

STUDENT PROFILE

ANITRA SCOTT: PERSISTENCE LEADS TO HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY AND HEALTH CAREER GOALS

by Vanessa Caceres



Anitra Scott exemplifies “never give up.”

Scott, who earned her HSE last year from The Literacy Alliance, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, first attempted to earn her HSE in 2006. “I wanted to set an example for my children that when you put your mind to something, you will succeed,” she says.

She took a class at a local church but the class size was large and overwhelming. Scott continued her work as a home health aide assisting older patients in their homes and began working the night shift in 2017. To pass the time, she would read books to stay up through the night. After that, she decided to enroll at The Literacy Alliance.

“My first day was a life-changing experience, and I knew that I could do this in my heart and mind,” she says.

However, it wasn’t always easy. After working the night shift, she’d come home and stay awake to get her youngest ready for school, then sleep for 30 minutes, take her oldest son to school, and then get to school herself around 9 a.m.

Scott praises the instructors and site coordinators for guiding and encouraging her through the classes. Yet they praise her as well.

“She came to class tired after working all night with her patient but had a smile for others,” says Melanee Neilson, the site coordinator. “She was a constant in attendance, always heralding everyone that they could do it and to just never give up.”

In 2020, Scott graduated with her HSE—the same year that her oldest son earned his high school diploma.

“Being a graduate with my oldest son is the best feeling in the world,” she says.

Scott’s goal now is to go to college to become a certified nursing assistant and then become a licensed practical nurse. “My heart is full when I can help someone else,” she says.

Scott has some tips for learners who’d like to earn their HSE:

1. Make sure that you are ready to commit to earning it.
2. Have a support group to encourage you.
3. Never give up when times get hard. This is not an easy walk.
4. Stay focused. Never be ashamed to ask for help.
5. Tell yourself in the mirror that you can do this.