

A Real Second Chance to Finish High School and More ...



Isaiah Garrett

It all started back in 2002 — my first year in 6th grade — when out of nowhere my legs began to bother me. Over time the pain started to get worse, so much so that I began to miss days out of school. In fact, I missed so many days out of school that I failed the 6th grade, which kind of hit me pretty hard. After that I transferred to Neal Middle School, and with the help of the teachers and staff there, I somehow made it through. In high school, though, everything went in a downward spiral. My pain began to get the best of me; some days I could not even get out of bed, and when I did go to school the pain was so bad that I had to leave school early. In addition to dealing with my health condition, my brother and I became concerned about our safety. One day after school we were attacked by a group of guys we didn't know; that incident was the last straw for me, and I gave up. After I had been out of school for a year, my mother heard about the Gateway

to College Program. With her encouragement, I applied, interviewed, and was chosen as one of the first students in Gateway at Durham Tech in the fall of 2010. Being in this program has changed my life drastically. It is the perfect setting for me, especially considering my chronic condition. Classes are arranged so that I am able to take a break when I need one, and the staff even put a special chair in the classroom for me so I will not have to sit in uncomfortable desk chairs. In the Gateway program, the staff and instructors have consistently been there for me. The instructors are willing to spend extra time with me, and the tutors have helped me a lot, too. My grades are great, and my future looks bright. After I finish with Gateway to College, I hope to be accepted in the C-STEP program at Durham Tech and transfer to UNC-Chapel Hill to continue my education, majoring in computer technology. I have a high GPA now, and I will start my college-level courses in the spring. Gateway to College is my path to a great future.



Rayonna Hall

My name is Rayonna Hall, and I am 19 years old. I am currently attending Gateway to College at Durham Tech, but I have had a hard road getting here. I grew up as native New Yorker, in the inner city of Jamaica Queens. I became a mother at the age of 13 and soon after that stopped attending school. In 2006, I moved to North Carolina. When I attended school here, I only went because I knew that I had to go, but I dreaded it because I felt as though I had no support. School started to become overwhelming because of numerous problems I had going on in my personal life. I just felt out of place all the time, and I felt as if I was never considered as a person, but instead I was a number. That never sat well with me, so I dropped out and just worked for a while. My experiences have been quite different since I came to Gateway to College in January of 2011. The staff encouraged me and saw something in me that I did not yet see in myself.

For the respect and love that the Gateway family has shown me, I am forever grateful. I will graduate from Gateway to College in May 2012 with a high GPA and with 17 college credits already finished, and I will continue my education at Durham Tech to earn an Associate in Applied Science degree and become an Occupational Therapy Assistant. After that, I would like to eventually finish my education by obtaining a masters degree in occupational therapy. Without Gateway to College, I never would have seen an opportunity for advancement in education as high as a master's degree. Gateway has brought forth the confidence that I always had but never had the courage to express. I love this program. Each and every staff member and friend I have made here will always be in my heart. Gateway to College at Durham Technical Community College is my Serendipity.