

## **DETERMINATION PAYS OFF FOR CCYEP STUDENT**



Brandon Sargent was a high school drop-out and as a high school drop out, he soon found out how hard it is to get a good job. He learned real quick - no high school diploma, no GED, no job skills, leads nowhere. And Brandon was going nowhere in a hurry.

A friend told him about the Cabell County Youth Empowerment Program and how they help high school drop-outs get their GED and find jobs. So in February 2004, Brandon decided to enroll in the CCYEP program; a decision that has changed his life forever.

As a high school drop-out, Brandon was used to staying out all night partying and then sleeping all day. "Getting up each morning and going to class at 8:30 AM was the hardest thing. That was the toughest part for me," Brandon said.

Brandon likes to work with his hands, so when he heard about the Huntington School of Fine Woodwork he checked it out. "I liked it. It let me work with my hands and build things. I like art. I like making things," Brandon said. "Not only that, I got

paid," he said.

Soon his sporadic attendance leveled off and getting to class on time was no longer a problem for Brandon. Once he got his time management under control, he began to work on his anger management, which got him sent home on more than one occasion. "I did not like people telling me what to do," Brandon said. "Still don't. But I have learned that being told what to do is part of being a good employee," he said. "Now I don't get mad or angry as much and I am learning to keep my anger under control," he said.

He attended GED classes in the mornings and then went to the woodshop class in the afternoon. After six months of studying for the GED test, in September 2004, Brandon passed his GED.

After spending six months in the woodshop program, Brandon, along with four other students, was given the opportunity to work full time as a temporary laborer for the Huntington Housing Authority. Soon a full-time position opened up and Brandon decided he would apply for it.

Then the call came. Brandon was notified by Terry Henry, HHA Maintenance Supervisor that he had gotten the job. He was no longer a temporary laborer but a full-time laborer with a pay raise from \$5.15 per hour to \$9.86 per hour.

Brandon works a full forty-hour work week and is applying to attend night school to get his B.A. in Art.

"With my increase in pay, I am paying off old debts, saving money for a car and hope soon to move out of the projects and have a house of his own. I don't want to be 40 years old and still have a minimum wage job," he said. "I stuck with it when others quit. I stuck with it when I wanted to give up. Now I have a good job, I am dependable and always get to work on time. I have a future. I am proud of myself and my mom and dad are proud of me," he said.

We are extremely proud of you too Brandon. Hard work and determination pays off. Congratulations and good luck in reaching your dreams.

# CCYEP Alumni Graduates from RCBI

On Thursday, August 11, John McComas, a former CCYEP student received his diploma from the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Manufacturing. John was one of 13 students receiving their diplomas at the ceremony.

John enrolled in CCYEP in August of 2003. As a high school drop out, John realized that without a GED or high school diploma his future was looking bleak.

Newly married and with a new baby, John made a decision that has changed his life and future forever.

While enrolled in the CCYEP program, John attended GED classes in the morning and participated in On-The-Job Training at the Nick Joe Rahall Institute for Rural Transportation each afternoon. After his O-J-T concluded NJRI offered John a part-time job.



While at the NJR Institute, John's job duties required him to take some material to the RCBI. While there, John took a look around and was intrigued by what he saw.

After getting his GED in May of 2004, John began to inquire about enrolling in RCBI. He did and one year later graduated in the top of his class.

John's grades at RCBI were so good that he has now enrolled in engineering classes at Marshall University.

Tim White, CCYEP Program Coordinator, joined John's wife and family at the RCBI graduation ceremony to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Congratulations John. Your family, friends and especially the CCYEP staff are very proud of you. We cannot wait to be there when you graduate from Marshall University with your engineering degree.