

Quinton at South Carolina Department of Social Services Project Hope

Quinton is a 21-year-old young man from rural South Carolina. He was recruited to Project Hope through the YouthBuild Program, which helps unemployed low-income youth without a high school diploma to obtain a GED and train for an occupation.

Quinton dropped out of high school in the 11th grade to take care of his family. His grandmother was the stable factor in the family. After being home for a while, he decided to enter Job Corps. This did not work out, and he returned home with no direction and nothing to do. A friend gave him a brochure about the YouthBuild program. Quinton completed the application and was accepted in the program.

The program helped him improve his academic skills and taught him how to be a team player and build relationships. The program also helped him to understand the job market and his potential. After his grandmother was placed in a nursing home, all of the responsibility for caring for the family, including his two younger sisters, fell upon his shoulders. After Quinton received his GED, the director of the YouthBuild program told him about Project Hope. Quinton informed the Project Hope career counselor that he wanted to further his education, become a leader in his community, and go into the healthcare field. He shadowed an EMS training officer, saw how an EMS helped strangers in distress, and wanted the same opportunity to help others.

When Quinton started Boot Camp, he was extremely shy, but he gradually gained confidence, and the Project Hope staff discovered that he was a special and sensitive young man. During the afternoon classes, the instructor would approach him, shake his hand, ask how he felt that day and what he had to share, and let him see that he could accomplish the task. The instructor gave him the encouragement he needed, and, as the weeks progressed, others witnessed his big heart. Quinton finally felt like he was accepted by his Boot Camp classmates. The Project HOPE staff noticed that Quinton had a journal and was writing with a passion. He told the staff that he loved to write poetry because it made him feel alive and connected to the world. The staff asked him to share his poem during the graduation ceremony.

Since completing Boot Camp at Midlands Technical College, he has been studying at Central Carolina Technical College to become a Patient Care Technician. He has completed CNA, Phlebotomy, and EKG, which are the three required courses for the position, and is awaiting his certification. Quinton is currently enrolled in the EMS certificate program. After completing this certification, his desire is to complete a four-year degree program in a related health field.

Quinton is currently employed full time with Colonial Health Family Practice in Sumter. His employer has complete confidence in him and has provided him training on the CBC machine. The employer's satisfaction with Quinton's work is best summed up in a follow-up email from the hiring manager to the Project Hope Job Developer: "We love Quinton – thank you so much for sending him to us!"