

LaSonya Thompson

Nominated by *Mari Ukleya & Michael Stella*
Oneida Cortland Madison BOCES

I am nominating LaSonya Thompson for NYACCE Student of the Year because she has taken advantage of every opportunity given to her and has become a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work and determination.

Ms. Thompson started our Workplace Education Program in March of 2008. She entered with her reading score at the eighth grade level and math scores at the fifth. Ms. Thompson worked as diligently and determinedly as any student the instructor, Michael Stella, has ever had in his class. Each day, she took on her math and reading assignments with vigor and resolution. Her focus on obtaining the scores necessary to enter the External Diploma Program (EDP) was unwavering. By July of 2008, she brought her reading and math levels to the tenth and eleventh grade levels, respectively.

One particular experience during Ms. Thompson's time in the class exemplifies why we are nominating her for this award. There was a student in class for her fourth time with BOCES. The first three times she had tried to raise her scores, but had given up. The fourth time around was a complete success, primarily due to the example set by Ms. Thompson. This student allowed herself no distractions and no complaints. She learned from Ms. Thompson's quiet determination and focus. There is little doubt she achieved the scores necessary to enter the EDP because Ms. Thompson was in the program at the same time.

Ms. Thompson started the EDP with Pat Katz in July of 2008. She applied the same purposefulness and concentration to the completion of her diploma. It took her the minimum time necessary to complete the five booklets in the program. Tough problems and hard work were tackled with determination. She completed all her assignments in October and received her diploma in November.

In January 2009, Ms. Thompson started in the initial Central Services Technician program offered by OCM BOCES. Her time in that program could be summarized in the same way as her time in Workplace Education and the EDP. Again, she was a role model to other students. This was so much the case, that the instructor, Shelly Bernardini, asked Ms. Thompson to come back to address the next class. Ms. Thompson spoke about the importance of studying in class and of punctuality and professionalism in the workplace. She stressed the need to keep trying and to go for your goals, regardless of the obstacles.

After finishing the class in July of 2009, she was hired by St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center. She currently works for the hospital as a Central Services Technician on the third shift. Her public assistance case was closed. She is supporting her family and has begun a career with limitless opportunities.

Ms. Thompson's experience was not without obstacles. She was a victim of domestic violence. She suffered from a lack of confidence and the effect of being out of school since the tenth

grade. What is so remarkable to every teacher that had the opportunity to work with Ms. Thompson is how effectively she set everything aside to capture her goals. She never complained and never considered quitting. She eagerly grabbed every opportunity in front of her. She is simply the complete OCM BOCES success story and the reason why teachers teach.