



CROTCHED MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

Vocational Skills Build Pathway To Learning: Drew's Personal Route to Self-Sufficiency

When you first meet Drew you notice his polite and kind nature, followed by his bright smile. He works hard at his jobs and enjoys the rewards of a paycheck and a job well done. It is hard to imagine that just 2 ½ years ago when he came to Crotched Mountain School, Drew was withdrawn and struggling emotionally. Diagnosed with ADHD and a learning disability, he had a hard time expressing himself and interpersonal relationships were difficult. Academically, he was a reluctant student who resisted traditional classroom instruction. His anxiety and difficulty in communicating made learning and developing relationships with his peers and teachers very challenging.

Before Drew came to Crotched Mountain, he struggled with aggression and had a hard time focusing, said his mom, Lisa. Now he comes home from school upbeat and happy. He always says, I had a great day!

Drew's transformation took a commitment to finding the best way for Drew to learn and a focus on interpersonal and communication skills. With self-confidence and a quest for independence, Drew is now focused on life after Crotched Mountain School, which includes more vocational training and finding a job.



Unraveling the issues

One fundamental step in Drew's early successes at Crotched Mountain School was learning how to deal with conflict. When his teachers focused on academics in class, he wouldn't talk. He wouldn't engage. He wouldn't make eye contact. He wouldn't do his school work. He wasn't happy and he was struggling to adapt.

Christy Greene, his counselor, discovered that it was hard for Drew to put his feelings into words. He had a long history of unsuccessful school

experiences and he often chose not to communicate. Drew had some past issues with expressing himself, especially around conflict and his struggles with academics, said Greene. By role-playing, they worked on identifying words for Drew to communicate his needs more effectively, being assertive without being aggressive and using communication to manage challenging social situations.

