

Youth Program Spotlight

Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) Wings Program - A CMWIB-Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funded Hi-Set Program

Aathena Jackson-Gulley Hi-Set Program Gets High Marks

“My name is Aathena Jackson-Gulley. I have been a student at WCAC for about 3 months, and I have already received my Hi-Set (High School Equivalency Degree). Everyone here is very nice, and they actually care. Getting into the program, for me, was the best thing that has happened to me this year. I have achieved a lot since I’ve been here and it feels really good. What I like the most about this program is that nobody judges you; everyone is here to help. They make you feel so welcome, and important. They really are amazing.

I enrolled into the Wings program because I was going through a lot in my life. I have a daughter I am fighting for and I had a lot of family issues going on. When I came to WCAC, I realized that I can still do this for my daughter. I didn’t want to drop out of high school. Trying to get back into school was hard because I didn’t have a legal guardian in Massachusetts. I need my daughter to look up to me as her role model. I’m doing whatever it takes to meet those expectations to get my daughter back.

Another thing about this program is that, for me it’s way better than going to high school for four years. I got my Hi-Set in 3 months. It’s not a big class, so your questions will be answered when you need them to be. It’s not a 7:00AM-3:00PM type of school either, it’s way better. They don’t push you all week and have you exhausted by the end of the day. You actually have fun learning. You have space and time to do what you need to do. They don’t pressure you too much to the point where you don’t want to be here anymore. The teachers are great. If I knew about this before, I would’ve signed up earlier.

Now that I have my Hi-Set, I am thinking about going to college in the next year or so. It wasn’t the program itself that made me think about my future, but it was the people. They saw the motivation and potential in me. When I was in regular school, some teachers did not recognize any of this. They made me believe in myself more than I did before. They made me realize I can be whatever I want to be, and I can achieve whatever I want to achieve, as long as I work hard for it.

This program should be known everywhere. The people here are so loving and kind. Every day I heard something inspirational or some type of advice that made me look at life differently. These people here are life-changers. They changed my life for the better. Even though I will be leaving them, they will always be in my heart because they are the reason why I made it. They treat you like family, and they make you feel at home. The Wings program changed my life. They will always be considered family.

By Aathena Jackson-Gulley”

*(Submitted by Ed Gagne Director of Youth Programs and Linda Taylor Case Manager at WCAC)
For more information regarding the Wings Program, please contact WCAC at 508-754-1176.*