

## Michael King



Michael King moved to Schenectady with his wife and daughter, TaZahra, in 2010. After hearing positive things about SCAP from other members of the community, Michael enrolled TaZahra in the Head Start program. Michael said, "SCAP is a very community-oriented program; it's kind of like a network; I got good feedback about the Head Start program and decided to bring my daughter here."

TaZahra was enrolled in the SCAP Head Start program as a four-year-old and she was getting ready to transition into kindergarten. Michael felt that his daughter had some behavior issues that needed to be worked on before she moved on to

elementary school. At that time, he chose to volunteer in the classroom as a way to help her overcome these challenges. As it turned out, working in the classroom with his daughter and her teacher turned out to be a very positive experience for this father and daughter. Michael remarked, "Before I started volunteering, I had very little patience with my daughter. Spending time in the classroom and working with TaZahra and the teacher was a learning process for us both. I have discovered what learning style works best for my daughter and what doesn't work." TaZahra's problems had greatly improved and she attended kindergarten the following fall. Michael felt strongly about the positive experience he and his daughter had at Head Start. Accordingly, even after his daughter left the program to begin kindergarten, Michael stayed on as a volunteer food service worker helping in the kitchen to prepare and distribute breakfast and lunch to the children.

A year later, Michael felt he needed help to get started in a career that would provide his family with a better life. He returned to SCAP and enrolled in the Health Profession Opportunity Grants program so he could begin a career in the healthcare industry as a Certified Nurse Assistant. Although he completed his training, Michael continued to feel like he belonged at Head Start helping children and their families succeed. In February, 2013, Michael applied for and acquired the position of Substitute Classroom Aide. One of his first tasks in this position was to help a child that exhibited similar behavior issues his daughter had displayed. The teachers at Head Start felt he would be the right fit for this task since he had been successful in helping his own daughter with similar issues. He proved himself to be a hard worker and dedicated to his job which led him to the next chapter of his career at Head Start.

Shortly after being hired as a Substitute Classroom Aide, Ann Haywood, Assistant Director of Head Start, approached Michael and asked if he wanted to work as both, the Substitute Classroom Aide and a Substitute Bus Monitor. It wasn't long before the Substitute Bus Monitor position turned into a full-time Monitor position.

Today, Michael is still working at Head Start, dedicated to learning and bettering his life for himself and his family. Currently, he is enrolled in a Child Development Associate (CDA) program in hopes that by earning his CDA certification he can eventually be promoted to a full-time Teacher Assistant at SCAP Head Start. Michael has participated in a wide range of opportunities SCAP offers. Not only has Head Start helped TaZahra prepare for kindergarten with a better chance for academic success, but Michael King is working full time in a job he loves, while providing an improved life for his family.

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