
From bleak to bright future

By West Michigan Works!

Posted at 8:00 AM

D'Angelo Green will graduate from Muskegon Heights High School Academy with a very bright future. But the outlook hasn't always been so positive.

At the start of his senior year, D'Angelo lacked the essentials needed for graduation and success beyond high school: credits, motivation, maturity and basic employability skills. He was ready to drop the program that would help him turn his life around — Jobs for Michigan Graduates.

The JMG program helps youth at risk of dropping out of high school get the skills they need to graduate, find a job and contribute to their communities. The program, which includes classroom instruction, adult mentoring and leadership development, has helped 98 percent of its participants graduate and 91 percent move on to employment, continuing education or both.

Fortunately, D'Angelo didn't drop the program and after further engagement and several class assignments, his perspective changed. D'Angelo began to see opportunities for a brighter future.

After his product presentation for the "Shark Tank" program activity — a virtual reality headset — one of the "Sharks" offered him a job and the mayor of Muskegon Heights offered free space to run his business.

D'Angelo is happy he decided to stay with the JMG program; he has made considerable improvements in areas where he once struggled and he is focused on his plans for the future. He recently accepted a position at AB Electrical Wires in Muskegon Heights and plans to attend Muskegon Community College to study engineering.

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunities that have opened up as a result of the JMG program," D'Angelo said.

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