

My name is Elijah Craft and I'm a college student. My first time playing football, I went to a school that had never won... ever. So it was like everybody was doubting us and when we started winning, more people started bringing more money to the community so we could keep winning. That's when more people started relying on us, talking to us and it's like we created a bond like family, like if we needed anything, they helped us out and if they needed us to do anything, like even labor work, like help carry stuff or doing anything for younger people or older people... we did that too.

I couldn't read for nothing and it was really, really difficult for me. I used to go days sitting at the house watching my brothers go to stores, go to games, do stuff with their friends. I used to sit there upset and angry like, wow, I can't go because I can't really just ride my bike with them or go to the car and go drive somewhere with them because I can't read nothing. So when I went to *Beyond Basics* and met Mr. Reid and they taught me how to read, everything got better. I was able to go to the store. There's just so much more stuff I started doing it. I couldn't read the street signs. I couldn't do none of that. So I was able to read the street signs. And I was so thankful for the fact that they helped me get that reading. So I can walk down the street and do what I want to do now, instead of just being stuck at home angry all the time. So, when I really caught somebody that really cared and helped me out to the point when I could read on my own, it made me feel like I accomplished, like I was going to be somebody, like I was really doing something in my life.

Like recently my friend, his mother and father recently got murdered. And with the little money I had I spent \$500 on him, to get him new clothes, new shoes because all he had was a shirt, pair of pants and underwear, that was it. No shoes, no socks nothing else, so I helped him with that... and its the fact if I helped him out, he's going to help somebody else out and its going to keep going and keep going, and that's how we make the world a unity, instead of everybody always fighting and bickering with each other. That's my

motivation, to always keep learning and to keep working hard. That's my family. Families always got your back. When you're down the lowest, the family are the ones who are going to pull you up.