

Life's Lesson of Independence

Judith Sheppard June 4, 2007

The story of Christopher Cornlieus Beasley

By: Ashley A. Davis

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The independence of life varies for different people. Some are born into a family of wealth, never having to lift a finger to provide for themselves, while others work hard their whole lives.

On January 23, 1987, in Philadelphia, Pa, Christopher Cornlieus Beasley was born into a life of poverty and struggle.

For 12 years, he was raised by his mother and grandmother while leaving in the ghetto of Philadelphia. Chris, as his mother fondly called him, never knew his father or even where he was located. However, that didn't stop him from growing up drug free, happy and disciplined.

However, growing up without a dad was hard, especially when Chris went to enjoy his favorite pass time of playing basketball.

"I remember growing up thinking about how I had no one to play basketball with...no one to teach me how to get the ball in the hoop like other dads did with their sons," says Chris.

Father's Day didn't make life without a father any easier.

To ease the pain, Chris's mom would celebrate Father's Day by taking him out to dinner, but Chris said that even that gesture didn't feel the void of needing a father.

Another hardship Chris had to endure was wearing old clothes from the nearest Salvation Army store, or shoes that were too tight for walking to school. Although his mom did the best she could by providing food and shelter, Chris new that he need more then just the basic needs.

As soon as Chris entered into the life of a preteen, he began searching for a job. During his search, he met Mr. Ellem, a mentor at the local recreation center. Mr. Ellem, treated Chris like he was his son, and knew of Chris's struggles. Therefore, he provided Chris with a job to help clean up at the center.

"I earned \$60- \$70 a week, which allowed me to buy Nike shoes and clothes that actually fit," says Chris.

Chris worked for Mr. Ellem for two summers until he was 14, which was the time that his mother decided to move Gwinnett County in Atlanta, Ga.

In Gwinnett County, Chris was around more family members, who motivated him to apply for a scholarship at Wesleyan, a private school near by.

To Chris's surprise, he won the scholarship and attended the school until graduation.

While Chris attended high school, his mom decided to go to college. After graduating from Mercer University in Dunwoody, Ga, she became motivated in the idea of her baby succeeding in life as well. She began talking to Chris about attending college, and asked him what he was interested in.

"I knew that I loved computers, video games, and anything electronic," says Chris, "After talking to my mom, I knew I wanted to become an engineer."

In the spring of 2004, Chris was about to graduate high school, and his mom was already a college graduate. They both began researching visiting colleges to find out what college had the best engineering program. In April, Chris ran across Auburn University.

“I knew this place was for me from the moment I stepped on campus. I found that its homely atmosphere and spirit made me feel right at home.”

With the help of grants and loans, Chris was able to afford to attend Auburn University in fall of 2004. Chris’s mom agreed to provide him with an allowance as long as he kept his grades up.

However, at the beginning of his freshman year, Chris became involved in drinking and the party life of Auburn. His grades began to drop, and his mom became angry and decided to cut off his allowance until he got his act together. Again, Chris was faced with a life of independence.

He quickly got a job at J & M Bookstore, and began paying for food and shelter at the Sewell Hall dorms. He new that if he wanted to be taken seriously by his mom and not be kicked out of school, he would have to turn his college career around.

“I work well under pressure, and the pressure was on at this time.”

By the end of his sophomore year, Chris had changed his lifestyle completely by maintaining his grades and working hard to provide for things he needed. However, the money he made at the bookstore was not enough to keep him from struggling financially in college.

During a physics class his junior year, a co-op representative visited the class to discuss job opportunities. He discussed different jobs that allowed you to make \$9-\$15 an hour. According to Chris, this sparked his attention immediately.

“Not only did I need the money, but I needed the experience,” he says, “Coming out of college you’re no different from the next Joe Blow, so I figured this experience would give me a leg up on things.”

During what is known as Auburn University’s “Co-op Day,” Chris set up five interviews for a job.

One lady, by the name of Tai Stewart, took interest in Chris’s hard working personality and offered him a job at the company South Wire in Carrolton, Ga.

Chris started the co-op job in summer of 2006 working in the research department where he helps with testing cable efficiency. He was provided with a close range apartment location.

From the looks of things, the atmosphere of the job is laid back and calm. People in Chris’s department are of the retirement age. Most of his co-workers have been a part of the company for 15-20 years.

There are several rows of brown cubicles that line the floor, providing plenty of space for each worker. The testing areas are in the back behind the cubicles.

At South Wire, Chris is employed on a salary bases. He worked in the fresh smelling environment in the spring of 2007 as well.

“I had to attend school in fall of ’06 because they require you to go to school while co-oping,” he says.

This summer, the company let Chris continue to work part time, where he is happy.” I have done a lot of growing up through out my life and I wouldn’t change that.”

Source

Beasley, Christopher. Auburn Student. Interviewed June 1, 2007. 678-575-6366.