff that he earned his GED certificate and acquired employment to support himself and his family.

Sam exemplifies a person who, even though at one time took a detour down a dead-end path, decided to utilize the resources of the *Jail Education Program* to change his course of action. Going back to school helped him to improve his academic skills, pass the GED test, and gain the knowledge needed to achieve a better way of life. Sam knows that does not come easily, but through ambition, strength of purpose, and hard work.

Note: All details in this story are true, except for the fictitious name, “Sam.”

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