

Felix Hernandez



Imagine a child moving in and out of foster care, coping with the absence of his mother and mourning the loss of his father, who had recently passed away after a difficult battle with AIDS. As a young child, that was the state of Felix Hernandez's life. Luckily, at the age of 14, Felix was adopted by a loving woman who helped him with his grief, taught him how to love others, and encouraged him to think for himself. She raised Felix as she would her own child.

She believed in Felix and introduced him as her son, the future doctor. As fate would have it, Felix eventually became her caregiver as she battled cancer. It was during this time that Felix discovered his calling to work in the medical field.

With determination, Felix enrolled in school and accomplished his GED. He went on to Community College, but was soon facing another obstacle, and this time, it was his own health. Felix refused to give up. Felix heard about SCAP from friends. He didn't know what to expect, but thought he would give SCAP's HPOG program a try. He was determined to succeed, but at the same time recognized he needed help. Felix enrolled in SCAP's three-week career readiness program. There, he gained a better understanding of work ethics and worked on many other issues, such as problem solving, time and stress management, and confidence building. Felix went on to successfully complete an intense education program with Schenectady County Community College to become a Direct Support Professional. He was able to start a new job as soon as he completed his training. Felix stated, "I picked becoming a Direct Support Professional as a way to experience human services and health care while making a difference for people facing daily challenges."

Felix has learned that he works best when he is caring for others and he has gained a deeper understanding for the rewards of helping others. Mostly, Felix enjoys the challenges and new experiences his job offers every day. He loves helping his patients integrate into the community. He enjoys working with his coworkers as a part of a team, which he refers to as his day family. He stated, "I am grateful for the opportunity to work where I can help others and I feel good about what I am doing."

Felix plans to continue his education at Maria College in the fall of 2013. When asked about advice for others, he replied, "Be willing to try new things, don't self-sabotage. SCAP is a great place to start. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just the next step!"