

Dear Mr. Art:

I miss being in your class. It's because of you that I have the ability to go to college one day. I want to be a teacher just like you, and work with students with special needs.

Please tell all the teachers "hello" for me, especially Mr. Freeman. Thank you for making me a smart child. Without your hard work I would not have made the Honor Roll each quarter. I hope I can see you and all the teachers one day. Thank you again for your hard work.

Sincerely, Bruce

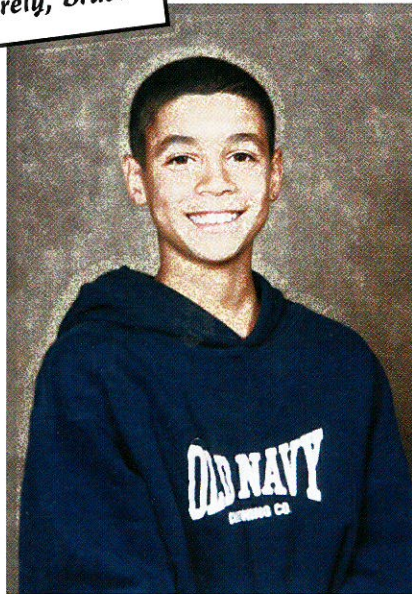
When Bruce was placed in YCS, he developed close relationships with his teachers and childcare workers. These nurturing relationships helped him develop emotionally and academically. One such relationship is depicted in the letter above.

"When I received the letter, I was at a loss of words, said Art Pataky, one of Bruce's teachers at YCS. I felt it was proof that I am making a difference in the children's lives. Reading it over again, I felt what I was doing was getting through to my students. I am extremely proud of Bruce, because I know how hard he worked to earn all of his accomplishments. I framed the letter and look at every day. It motivates me knowing that I made such an impact on a child. Bruce's letter shows just how a teacher can be a positive role model."

For Bruce, it was not only this special teacher that allowed him to move on in his road to success, it was the staff at the residence as well. When Bruce arrived at YCS Laurie Haven, he expressed how much he hated school. Laurie Haven's staff quickly understood why he disliked school so much. "He didn't know how to read," explained Residential Coordinator, Joanne Shamberger. The staff took the initiative to make reading fun for him. "Supervisor, Chearron Mitchell, and Senior Supervisor, Gloria Ross, took it upon themselves to read to Bruce every morning, and soon he learned to read." Once he learned to read, Bruce began to improve in school.

"The staff from Laurie Haven worked with Bruce's teacher to help Bruce change his attitude about school," explained Etta Sample, YCS Laurie Haven Site Administrator. As part of the continuity of care for the children at Laurie Haven, the childcare workers also assist in the classroom at the YCS school. "They

Resident Forms Special Bonds with Staff Members that Lead to Success



MAKING THE GRADE – Former YCS resident, Bruce, smiles at his success as an Honor Roll student.

[childcare workers] would monitor his behavior at school." Often the residential clinician and the school clinician would discuss Bruce's behavior and come up with plans to improve it. After several months, Bruce's behavior had improved dramatically and he was ready to move into a less restrictive home environment.

The process for his foster placement had begun long before the actual papers were signed. "Every weekend Bruce would be alone while the other children went home, so Mr. Jeune [Laurie Haven's Overnight Supervisor] inquired about weekend passes to take Bruce home with him," explained Site Administrator Etta Sample. "Those weekend passes turned into holiday passes." Their relationship blossomed throughout Bruce's stay in the YCS residential program.

When it was time for Bruce to be placed in foster care, Patrick Jeune and his wife became Bruce's foster parents. There, with consistent, nurturing help and tutoring, Bruce's interest in school was sparked even further.

"Some felt that Bruce could not coherently function in a school, let alone get good grades," explained Mrs. Jeune. "But Patrick would study with Bruce all the time," continued Mrs. Jeune. Once the Jeunes showed Bruce how to apply himself in school by teaching him valuable homework studying skills, Bruce improved again. Soon, Bruce excelled enough to leave the YCS school.

Bruce, still living with the Jeune family, is currently a sixth grade Honor Roll student with a 3.5 grade point average at Sayreville Middle School. Impressed by his academic and behaviorally mature abilities in the classified classrooms at his school, his teachers are recommending mainstream classes in certain subjects to challenge him at an even higher level.