

Regina

Success Story

In January 2007, Regina came to Lifeline to interview for a slot in the Family Development Program. Referred by a friend who had completed the program, Regina knew that it was possible to succeed. She saw her friend finish nursing school and get a great job. At her interview Regina wanted to change her life, she wanted more opportunities for her and her three children. Lifeline had a program just for single mothers like Regina, the Family Development Program.

Regina began the program later that month and worked with her Family Advocate, Michelle Mezaris, to write goals that would guide her through the program. In the Family Development Program, participants get to write their own story; they decide what goals they want and how they want to focus their energy. She wanted to focus on schooling in the medical field, self improvement, and better management of her resources. Regina was taking classes at Lakeland Community College but struggled with focusing her studies on a given field. "Lifeline helped by helping with setting my goals and getting a direction on what to do, also helped when I got behind on bills, and my family advocate was always there for me either by phone or email". Regina explains. Then in the summer of 2007 Regina learned that the LPN program at Auburn Career Center had received accreditation and therefore, she could apply for federal financial aid to assist with tuition costs. In September of 2007 Regina began the nine month program to become a nurse.

The days were long; classes started at 7AM and she had two children to get up, dressed, and to daycare before classes began. Regina explains "It was very hard at first to balance everything, but once the kids got into a routine, it became easier for me. I have the greatest bunch of kids, they were patient with me, and even tolerated the cereal for dinner twice a week. I also had a great support system- my friends, family and Lifeline of course". Regina met many women in her class that were also single mothers struggling just like her. They leaned on each other for support. Michelle provided an ear to vent challenges and together they created plans to overcome obstacles and stay on track. "It helps when someone outside your immediate family can give you a different perspective on things. It helped tremendously" Regina states.

The intensive nine month program was challenging and at times it was difficult to balance her family's needs and schooling obligations. In spring of 2008, Regina finished school and graduated with her LPN class. Now there are many employment opportunities available to Regina, "as a nurse, she can choose her hours, work environment, and specialty" says Michelle, "She has become a role model to other single mothers struggling with the same challenges she was two years ago". She made a decision to start a new path in life, and the view from here is full of promise.