

Voices at AFOC

My name is Anthony Contreras. I started attending Abram Friedman Occupational Center (AFOC) in November, 2017. I grew up in a violent household. I saw my stepfather beat up my mom. When I was 12 years old, I looked for a door to escape that horrible life, and that's when I got into a gang. Along with becoming a gang member, drugs, alcohol, and jail came into my life at an early age. I was a drug addict who ended up in prison. I was also a father of three children, but I was never there for them. I was an absent father because of the lifestyle I chose.



Today, I am a recovered drug addict. I am learning how to be a father; I am there for my kids. I am also a responsible man. I am going to school for a career in barbering which has always been one of my dreams. I have always wanted to be a barber, and I am now pursuing my

dream. Today, I am grateful and thankful for Abram Friedman Occupational Center. I have found the place where I am accepted just as I am. Coming to school has taught me that I have to be responsible and accountable for what I do because I have to be present and punctual to class every day. I have accomplished 250 hours of learning and training. At school I feel like I am at home. I feel successful, and I now know I can reach my dreams. People at AFOC make me feel welcome and support me as I pursue my goals.

In my near future, I want to get my license and own a barber shop. Others who think that there's no hope, I am here to tell you that there is hope. If I can do it, you can do it. You just have to be willing to put in the work. Stay positive and work hard. There is a tomorrow!

