



Court Services Officer

Chris Pankratz



I grew up in a small town where everyone knew each other, but not everyone had the same chances. My family didn't have much; and we rarely talked about jobs, college, or what came after high school. There wasn't a roadmap for how to move forward, and I had to figure a lot out on my own.

I saw people around me make choices that led to trouble: dropping out, getting involved with drugs, or crime. I started heading down a similar path. Looking back, I know I needed support that I wasn't getting at home, and didn't know how to find at school.

Eventually, I realized I wanted something different—not just for myself, but for others who were struggling like I had. That's what led me to become a probation officer. In this job, I help people who are trying to turn their lives around. I guide them toward goals, connect them with resources, and remind them that their past doesn't have to define their future.

I do this work because I believe in second chances. I believe in respect, fairness, and the power of personal growth. And most of all, I believe in people—even when they don't believe in themselves.

Your background doesn't determine your future. Whether you become a probation officer, a teacher, a mechanic, or anything else—you get to choose your path. For me, it was a high school coach who believed in me. For someone else, it might be you.

"It's not how you start the game; it's how you finish it that matters..."

