

Denay W.



Denay is an outgoing, well spoken, well-mannered young adult. About a year ago, while walking home from work, Denay passed the Hudson Park nursing home. She went in to inquire about a job. They suggested she go to SCAP and enroll in their career readiness and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program and then she would be prepared with the skills she needed to work at their facility.

Denay has a very ambitious long-term goal to become a firefighter. This has been a dream for her since she was just a child. “I was nine years old; mom was frying chicken on the stove. It was crackling and spitting. Mom took the cover off and a huge fire flashed before us. Everyone in the house was freaking out but me. I remained calm, grabbed some flour and threw it on the flames. The fire department arrived, and they were impressed! I thought it was fun, but mom didn’t think it was funny. I watched them do their job, handling what was left of the fire and making sure we were all okay. After the fire was extinguished, the firefighters talked with me about volunteering when I was old enough. I remember this day, because this was a defining moment for me. I knew someday I wanted to have a job like the fireman. A few years later, when I met the age requirement, I went to the fire house and participated in volunteer training. I even earned a key to the fire house! This was a big deal; it was an honor to hold a key.”

Denay continued, “As a volunteer with the fire department, I participated in trainings. We would have to navigate in pitch black buildings to find victims, complete maze drills and complete pack drills to see how long the oxygen would last. I loved every minute of training. What I didn’t love was the book work. It was a challenge for me because it meant sitting down, reading, focusing and doing hard work. In short, I did not complete it. After high school, I had to get two jobs to pay my bills, so I had to stop volunteering and surrender my key. I still hope to one day be a firefighter, but to become a firefighter one must go through EMT training, written work, and academic work. It’s on my list of goals.”

Denay, now 20 years old, remembers herself in high school. She was an average student, but lacked motivation. Now that she is older, she is dedicated to her education and fulfilling her dreams.

“Life isn’t like high school,” said Denay. “I’ve had a reality check. Nobody’s going to hold my hand. In high school, I just wanted to move; I was antsy; I didn’t think long term. I felt like I didn’t need to know what they were teaching.” Now Denay is very aware she has to do the hard work to gain the skills for any career she wants. She is determined to buckle down, learn and stay ahead of her assignments. Someday, she would like to be a firefighter, but she knows that she has to go through paramedic training first. Her plan is to continue as a dietary department aide while working on her CNA. After, she plans to apply for a position and then begin paramedic training in the fall. For now, Denay enjoys interacting with the residents as a dietary aide. It is this work that has augmented her desire to become a CNA and keep moving forward. Denay views her job as a great way to inspire people and continue working toward her goals.