A number of factors led to Edward becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. While his mother served as a positive force in his life, Edward didn’t have the benefit of growing up with a father figure in his life. James Rice, his former Juvenile Parole Officer, met him at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility and was quickly impressed by the young man’s determination to overcome his past.

Once released onto parole, Edward continued to be determined. He worked ten-hour days to address his own financial needs and to help his mom who was experiencing a health challenge. What’s more, he immersed himself in the Welding Technology Training Program at Fortis College to further career possibilities. Recently, Edward successfully completed the welding program and now has a foundation in industrial welding techniques, craft skills, welding mathematics, and career development skills.

Yesterday, Edward was presented with the Youth Award of Achievement at the Restored Citizen Summit in Columbus. He was honored for the strides he has made and had his family and girlfriend by his side.

"His family is living proof that it takes a community to raise a child and guide him in the right direction for success. They have truly taken the journey with him from day one," said Masija-Jmes Porterfield, Juvenile Parole Services Supervisor.

Edward has been a shining example of what’s possible for youth with prior involvement in the juvenile justice system. He’s considering going back into our facilities to encourage others to stay the course. All of us at DYS are proud of the success Edward has found and that he wants to pay it forward.