

# Our History

PROJECT LIFT

STRONG MINDS • SKILLED TRADES



HOW WE BEGAN.....

# The Genesis of Project LIFT

*We are dedicated to improving the lives of at-risk teens and their families through substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, mentoring, and vocational skills training.*



## **THEN.....**

Before 2010, Bob Zaccheo, the founder of Project LIFT, worked at a counseling agency that served troubled young people, many with criminal backgrounds or substance abuse issues. Often these clients were ordered by the court system to attend mandatory therapy sessions with a licensed therapist such as Bob. Before long Bob discovered that, despite his best efforts, these troubled young people who were indeed struggling with all kinds of mental health challenges, family functional issues and substance abuse problems, had no intention of sitting in an office with an assigned counselor and talking about their problems for 45 minutes. They needed help, no doubt about it, but this structure was not going to work for them.

Frustrated, but unwilling to give up, Bob decided to take one young client fishing behind the building instead of enduring another 45 minutes of trying to pry this disinterested kid open.

Surprisingly, once they were out of the office, fishing poles in hand, side by side instead of eyeball to eyeball, the teen started pouring out all the heavy burdens that weighed him down. Bob took note that this simple change of tactics and scenery resulted in dramatically improved results.

Buoyed by his new approach, Bob experienced a period of sustained success at the agency, tackling even the most recalcitrant clients.

## **AND NOW....**

Now serving over 600 troubled male and female teens a year, Project LIFT holds fast to Bob's original insight: teens who are given an opportunity to build caring relationships with adults and keep their hands busy doing something interesting will successfully travel down the road of resiliency and seek out strategies to improve their mental health.

At Project LIFT, counseling continues to happen under the hood of a car. Impossible kids who had been relegated to the category of unreachable, find the tools they need to walk away from self-destructive choices and instead pursue life-giving relationships and vocational opportunities.

The end result is clear minded, sober, drug free, hardworking young people with real world vocational training that positions them to secure well paid, career oriented jobs in industry.