

# Project Independence



## Olive Crest's Program is Changing Lives for the Better

Make a difference one life at a time. For more than 40 years, that has been the mission of Olive Crest, a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing child abuse, treating and educating at-risk children and preserving the family. Olive Crest is one of the Clark County Department of Family Services' partner organizations and continues to provide critical services to children in care throughout southwest Nevada.

Through its Project Independence program, Olive Crest has made great strides in assisting youths in care. The goal of Project Independence is to help youth establish the skills necessary to be successful, independent individuals as they transition out of foster care. The program focuses on three areas to help alleviate potential barriers as youth make this transition—education, work readiness and experience, and building life skills.

Here are two recent Project Independence success stories.

### Elliot

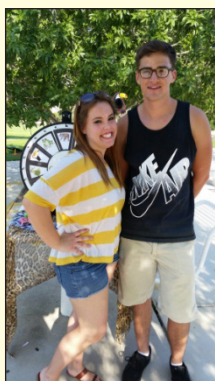
With no knowledge of his father's identity and raised by a mother who was an addict, Elliot was sent to live with his grandparents. For the first time in his life, Elliot had a stable and loving home. When he was 17, Elliot's grandparents passed away, leaving him without any caregivers. He was living in a treatment facility and was all alone.

Upon enrollment into Project Independence, Elliot was fighting for his own sobriety and a place to call home. He was teamed up with a Project Independence Youth Coach who began mentoring him. Almost two years later, Elliot is drug free and is working hard on his studies to get his associate degree with an emphasis in psychology. He wants to pay it forward by speaking with and mentoring youth in are who may have similar experiences with substance abuse and share his success story.

Without this program and continuous support he has received from the staff at Olive Crest, Elliot said he would not be where he is today, were it not for the Project Independence program and the support he received from Olive Crest. For the first time in his life, Elliot looks forward to his future and is learning to believe in himself.

### Tina

Entering the program in April 2015, Tina confessed to being "in shock" at the benefits of Project Independence. She quickly learned to rise above the negatives she encountered in her earlier years. Through assistance in Project Independence, Tina embraced the positives in her life and focus on her future rather than dwelling on her past.



Tina and Elliot at a recent Olive Crest event.

With a positive outlook on her own life, Tina graduated from the Southwest Career and Technical Academy with an emphasis in fashion design and enrolled at UNLV for the fall 2015 semester. Happy, positive and embracing her life, Tina is currently enjoying college, pursuing a degree in graphic design. She also works for Regal Cinemas at the Red Rock Casino Resort & Spa.

Tina continues to attend Olive Crest outreach events, extolling the benefits of Project Independence. In the short time that she has been with the program, Tina said Project Independence has become "a second family" to her and provides the needed support to succeed during this transitional time in her life.

**For more information on Project Independence contact Jennifer Erbes at  
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