

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – 2010 Essay Contest Winner: High School First Place



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The Best Decision of My Life

Have you ever experienced a childhood without a father figure around? As you get older, you get into more trouble. You begin running from the law and from home, getting into gangs, carrying unnecessary weapons, and acting poorly in school. Until one change makes you a better person inside and out.

When my mother and I took one step and moved to Houston and I discovered the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, things began to change for me. Since then, I gave up possession of unnecessary weapons, and I finally started listening to my parents. For the first time ever, I am proud to show people my grades and tell people what I worked hard for.

Ever since I joined this program, my attitude

has changed toward helping people who are in need or struggling. What I love about the program is that it kept me on my toes as a role model, because how can someone be a second grader's role model and still out on the streets doing drugs or violence?

I take pride in working with my tutees very seriously because I don't want them to goof off in school like I did as a child. When I see a smile from my tutees, it gives me the sign that I am a great person as a role model and as a growing man. Sometimes I wonder what would have happened if I didn't make this best decision of my life.

