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Trident Workforce Investment Act Success Story

Devona Kinlock came to the Trident One Stop in 2009, seeking assistance with obtaining her GED. As a young child, Devona did not have a mother or father figure in her life and was primarily raised by her grandmother until she was 12 years old, at which point she was placed in foster care. She fled foster care at 14, and made her way through hotels and shelters until she met the father of her children, who was very abusive and controlling. She was 15 years old and he was 23, and while not the ideal situation, staying in the relationship was much better than her alternative option of living in the streets. They later had three children, which was life changing for Devona; she wanted to give her kids a better life than she had growing up. Despite the challenges of the relationship, she started working in fast food restaurants, making positive changes in her lifestyle and eventually left her boyfriend after ten long years.

In June 2009, Devona attended a work readiness workshop hosted by the Department of Social Services, where she connected with Ms. Washington from the Educational Opportunity Office at Trident Technical College. Ms. Washington directed her to a GED preparation course sponsored by a church, which sparked an unstoppable drive and determination in Devona. Not nearly satisfied with the pace of the once-per-week program, Devona contacted the Trident One Stop. She was enrolled in the WIA program, and Chuwinia Williams, her workforce specialist, immediately got her started in GED classes through Adult Education.

During the course of her studies, Devona met a wonderful man. His love and encouragement, along with the support of Chuwinia and other members of the Trident One Stop staff, helped keep her focused and motivated. Having only a 6th grade education, Devona took the GED in August 2010 after only two short years of study. After taking the test and not getting scores for over a week, a determined Devona started making inquiries. While out shopping for a coat for her child, she got the call that she had passed the exam and screamed in excitement! The store clerk was so moved by her story that he gave her the coat for her child free of charge.

Earning her GED was just the beginning. Devona was immediately ready to begin training in the Community Healthcare Training Program at the Trident One Stop, but was told she could not enter the program because of an issue with her background. After coming this far, she was not about to let it stop her. Devona persistently pursued every avenue possible to resolve the issue and was finally accepted into the program in November and graduated this January. Devona's journey has only begun. She is currently enrolled at Trident Tech and is taking prerequisite classes in preparation for nursing school. Hers is a story of overcoming unthinkable barriers and proof that regardless of what obstacles we face in life, with true desire to survive and succeed, anyone can reach their goals.



Devona Kinlock telling her story at the CHTP Graduation

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