



Loretta Conkel

plenty of **ambition**

Loretta Conkel came to the Denver Street School as a freshman in 1993 after several attempts at a public school career. She battled feelings of isolation, neglect, and hopelessness and considered dropping out completely.

"In the public schools, I felt I had to prove something to my peers which led to trouble," says Loretta. "The Denver Street School, on the other hand, was a great fit because it was small and comfortable. The staff at DSS

was caring and paid close attention to all of the students. It was like one big family. I became involved in sports and earned the honor of the basketball All Conference award."

Loretta believes the most important part of her street school experience was coming to know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. "We prayed in classes and at sports practices. I had many one-on-one conversations with staff members and coaches. The teachers were passionate about God and their students."

After four years at the street school, Loretta earned her high school diploma and went on to Metropolitan State College of Denver through the school's Kingdom Enlightenment scholarship program. "Attending a four-year school would have been impossible without the scholarship and help of DSS. I had the ambition, but I didn't have the finances."

Loretta did have the ambition and was outstanding at college, graduating with a 3.8 GPA in Computer Information Systems and Management Science. And she is now using that degree as an Associate Professor at the Community College of Denver teaching Business Technology courses. She is also planning to pursue a Master's Degree in the near future.

"There are so many benefits I have gained from being affiliated with DSS. I tell people how much DSS has changed my life. Even

though I know God had a plan for me, it scares me to think about where I would be now if I had never attended the street school."

Loretta's advice for troubled students is to keep on pressing on. "When you feel down or discouraged, don't quit. Keep going. Sometimes just showing up is half the battle."

