



When I was a junior at East Lincoln High School, it was time to decide what I was going to do with my life. At that point I didn't have a clue. I had no plans of going to college but knew I had to do something. My main reason for not wanting to go to college was the money; I didn't think I could afford to go to college and the idea of owing someone thousands of dollars when I graduate with no job just didn't sound good. So I was still very open minded to different ideas.

One day at the Lincoln County School of Technology they held a presentation about an Apprenticeship program. I considered it but thought that it just wasn't for me. Then about a year later when I was a senior they had the same presentation. Once again they gave out the details of the program, saying that they pay for school, give you a full time job and pay you while you sit in class. It really sounded like a deal but I was still skeptical. I decided I would go to their open house and just see what it would be like.

The open house that I went to was at Blum Inc. A handful of high school students and me were given a tour of the facility and told more about the Apprenticeship program. We were told about the pay scale, job trades available, and the time line of the 4 year program. I did like how all the job trades were very hands on. All that kept going through my head was the presenters saying, "If you don't like the program, you can leave when ever you like and you will never owe us anything." What could I loose?

My experiences through the program were great. Some of the things I was able to do are just amazing at my age. When I was 19 years old and in the second year of the program I was able to buy a house on my own. I would have never been able to do that if I had to pay for school. I made friendships that will last a lifetime not only within the company but also in Europe. In the forth year of the program I was given the opportunity to travel to Austria to work for an entire month. It was the experience of a lifetime. The apprentices there took me places that I have never been before and may have never even heard about. Plus those apprentices also get the chance to come to the US for a month. So, I was able to return the favor to them.

Well, here I am, a graduate of the Apprenticeship Program with an Associates Degree, no debt, and I owe it all to this program. Signing up was the smartest thing I've ever done. I am now in my chosen trade and I never dread coming to work. Even after the program I decided to continue to go to school to advance my education and the company was 100 percent supportive of that and continued too pay for the classes.

Don't overlook this great opportunity, I'm glad I didn't!

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