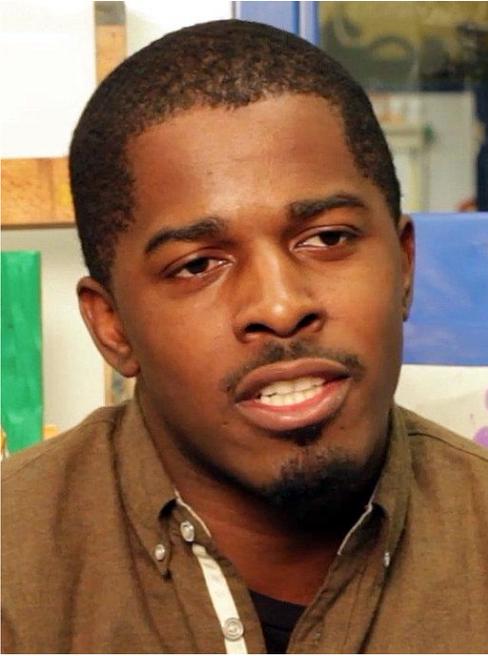


## Chip (Larry) King brief autobiography:



I grew up in the 19<sup>th</sup> Ward of Rochester, Genesee Street and Flint Street. I was one of 13 children. I had to overcome a number of obstacles. There were a number of us in the family and we couldn't afford a lot. I was from a single parent home. Obstacles to overcome were peer pressure, selling drugs, fighting, stealing, emotional problems, being from a single parent home, problems at home, no food being on the table every night, and my oldest sister raising us.

At times it made me feel like I was drowning with no one to go through those things with me. I was embarrassed to let people at Boys and Girls Club know what I was dealing with. Ultimately, it made me stronger but then the best coping strategy I had was to pretend the problems weren't there. Eventually as an adult, I learned how to problem solve, to read and to seek for help.

When I had setbacks, especially in fighting, I wasn't thinking about the consequences. I sold drugs to be cool and because I could use the money. I ran away from home when I was 13 or 14. Something happened at home and I left. My oldest sister took me in to stay with her. She made a huge impact on my life and raised me. She did as much as possible to love me and help me. It made me want to work super hard to show her, "I am doing this for you". I wanted her to see that all she had invested in me was worth it. I didn't want to let her down. When I dropped out of high school, my best friend's mom and people at Boys and Girls Club helped me get back in to school. I finished my high school degree, the first in my family to complete high school.

I think I had drive and ambition to finish High School and my older siblings dropping out of school made me recognize I needed to stick with it. I consider myself both a leader and a follower. Sometimes I was a negative leader in starting fights. But, I was a follower when my friends were finishing and graduating. I wanted to be like them. It motivated me to stay with it, even though no one in my family had finished.

When I finished high school I went on to Finger Lakes Community College and got my associates degree in business. My first year at college was very challenging. I didn't have the note taking skills and the writing ability. I was behind at first. I got tutors and extra help, was very proactive. After I got my associate's degree, I went to Buffalo State and finished my 4 year degree in business administration. I was really happy and proud of my accomplishment.

I had to ask forgiveness from God and from Mr. Mahoney (head of Boys and Girls Club). I was kicked out for a while because of my behavior. When I asked for a second chance, they took me back with open arms. I also had to forgive others.

I think I made it partly because of the resources and relationships I tapped into at Boys and Girls Club. I didn't give up on myself and believed I could make it.

Success for me is being happy, having food on my table, having my own space, being mobile and being able to help out and give back at the Boys and Girls Club.

I am grateful for all the barriers and roadblocks I encountered. I am grateful for Kathy Hope, my mentor at Boys and Girls Club, and for my family and good friends.

Currently, I volunteer at Boys and Girls Club and run a charity event (fashion show) that raises money (about \$10,000) for kids who are smart but have no money to go to better private schools. I work full time at Wegmans as a manager and trainer. I have a four year college degree in business administration. I give back to my community with my time and by listening to kids at the Boys and Girls Club who are dealing with the same kind of stuff I dealt with.

I would like to say to kids today: Don't give up! It only makes you so much stronger mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. You can do it! Believe in yourself! Be accountable for your decisions! Take control of your life!

Editor's Note: Material drawn from an interview with Chip for the *Creating Hope* video.