

# Success Is What You Make It

**Name:**

Damon Hughes

**Hometown:**

Columbus, OH

**Started working in the industry:**

2000

**Current company & position:**

Stark Truss Company,  
truss technician in Hearne, TX

**Favorite hobby:**

working out at the gym

**Favorite food:**

Fish and rice



Sometimes success comes as the result of a second chance. About a year ago, Damon Hughes was released from Marion Correctional Institute (MCI) in Marion, OH after serving a 13-year prison sentence. Damon has made the most of his second chance.

Stark Truss Company teamed up with Ohio Penal Industries (OPI) in 1996 to help inmates change their lives and destinies. OPI and Stark created a design office to train inmates to become truss technicians at MCI in Marion.

Damon is one of seven inmates trained at Marion to have been hired by the company. Because he excelled in his design work at Marion and demonstrated the will to change, Stark offered Damon a position when he was released. By July 2006, Damon had relocated to Texas and reported to work as a truss technician at Stark's location in Hearne (northwest of Houston).

"One of the things that impresses me about Damon is not just that he's great at what he does, but he always strives to find a better way to do it," says Tim Willett, manager of the Hearne plant.

Tim developed a relationship with Damon by corresponding via phone about multi-family jobs he was designing in Marion. "We became very comfortable with each other, and he really wanted to come to Texas when he was released," says Tim.

Clearly an asset to the team, Damon's transition into his new environment was seamless. "He fits into the local community and our operation really well. You would have never known that he was in prison a year ago," says Tim, adding that the staff looks up to him. The management at Hearne appreciates Damon's willingness to pitch in wherever there's a need. "He has been very helpful to us," notes Tim.

Tim praises Damon for making the most of his second chance. "He's an example of the success you can achieve even if you've been stuck behind bars for 13 years," says Tim. "I'm so impressed with his skill, work ethic and determination to be a good citizen." **SBC**

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