

An article about the responsibilities of Life Coaches in the Adult Education programs first appeared in the August 2016 newsletter. As you would expect, the duties and responsibilities of life coaches may vary from program to program, and like Shawndra stated below, the position has evolved over time. We are extremely pleased to share our second article with you.

Shawndra Hamilton is currently the Lead Life Coach at the Walker Career Center in Indianapolis. She has spent four years in Adult Education. As a life coach, Shawndra counsels students on education and employment opportunities and helps students understand the opportunities available to them. Shawndra is often providing students with information about the High School Equivalency (HSE) process and discussing both careers and training options with students. The students that Shawndra works with often have a lot on their plate; they come to her to for help in figuring out how to move forward with their goals.

Life coaching appealed to Shawndra, because she finds that assisting students with their educational and career goals is a rewarding experience. As Shawndra says, "It's a job that makes you feel good about yourself." Shawndra's role has developed and evolved over time.

Instead of merely meeting with and counseling students, Shawndra also helps with student orientations, works with LensCrafters to assist people who need glasses, helps those in need of clothing, and connects individuals to a wide array of other supportive services. In this part of Shawndra's

job, she helps students overcome barriers to make certain that they have the capacity to further their education and career goals, while simultaneously supporting themselves and their families.

Natalie Reuter, the Adult Education Coordinator at MSD Warren Township Schools, praises how involved Shawndra is in helping students, saying that "[Shawndra] meets every student who comes to orientation" and builds such a rapport with them that once these students begin their adult education or training classes, they continue to stop by to see her for advice or motivation.

One of the goals many of Shawndra's students have is earning their HSE Diploma. This is because students know that it is difficult to improve their career path without first obtaining a high school credential; however, Shawndra often reminds her students that a good career often takes more than a high school diploma or HSE.

Shawndra works with each student to try and find a career that will meet their financial needs while satisfying them on a personal level. In doing this, she also helps students understand which occupations are in higher demand than others so her students have a better understanding of which careers paths offer the best chance for employment.

These counseling methods involve consulting students, student career assessments, and researching career possibilities. Often times Shawndra directs her students to the numerous tools and training opportunities available to them that go beyond the HSE. For example Shawndra's



Shawndra Hamilton, Life Coach

students often find themselves using the Indiana Career Explorer or enrolled in WorkINdiana and 180 skills courses.

Shawndra is proud of the students in the Walker Career Center's Adult Education programs, many of whom have achieved success. A large percentage of her students have experienced quick progress, moving rapidly from education and training programs into a steady career. It is helping those students who "started out with nothing and move on to a brighter future" that Shawndra finds to be the most rewarding aspect of her work. She says she can tell that she is truly making a difference in people's lives when the friends and family of former students, who are also looking to improve their level of education or get started on a career path, are referred to her for assistance. She enjoys when she hears her former students tell her how much they enjoy their new careers!