

URBAN YOUTH ALLIANCE **BRONXCONNECT & MANHATTANCONNECT**

BronxConnect / ManhattanConnect's Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) program is funded by the NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. The program provides counseling, mentoring, and case management services that address educational, employment goals of individuals, 13- to 27-year-olds with open cases in Criminal and Supreme Courts.



In 2021, Troy Barnes was referred to Urban Youth Alliance ManhattanConnect site by the Legal Aid Society on the charge of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd degree. With the opportunity to turn his life around, Troy wanted to take full advantage of what the ATI program had to offer and had demonstrated the motivation to grow from his past experiences.

Troy attended weekly anger management groups, Cure Violence counseling sessions, and employment readiness groups. With the help of his case manager, therapeutic counselor, and support from the ManhattanConnect staff, Troy pursued his goals to get his driver's license, his high school diploma, and find employment.

Troy obtained his OSHA license and flaggers certification and is now equipped to work on construction sites around New York City. He also received his driver's permit and is scheduled to take his road test soon. Despite struggling with his academics, Troy was determined to obtain his high school diploma. Troy's case manager helped him enroll in a credit recovery program at Democracy Prep. Despite setbacks related to COVID-19, Troy had the initiative to enroll into a new school—Independent High School—where he made straight A's since his first semester. He was also on the presidential honor roll and received accolades as the most improved student in his class.

When he first enrolled in the ATI program, Troy struggled with oversleeping, staying out late, and neglecting his priorities. Troy learned how to manage his schedule and continued to set and achieve personal and professional goals. Troy completed over 30 hours of Cure Violence counseling sessions that helped him learn to detect and interpret conflicts, identify, and treat high-risk behaviors, and change social norms. Coupled with weekly 1-on-1 case management sessions and counseling, Troy implemented strategies to help with his time-management skills and to keep himself away from the streets and the wrong crowds.

In Troy's words: "I am proof that a person can change. The entire ManhattanConnect ATI staff helped me realize that. I want to give a special thanks to Ms. Blocker, Ms. Jaelyn, Mr. Monroe, Mr. Collins, and Ms. Hill. The program helped me get back on track with school too. If there was one thing, I would say to new youth is that if you come to the program, just keep focusing on what you need to do and you will be alright."

Troy successfully completed Manhattan Connect's ATI program and received a Youthful Offender Disposition on May 17, 2022. He is currently employed full time at the Children's Aid Society as a youth counselor and is continuing his education in summer school, pending graduation in September 2022. He continues to engage with Manhattan Connect's counselor post program completion.