

Single Mother Achieves Education Goals

Positive Stories / Lessons Learned from HPRP: *Individual Success Story*

HPRP Grantee:	City of Tacoma
CoC Name and Number:	WA-503 – Tacoma/Lakewood/Pierce County CoC

Latest CoC Point-in-Time Count:

Total persons in ES:	597	Total persons in TH:	1,208
Total persons in Safe Haven:	0	Total unsheltered persons:	192
Total persons, sheltered and unsheltered:	1,997		

Danni* was only 21 years old when she entered HPRP at Washington Women's Employment and Education (WWEE) in Tacoma. The staff at WWEE remembers her as the most mature client they had ever met. She had dropped out of high school in her senior year to work full-time in the food industry, earned her GED the next year, and was raising her two toddlers by herself.

She had once tried moving in with her children's father, thinking he could provide occasional childcare for them and emotional support for her, but he became abusive, and she knew she had to leave. "There was simply no doubt in her mind that she would do whatever it took to keep her kids safe," recalled her housing specialist. Despite the obstacles she faced as a young, single mother working in the unskilled labor market, Danni was able to earn enough income to move into her own apartment. Eventually, though, her hours were cut at work due to the economic downturn, and her savings account dried up faster than she thought possible. Danni and her daughters were forced to leave their apartment and moved in temporarily with a family friend, who made it very clear that this was a limited time offer.

When her friend was no longer willing to host her, Danni had nowhere else to turn, so went to the WWEE. Through HPRP, she received utility deposit and rental assistance to move into a 2-bedroom apartment. After sitting down to create a Housing Stability Plan, Danni impressed her housing specialist by quickly identifying short- and long-term employment and education goals. In the immediate future, Danni wanted to focus on getting a new job in the same field with more guaranteed hours, and eventually, she wanted to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA). Money was the only barrier to enrolling in the three-month training program required to become a CNA. Together, Danni and her housing specialist came up with a plan: Danni would enter job search for a full-time position, and her housing specialist would help her apply for a scholarship through WWEE for the CNA program. Danni quickly obtained full-time employment with a former employer, and her work hours were arranged around her new school schedule. In November of 2011, Danni attended her first class.

She graduated with a nursing assistant certification in February, 2012, after five months of HPRP rental assistance. On top of the fierce independence that she has always displayed, her housing specialist says that Danni now shines with confidence bolstered by her new skills. Danni reached her goal of achieving full-time employment as a CNA, complete with excellent benefits, only three months after graduation. These days, Danni allows herself to indulge in plans for her future - a home with separate bedrooms when her daughters are older; neighbors she can befriend; maybe even a family vacation.

**Names have been changed for confidentiality.*

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