

Impact on Individual and Community: Kirkwood Community College

Impact on Individual

The Walmart Brighter Futures Project enables Kirkwood to be an active partner in changing the lives of individuals and their families. Each student has their own unique story; however, the project has helped people live better lives by providing individuals with the opportunity to:

- obtain training in high-demand occupations
- pursue a career that is fulfilling and aligns with their career interests
- obtain confidence in their ability to learn skills and possess skills that are valued by industry
- obtain employment and other benefits that help increase financial stability

Teneka is a great example of this. Teneka is a married mother of three whose husband is a Navy veteran. She studied Medical Assisting while her husband was stationed in Virginia, but did not get her certification. Teneka was working a part-time retail job earning \$8.25 an hour and wanted to move back into the healthcare field. She is very caring and compassionate, and wanted to find a job helping people. When her oldest daughter decided to go to Job Corps to get her CNA certification, Teneka decided to as well. Teneka was very motivated and quickly completed the 75-hour Nurse Aide program. Teneka passed her state tests with flying colors and quickly found full-time employment as a nurse aide earning \$13.75 an hour. This equates to an increase in her households income by over \$20,000 annually. She is now eligible for health insurance and loves her job. Teneka is incredibly passionate about her new position; her favorite unit is the Memory Care Unit. Her eyes light up when she talks about her residents. Teneka's next goal is to continue her education in healthcare and to become a nurse. According to Teneka, "If you have determination, follow-through, and a support system, you can achieve what you need to be successful."

Impact on Community

Khalid's story is one that highlights how training has impacted himself, his household, and the community. Khalid worked as a school bus driver for the past three years earning \$12.50 an hour. Prior to being a bus driver, Khalid was a vaccination technician in Sudan. He expressed a strong desire to get into a profession in which he could provide better for his family. He felt that he was limited because of only having a high school diploma. Upon completing an interest inventory, Kahlid determined that truck driving would be a good fit for him. He completed the CDL Class A truck driving program and obtained his commercial CDL. In addition, he earned a silver status on the National Career Readiness Certificate test. Since obtaining his CDL, he obtained a job at Top Line Logistics earning \$16.80 an hour and a sign-on bonus. This equates to a nearly \$9,000 increase in his annual income.

Here is what Kahlid had to say about his new employment:

In the beginning things looked challenging, but every day I gain new experiences. I have seen so many beautiful places while driving over the road. I started to wean my household from government assistance. Next month we'll be moving out of our low-income apartment, leaving it for others in need.

Khalid's comments speak volumes about how training has enabled him to earn a higher wage, increase his households' income, and decrease his household's dependency on social services. He describes a movement from dependency to an increasing sense of financial stability. This project has allowed him to be an example of how a short-term investment can net long-term results for families and their community.