

Debbie-Ann Powell Drayton: She Keeps Learning

Debbie-Ann Powell Drayton wants to learn and work. In Jamaica she garnered certificates in sales, accounting, entrepreneurial skills, and PC mechanics, and worked for five years doing data entry for the Jamaican National Government. When she came to the United States from Jamaica she realized that while she spoke English she had to speak very slowly for people to understand her. She also recognized that she needed to get her high school diploma. She came to Center for Literacy (CFL) in 2014.

“I remember that my first connection to CFL was talking with Denise [D’Angelo] on the phone who encouraged me to come in to CFL,” recalled Debbie-Anne. Denise later became one of three CFL “learning coaches,” who provided case management and career coaching to Debbie-Ann.

For one year, Debbie-Ann attended Family Literacy classes twice a week for five hours a day with teacher Mary Wilson. When her four-year old son, who has a learning disability, hours for his pre-school changed, she could no longer attend classes. While her son was in school from 12:00pm to 3:00pm, Debbie-Ann took to the books. Studying alone at home, with continued support from Denise and Mary, she passed all four GED® tests on September 28, 2016.

Debbie-Ann lives with her mother in West Philadelphia, along with her son and eight-year old daughter. She just got her driver’s permit. “I want to be independent. My goal is to branch out on my own and go to college. And to get a job that I can grow into, start with data entry and become a manager. I want a steady job, to be able to buy a car and own my own home, and save money for my children to go to college,” said Debbie-Ann.

She is looking forward to June 2017, when she can walk down the aisle with other CFL alumnus at the city-wide graduation ceremony for adult literacy agencies, and - equally important - the graduation of her son from pre-school.