

HCTC Success Story: Joaquin Canizal



Hazard Community & Technical College's Joaquin Canizal has played professional baseball for four and a half years with the Toronto Blue Jays organization. His excellence on the field resulted in the Blue Jays listing him as one of the Top 40 Pitching Prospects. Now he's happy to be in Kentucky working on his education. Canizal is finishing his bachelor's degree and will be working on his master's degree with the hope of being a high school Spanish teacher and baseball coach.

At the end of this semester he will transfer his credits from Hazard Community & Technical College to Union College where he came to on a baseball scholarship from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Canizal is a man willing to take risks because when he first stepped on American soil, he didn't speak English. That wasn't enough to steer him away from his goal though, so he came on to Kentucky

and learned the language, which he presently speaks very well. From being in college in Barbourville, a girl friend living in Perry County prompted him to make Hazard his new home and Hazard Community & Technical College his new college of choice.

“I love it here. All the teachers are good,” Canizal said.

Economics professor Richard Crowe is impressed that this young man is realizing a dream that so many others have. “He is well known in Puerto Rico and very well known in baseball circles but on campus, he is very unassuming and he fits right in,” Crowe said.

“I realize there is life after baseball,” Canizal said, noting that he will soon begin work on his master’s degree. “I love the United States because there are so many opportunities here. You can have a better life, better income. All anyone has to do is set their sights on what they want and go for it,” Canizal noted.