

PROJECT RISE

SUCCESS STORY: ROTHEL

Rothel finds responsibility

Charged with driving without owner's consent, armed robbery, and party to a crime, Rothel thought his life was over. He was only 15.

Milwaukee County Department of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) had a different plan for Rothel. Milwaukee County is reforming the youth justice system to give kids like Rothel a chance to rewrite their futures. This movement is called Project Rise.

Through Project Rise, a judge placed Rothel in the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP), an alternative to Lincoln Hills School. Instead of being "locked up" in a cell all day at a corrections facility, Rothel participated in programs that helped him learn empathy and take responsibility for his offenses. He also received access to mental health care to address the trauma in his life.

While in detention and on probation, Rothel attended classes online at the Wauwatosa Virtual Academy through a partnership with the Wauwatosa School District so he could continue his education. Through the youth employment program, Rothel got on-the job training at McDonald's, learned how to budget, and opened a bank account. In the community, Rothel and his family connected with Running Rebels to access therapy programs to keep their family strong. Rothel also was matched with an adult mentor, Tara, who supported him every step of the way.

Rothel graduated early from MCAP with good behavior. Now 19, Rothel continues on a positive path. He is actively seeking employment and working towards earning his GED. He also continues to participate in programming with Running Rebels.

