

A Year in the Life: Queen's Journey

Part Two - New Beginnings – Starting CPHP

This year, we share with you the story of Queen, one of over 100 Project Hope participants enrolled in job training programs. After facing her fears and completing a rigorous application process, Queen enrolls in Project Hope's Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships (WDEP) program, and walks into her first Community Partners in the Health Professions (CPHP) class. To view previous installments of Queen's journey, visit www.prohope.org/success.htm

Queen was nervous when she walked into the first day of CPHP. She was just coming out of the sadness and depression that surrounded her after the loss of her brother. She had carefully built a stone wall around herself to feel safe. But she was on a mission to reinvent herself and transform her life. She was ready.

Her cousin had told her CPHP had a lot of rules. She wasn't kidding. CPHP is no cakewalk. The 12-week, full-time job readiness program replicates the work environment. Participants are expected to arrive on time, be ready to work, and to dress and behave professionally. The CPHP instructor, Jennifer, gives constant and constructive feedback so that participants see themselves how potential employers will see them. There are daily writing assignments and quizzes and a final exam at the end of each week. Participants create a job portfolio with a resume, cover letters and a list of references. **They learn by heart the 4As, CPHP's formula for success in the workplace – Attendance, Appearance, Accountability and Attitude.**

Amy, the case manager, meets weekly with CPHP participants. A CPHP graduate herself, Amy helps women put, and keep, in place the supports they need to continue their training. She helps them secure child care, affordable housing, and transportation. She works with generous partners – Loomis Sayles and Circle of Hope – to find quality professional clothing. She finds funds for emergencies that arise. Since most of our participants support their families on less than \$25,000 a year, Amy's efforts are invaluable.

Queen worked hard. She learned about communication, email etiquette, and medical terminology. She learned how to navigate the web, create an Excel spreadsheet and save documents. She improved her customer service and social networking skills. As the weeks ticked by, Queen embodied a key WDEP concept – with competence comes confidence. As her self-esteem grew, Queen felt herself come alive again. She began spending more time with her three children and felt her bubbly personality re-emerge. She let down her walls and built friendships with her CPHP classmates. And she once again felt hope, feeling she finally had a chance to achieve her dreams.

Coming Up Next: Graduation and Job Search – Milestones and Possibilities