

## STORY 5: ADRIAN - Hispanic, Age 17

Hey, I'm Adrian from Florida. I guess you could say my childhood was messed up. My dad was never around and my mom got this boyfriend who would beat on us. I would try to fight back but I wasn't big enough. I begged my mom to leave him, but she said we needed the money... because we were down and out.

Eventually I got taken away and put in foster care. It was better, but it didn't fix me. And school sucked. I used to get bullied because my clothes were too old or too big or whatever. And I used to always have a bad attitude and get in fights. Or just not even go to school.

My life actually started turning around because of the Y. I got involved in Teen Achievers and they pushed me to do better. They taught me to *want* to do better. The Y has helped me because I can be in a safe environment and can get my work done after school. They even gave me meals which I really needed sometimes.

To be real, I don't know where I'd be without that program. And, yeah, I'm back living with my mom now. He's gone... it's safe.

So I just finished high school two months ago and for my senior year, I had a 3.5 GPA. In August I go to community college. A few years ago I didn't even see a future so I really owe a lot to the Y.

I've been listening to these stories and I think I can speak for everyone to say... the Y has been like a home to us. It's a place we feel safe and actually happy. When I think about it, the Y is the happiest home I've ever known. Thank you.