

Texas Community College Essay Contest

Amy Maddux

Hello, my name is Amy Maddux, and I am a single 40-year-old mother in college. I attend McLennan Community College and plan on graduating with my associate degree for my LCDC in December of 2025. The journey that I have taken to get to where I am today has been the most challenging but rewarding experience of my life.

I grew up in Texas, in a home of alcohol and drugs. All my life I have been witness to how addiction can take over a person's life and how it destroys families. When I was 12 years old, I started down my own path of destruction. I started drinking and later became addicted to crack cocaine. I lived a life of self-destruction, first by quitting school, then losing my children, and eventually becoming homeless. I tried going to college after receiving my GED in 2000, but that did not last long as my addiction took over my life. I was hopeless. I ended up going into prison for 2 years and when I got out, I went back to using. I never got help and honestly at that time, I did not want help and so I continued to destroy my life. You see, the cycle of addiction is real and when you grow up with it and you are never taught anything different, you are likely going to follow in the footsteps before you.

Eventually I got tired of feeling empty and I was tired of seeing what I was doing to my own children. I decided that I did not want my children to follow in my footsteps and decided I needed to do something right, and so, I finally decided that it was time for me to start a new path and I put myself into treatment. I went into Cenikor, a drug rehab in Waco, Texas on August 16th, 2021. While in treatment I met with counselors who had been in treatment themselves. This gave me hope. Hope that I can be more than just a statistic.

Hope that I could get through the storm I was so used to being in. As it turns out, hope is all I needed to get me started on this journey. When I got out of treatment I started going to 12 step meetings, got a sponsor and started working on me. One of the best things that I learned in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous is that you get to give back what was so freely given to you. So, I gave back every chance I could. I started sponsoring other woman and I came in early to help set up and chair meetings and I joined the board for the Sister to Sister conference that happens every year. However, I wanted to give back more.

When I decided that I wanted to go back to school, I was not sure if I would be able to because I knew I owed some money from 20 years prior. I called anyways to see what my options were, and they informed me of a program called the restart program. I found out that I qualified for this program and that was the beginning of my college journey. I decided that I wanted to help people that suffer with addiction and alcoholism. My desire is to walk alongside other alcoholics and addicts to hopefully help them achieve and maintain sobriety. When talking with my advisors I told them my story and explained my fears of starting school at 40 years old. They immediately helped and encouraged me to start planning my classes. Once I had a plan and I saw my schedule, I started to believe in myself. The staff at MCC helped me see that no matter how old I was and no matter what my past looked like, that I could do anything as long as I believed in myself. In that moment, I knew that I could accomplish my goals.

McLennan Community College is preparing me to be successful in the Mental Health/ Social Workforce community. The professors are always available and eager to guide me in my studies. Learning hands on during the practicum program is amazing. I get

to see real interactions between clients and counselors. I love that I get to bring my personal experiences into the classroom as well as learning new skills on how to help others in addiction. There is a very high demand for substance abuse counselors due to the increase of substance abuse. MCC is preparing me to join a high demanding field and I am excited and ready to see myself succeed. I am now a proud employee at Cenikor. I am a BHT (Behavioral Health Technician) and I work closely with clients who are just as I once was. I am using things that I am learning in school to help me when interacting with the clients at Cenikor. It is the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life. I was so used to being selfish, self-centered, and egotistical in everything I did as a child, teenager, and adult. Now I get to be self-less and I get to be of service to so many people. What makes me the happiest is when I see clients outside of Cenikor and they come up to me, hug me and tell me how they are still sober. That is the most rewarding feeling ever.

I know that this may not be the best essay or the winning essay and that is okay with me because I still get to tell my story and hopefully touch someone's life in doing so. All I know for sure is that MCC gave me hope and a chance to do something positive, not just for myself but for other people, and I cannot thank them enough. I have a 3.7 GPA and I am continuing to work hard in all my classes. Through the encouragement of my professors and advisors, I have decided to continue my education after receiving my associate degree and will be pursuing my masters.

If you asked me just a few years ago, what I thought my future would look like? I would have never thought I would be graduating college with honors or that I would be helping other people. I am so proud of my accomplishments, but more importantly I am so

grateful for the people God put in my life to help me get to where I am today. Today, I am happy, joyous, and free.