

My Gen I-challenge is through a program that I am currently involved in called "Teach Me To Fish." *Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.* It is run by a non profit restaurant called Po'shines. Our goal is to help troubled youth get back on their feet while being able to provide them a chance to learn the restaurant business, culinary skills, professional catering and banquet serving skills, and much more. I was once apart of this program myself.

I come from a family that suffers from drug and alcohol abuse. My home life was awful. My mother was in and out of jail while my step dad was slowly dying at home due to kidney failure. My little brother was stealing food at the near by Fred Meyers to eat and I was a drop out by seventh grade. Life was going downhill fast, but through everything I never saw this as my life. I wasn't taught any other way of living, but somewhere deep down, I knew that there was something different ahead and I didn't have to live like that.

One day I decided to volunteer at a restaurant, which is where I learned about the program "Teach Me To Fish" I started out in the dish pit, this taught me responsibility. Then I became an expo, this taught me how to communicate thoroughly and fast. I soon became a waitress/host, this taught me how to be both respectful and humble. While doing this I've also learned how to make pastries, cut food properly, BBQ, cooking skills, etc, but more importantly i've also gained a family. This organization has pushed me to get back in school. They have supported me through many of my tribulations and this is really what the program is all about!

By being part of this organization we are teaching other youth skills that they will need throughout life, but also providing structure and guidance. We are providing that family bond where there is none. We are constantly supporting each other to do the best that we can each and every day no matter what. This is our real goal; to uplift the broken. I want to offer my community the chance to experience what I had. There are so many children out there with stories like mine who feel like they are all out there alone. I am currently still in high school and am in awe with how far I've come within these last few years. I can't imagine where I would be today if it weren't for this program and the amazing people involved in it. I love this Non profit program and I can honestly say it has changed my life!