



## Testimonials

### What teens say:

“This summer has been really fun because I am making my last bench. Working at Van Go has changed my life. I like it because people don’t judge you, and you don’t have to be an artist to work here. When I paint I express how I am feeling. Van Go is my home, my friend, my family, and my shelter.” *-Laticha, 19*

“It’s given me a lot of confidence, and it’s given me a lot of people I can depend on when it comes to problems in the home. I can come here... I can talk to someone.” *-Faith, 16*

“Without Van Go in my life, I’d probably be lost.” *-Christina, 17*

“Van Go kept me out of trouble by keeping me here.....without Van Go in my life I’d be lost...either pregnant or a runaway...” *-Jamie, age 17*

“For all you’ve done for me, I can plainly see, that JAMS, I owe you my life....” *-Anna, age 16*

“Most of all, I learned that I can and will be somebody in this world and I will make a difference, no matter what obstacles I will have to cross. I can do anything I set my mind to, unbreakable.

I can whole heartedly say that I would not be so determined nor believe in myself in any sense, had I not worked with JAMS. They have truly been my life-savers, my shining stars, and my backbone!

I think I can speak for all JAMS kids when I say, I honestly don’t know what I would be doing with my life right now had I not received that extra push that I was before lacking. And those in the future programs deserve just as we received... a chance!” *-Jessica, 18*

“I just wanted to thank you guys for everything. I really love the Van Go program with a passion. Without your program, I don’t think that I would be where I am today. It actually made me look at my future and made me want to do something with my life. So,



I just wanted to say “Thank You” to everyone. –*Kachet, Van Go Alumni*

**What parents say:**

“I’m a mother of a young man who is getting ready to begin the JAMS program. I just wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart for making this opportunity available, and for accepting him. He would tell you that I’ve been trying to convince him to finish his education, either get a diploma or GED, since he dropped out! He’s a great kid with a lot of talent and a lot of potential. I love him very much.

I made a lot of mistakes during the years that I was raising my kids, and he really does come from a difficult, disadvantaged background. I’ve been praying for something like this to be a tool to help him find his path in life. I am a former addict, now completely clean, who is working very hard to turn my own life around. It breaks my heart that I can’t do more to help him myself yet, but I still have a long way to go to even be able to stand on my own feet. I am so grateful for people like you and programs such as this. Thank you so much.

–*Melissa, parent of Van Go apprentice artist*

“How can I begin to thank you for all you’ve done for Jon? Without Van Go, his life would be empty.....”

– *Dawn, parent of JAMS teen*

“...the work this organization does in the community, I’m proud to be a part of it.....thank you for saving my daughter’s life....”

–*Curt, Anna’s parent, board member*

“JAMS has given Alex the opportunity to be a “Normal” teenager and be involved with other teenagers. As a special education student in high school, much of Alex’s day puts her into contact socially with only special education students, JAMS has given her the opportunity to have a greater mix of contacts. We absolutely could not have found this



type of experience anywhere else in Lawrence.

**The first job experience has also been invaluable.** Through the JAMS program, students go through interviews, evaluations, receive reward when they exceed expectations and I would imagine are counseled when they are no meeting expectation. This type of experience has also been invaluable to our daughter. She worked for many months to finally receive employee of the week. It meant a lot to her when she got it and I appreciate that she had to meet expectations to receive that award. The staff is very fair and kind and they do an excellent job in working with these students and communicating expectations.” *-Allison, Parent of a Van Go Apprentice-Artist*

**What teachers say:**

“All the kids at Central would like be part of Van Go, because the Van Go kids that come back speak so highly of it and have had such a wonderful experience...In this community, we may not want to admit it, but there are a lot of children who need a great deal of help.”

*-Michel Loomis, Central Junior High School teacher*

“I can always tell, without knowing, who has been a part of the JAMS program. These children have a new sense of self-worth and are so very proud of themselves and their work!”

*- Ms Sears, art teacher*

**What community leaders say:**

“We look really hard at agencies to find whether they meet certain needs in this community, whether there’s an unmet need. Whether it ultimately ends up saving the community dollars and putting dollars in the front end of something as opposed to putting it in the back end. And developing our work force. Van Go does that so well.”

*-Sue Hack, Mayor of the City of Lawrence*