

# Tony Peek



Since arriving at UNC Charlotte in summer 2015, Tony has excelled in his studies working toward his Bachelor's degree in Social Work. Receiving his associate's degree from Stanly County community College in 2015, Tony is not your average transfer student. He is an extraordinary soul who lives each day and moment in the present, and strives without question to help others be their best self.

I had the pleasure and honor of speaking with Tony about his life experiences to get to this moment in his academic career. Tony has suffered hardships in life that could have easily set him back. Some that many may not be able to fathom experiencing. But speaking from the heart, he explained to me his mindset and outlook on life and opportunities in life as a result of those experiences.

Tony created his own non-profit to help inspire his message. A synopsis of his experiences, translated into inspiration, follow:

"I talk about the pain and struggles that have happened in my life. They have shaped, molded, and elevated me for this moment. To live in it, to endure, to persevere and to overcome brings about elevation and self-discovery. I am defined by me, it's what I do with what happens to me that determines and defines my life. Without the events that happened to me, what message of inspiration, love and hope could I bring?"



Tony does not reflect on his experiences or let them dictate his growth forward. His outlook on education is that it is an opportunity, one that can bring enormous return. The keys to it are: knowing how, being willing, and doing your part to take advantage of education and the benefits it brings.

***"The opportunity exists for everyone to step into and walk in their greatness. If you don't choose, a choice will be made for you". –Tony Peek***

His career choice is not happenstance. Tony wants to ultimately help youth seize the opportunities of education and success. He believes that everything that happened to him in life, happened in order to get him to where he wanted to be. His goal is to inspire others to be great, to plant the seed within each individual so they reflect on and recognize who they really are and what they can become. He has learned through his experiences the ultimate challenge of overcoming obstacles, achieving success in the midst of adversity, and remaining a service-oriented leader through it all. Tony hopes to do this through a successful career in social work, and is nearing the last year of his program.

From an academic standpoint, Tony is engaged in his classes. He strives to be involved, stay connected, and take his classroom learning seriously. At Stanly County Community College, he was the student body president and graduated with honors. On campus at Charlotte, Tony is an executive officer for the Bachelor of Social Work club where he serves as a peer liaison, and was recently inducted into the Social Work Honor Society, Phi Alpha. He not only engages through education inside and outside of the classroom, but he runs his own business where he engages in speaking events, working with at risk youth, and helping individuals through personal goal setting. As a proud father and devoted husband, he has endured the trials of balancing

school and his personal life – but through it all he is determined to excel. Tony is truly focused on the here and now, and being in the moment to do what you can to grow.

As motivation for other adult students who are looking to or are in the process of completing their degrees, Tony's message can speak measures. Live within your own truth, step outside of your comfort zone, stay determined, and remain active are just a few messages he lives by. It is our hope that if you are questioning your choice to return or are struggling to make it through, Tony's story is an inspiring message of how anything is truly possible if you work toward your ultimate goal.

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We hope you feel inspired and have enjoyed reading more about one of our many talented adult students.

If you are interested in sharing your journey or success story with us, please visit: <http://oases.uncc.edu/student-information/student-success-stories> to learn how.

