

MEET KEISHAWN

I joined Second Round when I was 16 going on 17.

Before I came to Second Round I was playing basketball. I had hoop dreams. I really wanted to be a basketball player. But I didn't grow up to 6'5", so I had to give that dream up. I needed something constructive to do with my time after school. And I found out about Second Round. It was a boxing program, and I always wanted to learn how to box. One of my friends posted it on Instagram, and I went online, looked it up, and sent it to my mom, and she said "Yeah, that would be good for you." I came here and just fell in love when I walked into the gym.

I wasn't really getting into big trouble, but I was around trouble. My brothers got into trouble — one of my brothers just got out of jail. I always try to keep the straight and narrow and not be involved with stuff like that. I wasn't really participating in school before coming to Second Round. I didn't see how it was important.

Second Round taught me discipline. It changed the way I look at myself — I saw I was someone of value. Every day I would work on myself, not just the boxing, but on my body. I learned how to take care of myself and eat healthier. The dedication it took to come every day when I didn't always want to come and the sacrifices I had to make — my friends were going out and doing stuff and I was in the gym. Coming here helped my grades. I knew I couldn't come here if my grades weren't good, so I had to tighten up at school.

When I started coming to Second Round my self-esteem wasn't as high as it is now. Low self-esteem does create anxiety, so I had some anxiety back then. Now I approach life how I approach boxing. When I started boxing, I started from nothing and then I got good and kept at it. If I want to do something, I know I'm not going to start off good, but that practice will help me get where I want to go. I just taught myself how to cut my hair. I cut a bald spot in my hair the first time, but now I've got the hang of it because I kept trying.

I work at Second Round as a coach now while I am working on my pro boxing career. I like when someone comes in and they are one way, and we take our time, and they show up in a whole different way. It's kind of like therapy, I always say. Like the mental aspect — like how you feel good about yourself. And men, I feel like they have a lot of aggression, especially young kids, so this gives them somewhere to release it constructively, without getting in trouble or going to jail. I think it's good for them — they know they have one place where they feel like "I can be me."

