

## KEEPING IT REAL WITH AN ORANGEWOOD YOUTH

You can also visit [www.orangewoodfoundation.org/alexs-letter](http://www.orangewoodfoundation.org/alexs-letter) to read an interview with Alex's Youth Support Specialist to learn more about Alex's story.

Alex, a youth who graduated from our Rising Tide Program, wrote this letter to an incoming youth who was just starting their journey with Orangewood Foundation. He offers his perspective, advice and words he wished he had heard when he was 18. "You have an opportunity here...You have potential." Youth in Rising Tide often become each other's support system and challenge each other while in the program.

I would've told you this in person but I don't want any problems with you homie, the reason why I'm leaving is obvious we are on 2 different paths in life and that's OK. I just wanna let you know I see alot of me in you, the me that first moved in here. I just wanna leave you with some words I wish some one left me with at 18. Life is not about getting fucked up every night and being high all day homie. Anyone can light a piece anyone can down some beers that don't make you real. Real is handling your business, taking care of your family, ~~the~~ Real is God, Real is liking who you are. You 18 years old homie you have the rest of ~~the~~ your life ahead of you. choose wisely who kick it with. Take a close look at yourself and really decide what you want in this life. You have an opportunity here don't blow it like every other 18 year old that comes in. You have potential. I'm always in my prayers homie, God Bless you