

When You're Sad, Keep Pushing

"I passed math because of her," relates Brooklyn native Joseph Gonzalez about his IU 13 Community Education instructor. Joseph needed to earn his High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma in order to move to the next step: become a union ironworker.

After three years in prison and a lifetime of struggles, Joseph moved to Lancaster where his parole officer encouraged him to contact the Reentry Services office at CareerLink. With the support of Reentry Services, Joe completed welding training at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. But to enter the union, he needed to earn his high school equivalency (HSE) diploma.

The reentry office connected Joe with IU13's Community Education program, where he studied for five months with his IU instructor in the Improved Reentry Education (IRE) program and earned his HSE. Joe joined the union and became a certified welder.

When Joseph reflects on his past, he shares that he learned from his mistakes and advises others, "Just because you fell all the way to the ground doesn't mean you can't get up. For every 10 steps you fall, jump up 20 steps. You might have times when you're sad, but keep pushing."

Joseph acknowledges that the transition from New York to Lancaster has not been easy, but shares that as a hard worker he appreciates that "everything is a lesson learned."

