

Profiles of Hope



The road to obtaining a Bachelor’s degree in Nursing has been an unusually long one for Project Self-Sufficiency participant Lisa Christiansen, who postponed her academic career in order to care for her family. A latent interest in the health care field was always simmering in the back of her mind, however, and was fostered by watching her grandmother navigate her own life as a successful nurse and single mother. When Christiansen’s oldest son was diagnosed with a baffling set of complicated health issues, the mother of three elected to home school her children. Caring for her son throughout his childhood only served to deepen Christiansen’s desire to pursue a medical career.

Christiansen had a feeling that the field of nursing would be a good fit for her. The aptitude tests she underwent at Project Self-Sufficiency’s Career Center confirmed her hunch. Over the next few years, Christiansen diligently pursued her college degree. She also parted ways with her partner and moved out on her own. Now 53, Christiansen is almost finished with her Bachelor’s degree in Nursing at Seton Hall University. Life has not been easy. Although her two sons are now adults, Christiansen has taken advantage of the Thanksgiving food baskets and the annual Season of Hope Toy Shop offered by Project Self-Sufficiency in order to provide for herself and her six-year-old daughter. She has also attended child sexual assault workshops, noting that the knowledge gained there would also help her in her chosen career.

Although her busy schedule prohibits her from taking part in many activities, Christiansen has found time to be a featured speaker at local and statewide events, sharing her story with the goal of helping others to pursue their dreams. She remains grateful for the support she has received from the agency.

“Project Self-Sufficiency has changed me. Knowing that somebody is supportive of your endeavors, having somebody celebrate that you are trying so hard to get somewhere, and knowing that somebody believes in you is what drives a lot of people at Project Self-Sufficiency. There’s something there for everyone at Project Self-Sufficiency, and sometimes that something is support.”

Lisa Christiansen

53

3 children

Lisa Christiansen
