

One experience that stood out to me was a young man who at the beginning of the year was 100% convinced that he was going to be a professional football player. He acted big and tough and was mean to all of the girls including any female staff. Throughout the year I have gotten to know him and have slowly broken down his tough “shell” to find that he is a softy who loves technology and in particular coding. Over the course of the last month, I have tracked down a few coding books and websites for him to look at. He has also gone to the Cedar Rapids public library and has checked out a few books himself. This is a major accomplishment because he has struggled to get rides home from the program so getting a ride specifically to the CR public library is amazing. We did *Possible Futures* on both IT and cybersecurity and these two resonated greatly with him. The kid is starting to view a future beyond just football and is starting to respect his peers more. He is no longer the instigator of fights with nerds and is rather sticking up for his more “nerdy” classmates. Another major accomplishment is that he has begun to trust and respect our newest staff members from Tanager. At first, he was standoffish and mean to them but over the course of the last three months he has warmed up to them. He was devastated when he realized their end date was near. But rather than acting out, he wanted to spend more time with them. This is a major improvement from the beginning of the year.