

## Kiesha, Caring for Patients and Making the Most of Opportunity



Keisha came to the WAGE Center trying to piece together enough money to support herself through temporary work after her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) license had lapsed. At the time, she says she was “looking for stability.” She wasn’t able to take a free training course, because she had already taken one many years prior. But, without the money to pay for training, she was stuck in a situation that didn’t provide enough money to make a living wage.

After talking about her situation, she was recommended by WAGE Center staff for a Capital Area Poverty Reduction Initiative (CAPRI) scholarship, based on her employment goals and prior experience in the field. Of this opportunity, Keisha says, “It changed everything. It opened a door to me to get a job with a higher wage and benefits and a morning shift.”

She was approved through CAPRI to train for free at Mildred Elley. She passed the licensing test and almost immediately interviewed with Albany County Nursing Home where she had done clinical training. She is now starting a new job that she has worked hard to get. She is excited about the job for a number of reasons. She says, “I have a habit of waking up early. I’m a morning person.” So, the early start time is perfect for her natural schedule.

But, even more important is the work. Becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant is important to Keisha because she says, “You can make a difference. You can change that person’s perspective...I just enjoy helping people.”

Keisha is also an Albany Housing Authority resident who has joined the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. FSS participants are able to save money based on increased income that results in a rent increase. As long as they achieve program goals and meet the guidelines of the program they can accumulate and save money to use toward future plans, including possibly homeownership.

Without the WAGE Center’s recommendation for the CAPRI scholarship, Keisha had no way to get the training money she needed to improve her employment situation. But, in five years, she hopes to have saved money through the FSS program with her increased earning potential brought about by CAPRI sponsored training and help from the WAGE Center.

Keisha’s advice to Housing Authority or Housing Choice Voucher recipients who can take advantage of programs like the FSS and/or CAPRI is this: “Take the opportunity, because you never know when you’ll get the opportunity again.”