

## AMIKids Alumni

### **Andrea Loureiro**

At age 11, Andrea moved in with her parents from Brazil to St. Pete, FL, and moved once again a few years later to Clearwater, FL. Dealing with a huge culture shock and the challenge of meeting new friends at such a vulnerable time in her development, she had a tough time making friends, and ended up being accepted the easiest by the "wrong crowd."

Soon, Andrea was not only rebelling against her parents, like many kids do, but external influences were encouraging her to rebel against society as well.

Rebelling led to anger, and anger led to fighting. As a result, Andrea was enrolled in AMIKids Pinellas by the juvenile justice system. At first, she was angry, not understanding why she was pulled away from school and her friends, and felt that the world was against her.

After a short time at AMIKids, Andrea got over the anger and started opening up to the staff. She began to realize that her life was her own, and the things that she does and decisions she makes are my future and will shape who I am as an individual. The Executive Director used to always say to her, "What happens in the dark will eventually come to light." His words influence her every day of her life and she lives each day by that mantra.

AMIKids prepared Andrea for life, the good and the bad. It helped her understand where she wants to be and how to achieve it. Andrea believes that it was the best thing that could have happened to her and that AMIKids drastically changed her life. Looking back to where those high school friends are now, she says that she couldn't be more thankful.

After completing the program in just three months, Andrea graduated high school and is now working toward her Master's in Business Finance. She is closer than ever with her family and has an amazing man in her life who supports her in all that she does. Andrea thanks AMIKids for all that they do, day in and day out, and for all of her accomplishments, achievements, happiness, and her way of life today.