

*Spring 2017*

**Youth Gains Valuable Work Experience while Earning her Degree**

In 2015, Sheneka McNeill was an underemployed, twenty year old high school graduate, who was dealing with some serious issues in her home life. She lacked social skills, was extremely shy, and had basic skills deficiencies in both reading and math. When Sheneka decided that she did not want to spend the rest of her life working a part-time job with no opportunities for advancement, she enrolled into the WIOA Young Adult and Youth Program at the Harnett County Department of Workforce Development in Lillington, NC.

After enrolling, Sheneka's case manager, Anitra Hart, discovered she was deficient in both basic math and reading skills. So Mrs. Hart assisted Sheneka with enrolling into the Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program. This program allowed Sheneka to improve her math and reading skills, and upon completion of the course, she earned a Silver CRC Certificate.

After Sheneka earned her CRC, she enrolled into CCCC to pursue an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Sheneka loves children and is looking forward to one day becoming a preschool teacher. With that stated, Mrs. Hart ensured that Sheneka received some hands on experience working with children by placing her in work experience opportunities with Kidd's Place Too as a childcare worker, and with the Dunn Police Athletic League (PAL) as an Enrichment Instructor Assistant.

In addition to the work experience and education Sheneka was gaining, Mrs. Hart helped her overcome her shyness and poor communication skills by encouraging her participation in various Leadership Development activities. Sheneka attended the TSWDB Young Adult and Youth Rally, the Chick Fil-A Customer Service Training, the NC Youth Summit, and became the Youth Chair of the Standing Youth Committee for the TSWDB. In her role as Chair, Sheneka assists in organizing various community service projects for the WIOA Harnett County Youth participants, helps with the planning of the Annual Youth Banquet, and attends all Leadership activities for the youth and young adults. Because of this, Sheneka has become much more sociable with people and is now a leader amongst her WIOA program peers. She has also gained a deeper understanding of the importance of community service projects.

Currently, Sheneka is still working towards her degree, and has just finished up her work experience with Dunn PAL. Due to her hard work and determination as an Enrichment Instructor Assistant with the organization, Sheneka has been offered a permanent position! This young lady is a wonderful example of why the WIOA Young Adult and Youth program is so important to our local area, and we are proud to have her as a member of our community.