

SHANNON MAYES

I am currently serving a life sentence at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution where I have spent 24 of my 25 years of incarceration. I'm now 43 years old and have been in prison since I was 18. I made a horrible mistake and deserve to be held accountable for my actions. However, I don't want to be defined by a split-second decision that changed my life forever.

Since my incarceration, I have participated in different educational programs. I have received my GED. For almost two years I have been enrolled in Lipscomb University's LIFE program where I'm working toward an associate degree. The people associated with the LIFE program are the most amazing people I've ever met, and they have changed my life for the better in so many ways. I'm so grateful for the opportunity that the Lipscomb University LIFE program has given me to not only grow in my education but also to grow in my faith.

RMSI provides many different religious services that I love to attend. Every week I attend morning devotional services, Bible studies, and church services. I currently attend morning devotional services four days a week, Monday night Bible studies, every Sunday I attend Church of Christ services, and every other week I attend Anglican services. The volunteers who come in for these services have forever changed my life for the better. They are great teachers, mentors and have taught me so much about myself and my faith. They have showed me that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

I've always enjoyed playing softball, handball, and other physical activities. Sports has taught me many value leadership skills like teamwork, adversity, and accountability.

For the past seven years I've been a part of the TRICOR braille program. We transcribe textbooks into braille so blind kids can have the same learning opportunities as their sighted peers. I currently hold 2 certificates from the Library of Congress (Literary braille transcription and Proofreading) and 1 certificate from the National Braille Association (NBA) in Braille Textbook Formatting. I have also participated in TRICOR's data processing plant and TRICOR's call center until they shut both programs

down. Through TRICOR, I have learned important job and life skills that will last a lifetime.

Upon release, I plan to start my own Braille business, make up for lost time with my family, join a church, and then my life will be headed down the path of redemption.