

# TURN IT AROUND



Turn It Around Alumni: Winifer Polanco  
Where are they now?: Winifer works at  
the Chelsea HealthCare Center as a  
Medical Interpreter!

## What was your involvement with Turn It Around like?

I met Sarah in 2012-2013, in a meeting at Charlestown High School. I told her that I was interested in doing extracurricular activity and she told me that I could go to Green Street on a Thursday night, and she briefly told me about this group and what was the purpose behind it all. I went and that's how I met this amazing group that has done, is doing and will continue to do such wonderful things, Turn it Around. I was with Turn It Around for two years or so. I participated in activities in collaboration with MGH Charlestown, the SHARP Program, and the Boys and Girls Club. I remember many events that were incredible, but one of the memories that I hold close to my heart is the Hat and Glove drive we did in January of 2015. I remember that the purpose of this was to collect hats and gloves and give them to those most in need. That day was very cold, we were in the middle of winter and still I would say that about 20 of us, if not all of us, arrived and set the table located on Main Street and started talking to people. We had hot chocolate as well, if I remember correctly. Everything I did with Turn It Around, left an impression on me. I think in every event in which I participated in, something awakened in my subconscious that I am part of a community that is willing to discover other people like us, people who are in need of love and of a minimum of material well-being; it has also helped me to become aware of my actions and know that they can positively or negatively influence my environment and myself.

## How did Turn It Around help you get to where you are today in life?

I learned about community work with Turn It Around. Turn it Around instilled in me a proactive attitude that helped to improve the panorama of our community and also I obtained from the experience, a rewarding result. It taught me that with a little initiative and with a group of people who are willing to do the work with the talents we have, together we can do great things for our community. I discovered by working with the SHARP Program and Turn It Around that I wanted to help people. I went to BHCC and became a Medical Interpreter. I have worked as a medical interpreter for five years now, being the voice of those who need it. I am also part of the Center for Community Health Improvement program with the Chelsea Health Center. I am currently putting together my portfolio to continue my education at Lesley University and become a Holistic Psychologist.

## Can you share some advice for current Turn It Around members and Charlestown youth?

Something that I would advise to everyone now enrolled in the group is to be open to new challenges and new opportunities. When we decide to accept new opportunities, there is a new energy in our life, it's as if the Law of attraction and ourselves become one. It allows us to learn and grow. It helps us develop new qualities such as resilience. It truly helps us become a better version of who we are.