

## **WIA Success Stories as recapped by Maria Foerschler, WIA Project Coordinator supported by the Junction City-Geary County Health Department.**

“Because I serve primarily pregnant or parenting teens when I have a success story, there is more than one person that benefits.

### Youth 1

19-year old youth, with a one-year old. They were homeless, living in a shelter. Housing was secured and day care was provided. It took her about 6 months to complete her high school education. A work experience was also provided. The Army recruiter office was right next door. She gave up rights to her daughter to join the Army. Her mother was a known drug user -that "cleaned up" her act once she had the responsibility of her granddaughter. I am happy to report the youth is supporting both her daughter and mom today--she no longer needs SRS assistance. She has a great career in the Army. Without the WIA program, she could have easily been a victim of the streets (there was an attempt on her life and her brother was murdered during the time frame she was working on her diploma).

This youth improved her basic skills, as she is no longer basic skills deficient. She also completed the 13 week Dave Ramsey Money Management workshops. She intends to avoid credit and save 5% of every pay check. As of this date, she is doing just that.

### Youth 2

When this youth found her due date would be in the middle of her 1st semester, her senior year, she dropped out of school. She felt it was more important to work vs complete her education. A chance meeting at the local Workforce Center brought the youth provider and youth together. She immediately enrolled at the Learning Center where she could work at her own pace and still have time to work. She finished her high school diploma before the baby was born. Her work experience led her to full time employment, where she still works. This youth felt so empowered, she applied to the Habitat for Humanity. She moved into a brand new home January, 2011. She no longer receives SRS assistance. Her future plans include attending college so that she can move up the career ladder at the hospital.

### Youth 3

A married youth was pregnant, decided if she were to soon be a mom, she needed to complete her education. As we worked together, signs of physical abuse kept popping up. It took a bit, but the youth was placed in a “safe house,” she did complete her diploma. There were many times she just wanted to quit - didn't feel like she deserved a diploma - basically wanted to die. She was placed in a work experience and her mentor had been through the same type of abuse. What she needed most was support from those around her. She did lose the baby, but is no longer in an unhealthy relationship. The husband, he did get counseling but is no longer married to this youth. Hopefully his next relationship will be more positive.

I could share many more stories. Overall I serve 16 youth each year. They tend to be the hardest to serve. Public school has given up on my youth (or vice versa). I am very passionate about the WIA youth. The WIA program works - we get youth that are basic skills deficient with barriers that no child should have to work through. Many times it is no fault of their own-- it's just the hand that life dealt them. I am so thankful for the opportunity to work with each of these youth. WIA makes a difference!"

Maria Foerschler