

DOUGLAS — Gain Employment, Maintain Support (GEMS)

In March 2025, Osceola County launched the GEMS Program (Gain Employment, Maintain Support) in partnership with the Osceola County Friend of the Court. The program supports non-custodial parents by helping them secure employment and develop life skills, like resume writing, interview preparation, soft skills and budgeting to consistently meet child-support obligations.

Douglas, one of the first four enrollees in the program, was unemployed and struggling with payments. He needed structured support to break the cycle of nonpayment and build a more stable future.

Douglas attended bi-weekly GEMS workshops, where he gained skills to support employment and financial stability. He participated in FDIC Money Smart training and received financial literacy support from Fifth-Third Bank.

Douglas improved his resume, par-



ticipated in mock interviews and learned about professional presentation. He also developed effective job search and application skills-equipping him to take the next step toward self-sufficiency.

Douglas attended weekly Michi-

gan Works! West Central workshops, building skills in interview preparation and job readiness. He applied what he learned in several interviews and secured a job with a local manufacturer. Through Michigan Works! West Central, Douglas connected with a Business Service Specialist who helped link him to local job opportunities.

Douglas faced multiple job rejections, often being told he lacked certain qualifications. Still, he stayed determined, kept applying, and treated each experience as a learning opportunity. His perseverance paid off when he secured a job with Reed City Group proving that resilience leads to results.

"The workshops gave me the confidence and tools I needed to succeed in my interviews. Connecting with the Business Service Rep. was a game-changer. It led directly to me getting hired," Douglas said.