



ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY

Danielle Gillens | North Carolina

Adult education began a life of fulfillment for 43-year-old Danielle. First arrested at sixteen on drug charges, she had several difficult years as a single mother struggling with drug addiction. However, after a visitor to her prison gave Danielle hope through a Biblical scripture, she decided it was time to turn her life around.

The road ahead would still be a difficult one. Years of obstacles stood before her: the death of her mother, homelessness, depression, and suicidal thoughts. That all began to change when her son, a graduate student at Elon University, asked her what she wanted for her birthday. She replied that she wanted just one thing, her GED®. The next day while listening to the radio, she heard about the GED® program at Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC). She took it as a sign and immediately enrolled in adult education classes to pursue her dream. Within five months, she had completed the GED® program.

Since then, Danielle has completed GTCC's Aviation Manufacturing Quick Careers training and her Peer Support Specialist Certificate. She was a speaker at the Racial Equity for Adult Credentials in Higher Ed (REACH) conference held at GTCC about how community colleges can support minority adults. Furthermore, she plans to work towards an associate degree in human services.

Her greatest desire now is to have a career helping others to recover from drug addiction, homelessness, incarceration, and other traumas that adult education has helped her to overcome. ■

Inspiring educators so adults succeed and communities thrive