

## Motivated Students Achieve Their Goals



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By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Marsheena Doman's boss wanted to hire her for a permanent job which required a high school diploma and that boss found Center for Literacy (CFL) to help Marsheena achieve that goal. Jaquaketter (Jay) Holland decided she wanted a better job and learned that to become a certified nursing aide, she needed a high school diploma. She Googled "free GED classes" and found CFL. Marsheena and Jay were in Shawanda Spivey's classes starting last summer and both celebrated receiving their High School Equivalency Diplomas at the citywide graduation ceremony.

A mother of four children, Marsheena had already written and published a four-part book series before she came to CFL. In high school, because she was bullied, she dropped out in tenth grade and took a variety of jobs including security guard, nursing aide, and temporary customer service rep in a medical clinic.

Marsheena started intermediate classes at CFL in June 2017 with instructor Steven Hawkins and was soon placed in the advanced class taught by Shawanda Spivey who helped her with

all subjects especially math, her toughest one. Marsheena supplemented her classroom learning with online learning through YouTube and Kahn Academy. She quickly passed all her tests and earned her High School Equivalency Diploma in September 2017. She did so well that now she can help her four children with their homework (including two high school students).

Marsheena's four-part book series, "He's My Best Friend," is available in paperback or electronic form on Amazon. Two more parts are in process.

In the fall, Marsheena will attend Community College of Philadelphia to study computer science and hopes to get a job in graphic design or information technology support.

Marsheena says, "CFL is an awesome program. I would recommend it to anyone trying to get their high school equivalency diploma."

Jay Holland was born in Alabama and raised in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Because of serious problems at home and school, she dropped out when she was about 13 years old. When she was 17 years old, she moved to Philadelphia. When she became a single mother, she stayed at home raising her two children and worked at several part-time jobs including telemarketing. Then in 2010, when her children were old enough, she used her child-rearing skills to work as a nanny, jobs she enjoyed but which were always temporary because the kids she attended to grew up. She also worked as a volunteer secretary for the youth ministry at her church.

After finding CFL, where she enrolled in August 2017, she turned down job offers, and studied science and math intensively. Shawanda Spivey encouraged and motivated her and even set her up with a tutor, a professor of math, for two hours every week. In April 2018, Jay received her High School Equivalency Diploma. She says, "I appreciate everything CFL has done for me. This is the best time of my life!"

Jay's next goal is to become a certified nursing aide. She has passed the reading and math tests and is waiting for acceptance into the training program. After that she wants to attend Community College of Philadelphia to become a medical assistant.

Shawanda Spivey has been teaching classes to students at CFL on how to prepare for the High School Equivalency exam for just over one year. Her students like her a lot and appreciate the help she gives them. She says, "I love to see how the students' hard work pays off and how happy they are when they accomplish their goals." She also likes to see that the students encourage and support each other especially when one of them is about to take a test. She says that Marsheena and Jay were "motivated and determined self-starters who took initiative pro-actively."

Shawanda has a degree in Environmental Science from Temple University. She has worked as a long-term substitute high school teacher and at the Franklin Institute doing educational programs for students, including workshops, public demonstrations, and field

trips. She plans to get a master's degree in Geographic Information Systems at Temple University.

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