

## **Melvin Edwards: From Cook to Chef**

One would think that not passing the GED test in math by one point would be frustrating. Not for Melvin (Mel) Edwards, who continues to take classes as part of the Center for Literacy's Family Literacy Program after he missed passing the GED test. While getting his GED is important to him, he also has career goals.

On September 3, 2015, Mel started a new job as a cook at Movie Tavern in Flourtown, where "movies never tasted so good!" Because it is a new experience for him and the business is fast growing, Mel believes it is a perfect fit for him. "I work hard and can grow with the company," he said.

Mel values the services provided by Center for Literacy, calling his teacher, Jacqueline Monts, "the most attentive and best teacher I have ever had." He also has good things to say about his referral and transition specialist, Denise D'Angelo. "She is so enthusiastic about my future, she says 'let's look further beyond the GED' and helped me get my new job."

Getting to this point wasn't easy.

A couple of years ago, this 245-pound man weighed 95 pounds. He had thyroid cancer and his heart stopped beating on the way to the emergency room. "God has given me a chance. I came all the way back. There is a reason why this happened to me. This is why I'm so persistent to get my GED," he said. "I also want to show my children how important education is. I want to be able to live comfortably and be able to pay for my children's college education."

Mel is following in his 78-year old mom's footsteps, who continues to learn. She earned her GED when she was 50 years old, and is now studying Spanish and travels abroad.

Mel enjoys time with his family, which includes nine-year twin boys and two teenage sons. He recently went camping with the family and took the family to a family reunion. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking: his favorite dish is spaghetti with shrimp and lobster.

Those who know him cheer him on, believing that he will achieve his ultimate goal - to get his GED, be a chef and own a restaurant, and maybe, just maybe, have a cooking show on the Food Network.

*Photo credit: Third Eye Productions*