



Meet Jasmine

The Patricia Michels Memorial Scholarship Fund provides academic scholarships to deserving young women attending YouthBuild Long Island who wish to pursue their dreams and aspirations of attending an accredited college, university or technical school. Pat was fond of working with young people through YouthBuild to advance their skills, education and leadership qualities in order to gain self-sufficiency.

At the age of 21, Jasmine was struggling to find work, there was no growth potential in the jobs she found, she regrets the decisions she made as a young woman that led to her incarceration for 2½ years which was a major barrier. For three years she was in limbo until a friend of hers told her about YouthBuild. Jasmine enrolled as a student and worked on her education and vocational skills.

“I couldn’t believe that I had the chance to be part of a program like YouthBuild,” Jasmine said. “There aren’t a lot of opportunities like this that come by in life, opportunities that can change your life. I knew I wanted more than how I was living, and the staff supported me in working to improve myself and my outlook. I talked about my personal issues and they helped me get to a better place, they helped me with everything.”

When Jasmine graduated from the program, she was one step closer to achieving her goals of working in construction. “I was finally making people proud, my transformation from where I came from to what I had become was so dramatic. I felt like I had finally accomplished something real and worthwhile,” she recalls.

During her time in YouthBuild, Jasmine learned about Opportunities Long Island (OLI), a program that leads to apprenticeship positions in the construction trade. The staff at YouthBuild Long Island made the connection, she enrolled and discovered a passion for plumbing. “We had the chance to get a feel for each trade to see where we could be the most comfortable and excel. I had no idea there were so many options in construction for me to explore! I never thought I’d be interested in plumbing, but after spending a week doing it I knew it was the path I was meant to take”.

Jasmine is on her way to a new career and a steady income. Jasmine qualified for a vehicle through our Switching Gears program, funded by the Island Outreach Foundation which gives successful qualified graduates a car. The Scholarship Fund helps support Jasmine with her insurance and light maintenance costs to keep her car on the road and to successfully get her to work!

When thinking about how YouthBuild changed her life, she found herself at a loss for words. “It feels great that I have a steady, great job and reliable transportation to get me there. I don’t have to worry how I’m going to take care of myself and how to get to work each day. In five years, I now see a real future for myself. I’m going to graduate from the apprentice program and be a certified plumber, start a brand new life for myself.”

To someone struggling, Jasmine says “If you’re really serious about changing your life, and you want it, YouthBuild works. Don’t fall for the games that led you to your past and your struggle. Stay focused, nothing happens overnight and everything worth waiting for takes time. It will get better, if you work for it.”