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ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY

Raylena Hayes | Ohio

Adult education gave Raylena the boost she needed to make it on her own without assistance. Pregnant at 16, Raylena was encouraged to drop out of school and join the Job Corps in Cleveland. During that time, Raylena became pregnant again while working on her GED® credential. At the time, she was also pursuing her certified nursing assistant (CNA) certification. She became homeless and began living in a women's shelter until the conditions became too unsafe and a friend took her in. Her boyfriend at the time, now husband, worked hard to find them their own place and he would walk miles a day to find work, sometimes getting paid only \$50 a day so that they could afford to eat. After some time of this, Raylena and her two children and boyfriend had to go to a homeless shelter to find a place to live.

Once they went to that shelter, they promised themselves they would never go back. Raylena began to study again to finish her GED® credential, but every time she would fail the math section by just a few points. She states, "I was tired. I tried to give up, but my husband would not let me! He always encouraged me, and he would always say, 'Baby, once you accomplish this, we are going to celebrate,' and I would just say, 'Okay babe. I hear you.'"

Life got busy, and working to pay the bills became more important. It was not until they moved to Columbus, Ohio, that Raylena's dream came alive again. Waiting at a stoplight, Raylena saw a billboard telling her she could get her diploma. Raylena enrolled, and realized she only needed a few credits and test sections to finish her diploma! Shortly after enrolling, Raylena's sister passed away unexpectedly, and even through that grief and loss, she persisted with the help of her instructor Bryanna. ■