

Michael Dee Hiser

Working on his Master's degree in Counseling
KentuckianaWorks College Access Center

I was at Dismas Charities. They needed a worker in advising, and I came in to do some work for them. I saw one of the KCAC counselors there who had been my middle school vice principal. He asked me if I was going to college. And, I said, "No, I owe money to the college from 20 years ago, so I can't go. But I only went there for six days, and the college closed."

He called some people, explained the situation, and got my enrollment cancelled and the college debt removed. Before you knew it, I was enrolled in college again. He helped me fill out my FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). He's helped me do my FAFSA every semester.

I became a KCAC customer in 2006. I got my Associate's degree in Human Services at Jefferson Community and Technical College. I went on to earn my Bachelor's degree in Pastoral Ministry at Campbellsville University, and I'll start working on my Master's degree in Counseling in August (2012).

At KCAC, they helped me with scholarships. Except for a \$3,000 loan, my entire Associate's degree was paid for with scholarships.

My KCAC counselor helped me stay on track, constantly – because he was real high-touch with me. He would see me in the halls and say, "Hey how are you doing? How are your classes?" He held me accountable. So I stayed 4.0, on the Dean's List and got a President's Scholarship.

If I hadn't gotten the assistance from KCAC, I don't think my life would be what it is. The education I received changed my life. It gave me the words to say how I felt instead of acting on feelings. It allowed me to express myself. It gave me the vocabulary to speak about what was going on with me instead of acting out on what was going on with me. So it has immensely changed my life.

I've got to be a miracle. I served four years in prison. I was uneducated, and I have dyslexia. The Accessibility Resource Center at Jefferson Community and Technical College helped me get computer software that assists people with dyslexia. That has really, really helped me a lot.

I start working on my Master's degree in counseling in August. I'm an Admission's Counselor at JCTC for the time being. I'm also a prison chaplain at two of the Dismas Charities. I do have plans for my future.

I'm not a victim anymore. Education has given me the ability not to be a victim anymore. You know, life doesn't just happen to me. I happen to life.