

Kente Winrow

Kente Winrow, a Production Manager at Sulzer Turbo Services, was a resident of Boys & Girls Harbor from 2000 to 2005. Growing up, Kente was the eldest of five children in a low-income family in Houston, and felt he had the responsibility of raising his younger siblings.

When Kente was 15, he decided to leave home, and took one of his younger brothers with him. He was picked up by the Houston Police Department and was given the option of going to a Texas Youth Commission facility or to Boys & Girls Harbor. Kente chose to move to the Harbor.

“Kids who grow up in the projects usually become a product of their environment. Not all kids want that life, but it is all they know-- it is a force-fed lifestyle. I knew I had to get out,” Kente said.

When Kente first arrived at the Harbor he said he was very hard-headed and had a problem with authority. Previously, Kente had considered himself an adult, as he made decisions and rules for himself but also for his siblings. After some time Kente was able to adjust to the lifestyle at the Harbor. He felt relieved from the pressure of being an “adult” and was able to enjoy his childhood.

“The Harbor saved my life. I tell that to everyone. I was on a path to destruction and the Harbor saved me,” Winrow said.

Kente had been placed in various foster care programs before living at the Harbor. There was a difference at the Harbor, though, because it felt like a real family. Kente said Colin Rae, the current Campus Director, played an important role in his experience at the Harbor.

“Colin was the father-figure in my life and my role model. Today, my children consider him their grandfather,” Kente said.

After high school graduation, Kente attended San Jacinto College in Pasadena. While attending college, he continued to live at the Harbor through the transitional living program.

After two years at San Jacinto, Kente enlisted in the Air Force. He was based in Italy and deployed on many missions in the Middle East. After four years in the Air Force, Kente returned to Texas.

Upon his return, Kente attended a Harbor Donor Appreciation event and spoke to the audience about his time at the Harbor. Afterwards, two board members, Darayus Pardivala and Fred Gorman, liked what they heard and offered him a job. Kente took a job with Pardivala at Sulzer Turbo Services in 2010, where he is now a manager.

Kente lives in La Porte with his wife and three children. “My kids are always busy, but I try to be at every event they have. I am very involved in their lives.”

Kente continues to stay involved with, and support, the Harbor. He has given tours at Sulzer to High School youth living at the Harbor and is a great example of what hard work can accomplish.

“The Harbor didn’t just change my life; it changed the life of my wife, and the lives of my children. That is what the Harbor does, it changes the path people are on and affects generations to follow,” Winrow said.