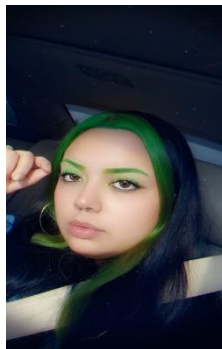


## The Success Story of Melodee Thompson



Melodee Thompson was an 18-year-old young lady who had dropped out of High School after completing the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and was receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) when she was enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program. Melodee's work history consisted of working as a Food Prep Worker for 2 ½ months at a pizza shop in Tennessee and had not been employed in over 6 months.

In 2019 Melodee moved from Tennessee to West Helena Arkansas for better opportunities and a better life. Melodee came into the Helena Workforce Center seeking employment assistance and information on the WIOA program. Career Advisor and Melodee discussed the benefits and all the different services that would be made available to her by enrolling into the WIOA program. Melodee provided the information needed to determine she was eligible for the WIOA Youth program on December 18, 2019.

After enrolling in WIOA, Career Advisor discussed with Melodee about enrolling in Adult Ed at PCCUA and getting her GED, she agreed it would be beneficial. Once agreed upon Career Advisor sent a referral over to PCCUA Adult Ed to get the process started. On January 21, 2020, she started work experience at Helena Regional Medical Center in Housekeeping. Over the next 4 months Melodee encountered numerous challenges. She was forced to move from West Helena Arkansas to Forrest City Arkansas, her worksite closed due to Coronavirus pandemic, and after obtaining employment, Melodee started struggling with mental health issues. Career Advisor talked to Melodee about referring her to Mid-South Health Systems for Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling to help with her struggles more in depth. She was also referred to Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' (ARS) for assistance.

Over the next several months in the mist of the Coronavirus pandemic, Melodee worked on completing the GED program online and getting Mental Health Counseling from Mid-South Health Systems. Melodee was also provided Career Exploration Services and Guidance & Counseling by WIOA Career Advisor.

In March 2021, Melodee stated that she was ready to get back in work experience or find employment. Career Advisor and Melodee discussed the type of work experience that would fit her current needs and still assist in meeting her goals. She stated that she would like a job that would be little to no public interaction and a stress-free job like housekeeping. Melodee's Career Advisor reached out to Delta Inn Hotel in Helena Arkansas to become a potential worksite. The manager of the hotel agreed to be a worksite, so Melodee was placed at Delta Inn Hotel in the Housekeeping department, working with supervisor and no public interaction detailing and cleaning hotel rooms. In just two short weeks at her worksite, Melodee heard of an employment opportunity at the Humane Society of the Delta working with pets, she applied for the position and was hired on March 15, 2021. Melodee continued to work on attaining her GED during all the obstacles she faced, and on June 17, 2021, Career Advisor received an exciting phone call from Melodee informing him that she had taken and passed the last two exams required for her to complete the PCCUA Adult Education program and receive her General Education Diploma. Career Advisor congratulated Melodee on completing and asked what she thought her next step would be, at that time Melodee informed her Career Advisor that she was no longer working for the Humane Society but that she had really enjoyed the short time she worked at the Delta Inn Hotel and decided that was the occupation for her at this time in her life. Melodee was now working as a full time Housekeeper and has three clients that she cleans for weekly.

