

Gavrielle Sween

What have I learned from this episode

I started the Take Charge Program in March of 2017. At the time, it wasn't a requirement but I was enrolled because of the mistake I made prior. I was open to joining because I enjoy new learning experiences and meeting new people. On the day of registration, I remember waiting in the lobby while my mother enrolled me in the office, there were other families in the lobby as well, waiting for registration. I immediately observed the others and noticed they had behavioral issues. I felt discouraged. Students would tell their parents to leave them alone and disobey their parents requests. I wondered "What am I doing here?" "I have nothing in common with these kids". I thought that I didn't do anything wrong. I didn't want to be a part of this because it will not benefit me. Upon enrollment, Students had to be present every Monday, dressed in appropriate attire and ready to be transformed into a better person. I already felt I was the best I could be, how much better could I get?

"What a waste of Monday's".

I did not expect that the program would be beneficial for me because I believed that I was well behaved. I did not give my parents trouble, I did not give teachers trouble and I was a roll model in my community.

On the first meeting, I was introduced to Mr. Curtis and Mr. Mike. They were kind, honest, intelligent and genuine. They shared their experiences with us students and allowed us to share our own experiences. We completed activities together, that stimulated our minds. We learned the importance of teamwork and communication. We also learned to appreciate our parents because they go above and beyond. We would not be a part of Take Charge, which encourages personal growth as well as growing with a community, if they did not care for us. Spending that one evening with the group, I learned so much, I was captivated. I couldn't wait for our next meeting! We developed connections expeditiously. I learned that although we may be in different chapters in our lives, we are not different at all. We are all one decision away from a mistake. I continued with the program for a month, learning new things about myself as well as the world around me. (We were required to complete current event articles each week and speak to the class about our high and low points of the week). After meeting with

an intake officer at the Juvenile Court System in April. He suggested that I continue my mandatory correctional programming with the Take Charge program for the 90 days of probation.

Participants are expected to complete the program for a couple weeks. Upon request of the Intake Officer, I stayed for months. I met new sets of students and explained what the program was about. I explained how much of a positive impact it has had on me and why they should continue to take part.

During the course of the program, I learned to have positive thoughts and encourage others as well. I learned that little things I could do differently, will change the outcome of a situation. I learned to control anger, as well as fear. I learned to think through situations before acting.

Currently, the Take Charge family is learning about budgeting. Not only do we learn how to be better people and make better decisions, we are learning how to be more responsible. We are learning how to plan ahead for our future and map out what we need to accomplish and at what time we need to accomplish it.

Even though my time is nearly over, I will continue to participate until I obtain all of the knowledge I seek from the program. When my duration of the program is complete, I will definitely give back to Take Charge and also to the young people who are not quite on the right path or stuck at a point in their life and need help.