

The following is a message written by one of our graduates, Andrew. Andrew has since entered our transition program where he is learning more skills and tools to better equip him to live interdependently. Andrew was in a few treatment centers before his parents found CALO. It's fair to say that prior to Andrew coming to CALO there was much uncertainty and doubt surrounding Andrew's future and his ability to be safe. Now Andrew is on the verge of his first year of college and will be a long-term, productive member of society. His name and article are being used with his permission.

*"The obstacles in my life created hardship and a lot of problems. Eventually it came to a point where I needed the help of residential care. After finding that the first two residential treatment centers I was at were not able to meet my needs, the decision was made that I come to CALO.*

*The biggest factor that made me agree with the decision was that I was told there were canines at CALO. My second day I was offered the chance to take one of the canines, Rikki, out to potty. At first I was unsure if I was allowed to, because I thought I would have to earn the privilege of playing with a dog. I was used to having to earn things in other programs. It turned out that Jeanna, the Canine Therapy Program Supervisor, saw my hesitation and told me I could handle Rikki. Ever since that moment I hit it off with the canines. They have been the cornerstone of my therapy.*

*Through parenting the canines, I learned that a lot of the things my parents did to help such as discipline and boundaries were actually necessary. This helped bring understanding and gave me the support to start working on what became a nonexistent relationship with my parents. I starting working with a canine named Jake in August and fell in love. He has been my motivation through my time here at CALO.*

*I have become quite successful in my own life now; I graduated the full-time CALO program and have been one of the first students in the transition program. I was accepted by multiple colleges and I have an on-campus job working for Jeanna. Now I work with Jeanna every week and help other students find the joys of working with canines, as well as explaining how they helped me. I believe that these wonderful animals can help all of our students through their struggles, even if they are like me and unable to adopt and bring a canine home."*