

**September 2014**  
**Former DYS Youth Operates a Very Successful Company**  
**and Employs DYS Youth on Parole**

Cincinnati native Tim Arnold runs a successful landscaping and home renovation company.

The former DYS youth is proud of another achievement: his ability to employ DYS youth on parole and empower them with the skills and knowledge so that they can be successful in the workforce as well.

In 2008, Arnold started his landscaping business, Lawn Life, a not-for-profit company that depends on donations and grants. It's a unique operation that has a clear mission: Provide disconnected youth with an opportunity to gain real-work experience and transferrable skills.



Donations and grants help cover expenses, employee training and equipment.

Since 2008, a total of 480 teenagers have been on the payroll at Lawn Life, including DYS youth. "The kids really respect the job. They feel empowered," said Arnold.

While Arnold is a success story himself, he is quick to share the many success stories of the youth he employs.

When Lawn Life was getting off the ground, a teenager saw Arnold at a gas station and asked him for \$1. Instead of just handing over some money, Arnold told the boy he could earn \$10 by cutting the lawn of a nearby home that Arnold was renovating. The teenager accepted and Arnold paid him \$10 an hour.

"It was his first job ever; his pride in that alone brought out a completely different side of him. He was motivated and intrinsically wanted to work hard," Arnold said. The youth went on to work at Proctor and Gamble, a Fortune 500 company.

During the past six years, Arnold's business has exploded, from 30 to 300 lawns a week and he has landscaping

operations in Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus.

Currently, about ten DYS youth on parole are employed at the company, learning a trade, earning a paycheck and opening bank accounts for the first time.

Lawn Life, however, offers youth more than just a paycheck, Arnold said. His teenage employees learn about customer service, sales and completing jobs with attention to detail. "When they (youth) come to Lawn Life, I hope I am building their character."

Arnold does not hesitate to hire DYS youth. He is eager to give them a chance because he was once a DYS youth himself.

From 1992-1996, Arnold was at various facilities, including Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility, Lighthouse Youth Center at Paint Creek and the now-closed Riverview Juvenile Correctional Facility.

After 27 adjudications, Arnold decided to turn his life around. He was 18 at the time and working at a steel mill. "I just decided to apply myself to the job," he said, "not just fill out an application, but really apply myself." Eventually, promotions and raises came his way. With the extra money, he paid off thousands in credit card and student loan debt.

After putting himself through real estate school, Arnold decided to renovate homes on the side. His first purchase was in Cincinnati for \$30,000. After three months of hard work, he sold it for \$80,000. While most people would be inclined to spend the profits, he took the money and purchased more homes to renovate and sell.

Arnold isn't flipping houses anymore, but he is still in the home renovation business, completing about 15 a year. The work is done entirely by youth under the supervision of professional tradespeople.

After nearly five years at the steel mill and several wise real estate investments, Arnold knew it was time for him to follow his "purpose in life." Lawn Life came into the landscaping scene in 2008.

The landscaping company offers youth many entry-level opportunities, from cutting grass to earning more job responsibility, to eventually working full-time.

Today, Arnold is married and has three daughters. His two older daughters assist him with the business. "My girls work circles around the boys," he said with a chuckle.



Arnold says he will continue to grow his business and instill a positive work ethic in youth that is reflected in his company slogan: "Persistently pursuing perfection."

I commend Tim Arnold for pursuing success while dedicating his time to our youth on parole. Tim's story should be a reminder to all of us of the DYS vision: A safer Ohio: one youth, one family and one community at a time.

For more information about Lawn Life, contact Tim Arnold at 513-961-2222 or [timarnold@lawnlife.org](mailto:timarnold@lawnlife.org).



*Pictures top and bottom: Before and after pictures of a kitchen renovation completed by former DYS youth Tim Arnold and his Lawn Life employees*