

February 2021



*Just Like That: An American Dream*

My name is Jamal Lampkin, I'm 18 years old and I live in Milwaukee. A couple of years ago my family and I were signed up to go through the PROMISE program and it changed my life forever. Promise got me into learning life skills at a time when I never thought I could do anything. I never focused on myself until this program told me I could do anything I wanted. I never thought I would be featured in an article or get interviewed over the phone because I never could talk to people, and I didn't know what I wanted. PROMISE is a real family since I know they have my back. This is What the Word is for real. PROMISE was there for me and helped me build skills that I will use for my entire life! Not only did I learn life skills, but it got me into my own feelings and my emotions to a point where I'm looking forward to building my whole life up. PROMISE even let me know about the Youth Leadership Forum and that was a huge next step in breaking out of my shell, creating real connections with people and giving me the confidence to testify in front of members of the state senate! When I testified in front of the legislature, I felt like there were 1000 people watching me and at the time I wasn't used to speaking let alone in front of crowds. I had something I wanted to say that was important to me and once you tell your truth, that's it. It doesn't matter what people think since it's your truth.

I love helping people and I've always had a caring spirit. I figure, I'm here and I'm still breathing so I want to make sure other people have what they need. I have been working in nursing homes since I was in high school. Having a good job is hard to find and especially one where I get to know people like I

do so I plan to stay with it until I go to college or move. Getting to know the residents and hear stories from their past, it's a special bond. Making bonds with people is the most important thing in life. It's kind of like dating you've got to get to know someone before you can get serious and share who you really are and I feel like it's the same way with friends or anyone really.

Because I work in assisted living, I was able to get both shots of my COVID-19 vaccine. I got my first shot in late December and I didn't have any problems with it. Just last week I was able to get my second shot and it went well. I ended up getting a headache for a few hours later that day but apparently that is normal, and it wasn't even that bad. I know sometimes people will get sick for a day after getting their second shot but I wasn't ever worried about that. Getting the vaccine is too important to be scared. It's literally saving lives and I don't think a lot of people get that. I can't wait to stop wearing masks and be able to see friends without being socially distanced but I'm going to keep doing it until we get the virus under control. If you want things to go back to normal you gotta get the vaccine. I want to make sure that people are alright. It's all about caring for people. We won't have to keep wearing masks if we get the vaccine out. Social distancing sucks but if you want it to go away you got to take it seriously. Especially since I work with elderly people and if I'm around them it's important that I don't have COVID-19. It gets real when someone you know has the virus. It's everywhere and that's the scariest part about it. You have a lot to live for and you can't lose that to fear.

If I ever change this world I want to make a real American dream. People should have the things they need without the fear of getting killed over it. I feel like I'm living the best dream I've ever had. I'm alive, talking, working and happy. A lot of celebrities are living their dream making music and leaving their mark but not everyone wants to live that celebrity life but you should still live your life. Be rich in life but not with money. You want to make something really good for your life whatever you want to do, get a job, go to school. I never thought I would do stuff like this and look how much my life has changed. I want to go to school but I need and want work experience first. We should be worried about the future, not the past. Don't get me wrong you should know the past and learn from it but don't let it bring you down. Care about others but focus on yourself. There is a lot of good you can do during your time alive. You only get one life and it is what it is so work hard and have fun with it!