



Unlike Wimberly, these young men made bad decisions resulting in unfortunate consequences. Their stay in the Lucas County Youth Treatment Center is a preventative “stop gap;” their next step, if they continue on this path, is to become a ward of the Department of Youth Services — basically a juvenile prison sentence served in Columbus.

The “second-chance” nature of this work is what drives Wimberly. Despite all of his managerial and supervisory responsibilities, one is likely to find Wimberly shooting hoops, throwing a football or playing ping pong with a young man who has had a particularly difficult day. It is during these times that the tough exterior, shielding the anger and frustration, disappears and the pure fragile emotion of being a teenager with a troubled life appears.

“They will tell you things you never wanted to hear and can hardly believe you’ve just heard,” comments Wimberly “and you just listen.” His message is one of inspiration; trying to convince these young men that they still have time to turn their lives around, Wimberly shares his story of growing up in south Florida and choosing a different path.

Wimberly will readily admit that not every young man gets the message and changes his life, but, for Wimberly, there is no greater satisfaction than seeing the ones who do. He has crossed paths with young men from the treatment program at The University of Toledo (enrolled in college!) and walked the sidelines of local high school football games only to witness a young man now choosing a more positive outlet.

Yes, DeMya Wimberly is leading a “meaningful life.” But even better than leading it, he is helping young men begin to create their own.

## A consequential choice

Story by Charles Shepard II M '04

All decisions, regardless of their ability to affect your life, have consequences. And at the ripe old age of, say, 12, DeMya Wimberly made a conscious decision with significant consequences.

With the high-pitched tone of police sirens blaring throughout south Florida and the crack cocaine epidemic spreading like a metastas-

sizing cancer, Wimberly surveyed the landscape and resolutely decided that he would become the first person in his family to graduate from college. With his mother, grandmother and aunts fully embracing that dream, they kept him off the streets, devoted to football and pressing on toward his goal.

Now, fast forward to 10 years later, and imagine a mother sitting — nearly breathless — in a packed auditorium with tears of joy beading up on her cheeks as her son marches across a raised platform and accepts a college diploma — the first in his family.

But the meaningful life doesn't end there; it continues in 2009. Today, Wimberly isn't running laps, scrutinizing defensive formations, throwing the perfect spiral or studying for exams. No, instead, on any given day, ensconced in the halls of the Lucas County Youth Treatment Center, you'll find Wimberly with his sleeves rolled up, pouring himself into the lives of teenage boys.



Spending leisure time with young men in the Lucas County Youth Treatment Center often leads to life-changing interaction.