

Daniel came to Communities In Schools of Miami with nothing but his book bag and his luggage. An exceedingly polite, well-mannered young man, Daniel always liked school, but struggled with his grades. Now, new hurdles in his personal life added significant roadblocks to success.

“We moved from Alabama to Miami, and then there were big family issues going on at home.” Daniel explained. “The end result was that I was put out of my household. I showed up at CIS with nothing but my book bag, and talked to Ms. Carri.”



Ms. Carri, the school’s CIS Site Coordinator, related to Daniel right away. Having grown up in poverty she witnessed first-hand the struggles her mother went through to provide for her family, “I can understand what it’s like when everyone around you is looking nice, or a certain way, and you don’t have that. I decided to make it my business to help others.”

She soon became a trusted confidant for Daniel, and through this relationship, she saw his great potential.

“I would see him every day. Some days, it was just to say ‘hi.’ Other days, it was to give him the opportunity to vent in a safe environment,” Ms. Carri explained. “I just clicked with him. He has very good manners – I’m keen on that. And I could see that he was determined.”

Perhaps his biggest challenge was simply being overwhelmed navigating the intricacies of transferring credits, studying for state testing, managing college applications, and not least of all – finding a safe place to stay.

“When I came to school, I didn’t know where to go when school was out,” Daniel said.

“Daniel came in my office depressed and discouraged and I knew I could not let him walk away without supporting him. It took me the entire school day to make contact with someone at a shelter. But it happened.”

Daniel now has a home in a shelter until graduation. Surmounting such challenging obstacles is an achievement in itself, but he suggests that one of the things he values most is his renewed outlook on life.

“Ms. Carri taught me to make the best of every situation. I didn’t think like that before I met her – she instilled that in me. She helped me realize that no situation has to be permanent.”

Since entering Communities In Schools Daniel has significantly improved his grades, and placed above average on his state testing.

“He was so worried about the FCAT testing. And guess what!” Ms. Carri said, with genuine excitement, “He passed! I am so grateful we made contact. He was on the verge of dropping out and with CIS support, he is making it.”

Daniel echoes this sentiment, “Without Communities In Schools, I’d be in the streets. CIS for me is more like a family. Caring, loving, nurturing.”

Thanks to his achievement, the guidance of Communities In School and his own perseverance, Daniel will be attending Florida Memorial University in the Fall on a full scholarship.

Daniel and Ms. Carri plan to keep in touch throughout his college years. “He has no choice! I’ll go there and follow him!” Daniel laughed, “Yes, we’ll always keep in touch.”