

Testimony from Affiliate Program Participant, December 2016

I am a participant of the Budget Buddies program at the Frederick Pilot Middle School in Dorchester. I appreciate the program because it is so comprehensive, it's well organized and there is a wealth of valuable information. Zoila (Affiliate Program Coordinator) is very warm and personable. From day one I felt welcome, and she fosters an environment where people all feel equal and respected regardless of whether they are there to learn or there to teach. The instructors are from all walks of life and diverse backgrounds. I love that we get the perspectives from people at all levels and that people share openly and honestly. The instructors are not judgmental and extremely approachable. It's a common practice for many to follow up even after they have taught for the week or offer their services beyond the group.

The other moms and I draw strength from each other and we share tidbits of knowledge that we have learned along the way. We often encourage one another and this type of support is regenerative. It helps to know that you are not alone in the battle, and most importantly that regardless of how bad things are there is hope and a way out. We have all have shared how this is both enjoyable and empowering to be able to take action and be actively working towards a common goal.

I can't say enough about my personal coach Marilyn. She has been a true gift. She kept her commitment to meet with me on the off weeks when the group does not meet, helping to reinforce what we learned the week before in the group. Marilyn has already been a true beacon of light and hope helping me in a number of ways. I've heard it said that when the student is ready the teacher will appear and whether it was fate or pure coincidence I cannot say. It was unbelievable that Marilyn was formerly employed by the state agency that I am now interning for. She worked directly with some people in high places, and just by making a single phone call she created an opportunity for me that otherwise I may not have had. There is fierce competition in my dept with over 60 interns competing for a handful of jobs. I am hopeful that her recommendation will lead to something positive in the near future. One of her former colleagues said that "With Marilyn in your corner as a mentor, you may end up being our next female Governor." While she said that in jest, I think that sums it up nicely. Marilyn is a powerhouse! My life has already begun moving in a positive direction. Having her in my corner has exceeded any and all expectations. I am humbled by the fact that she volunteers her time and expertise to help coach me. I do not take this opportunity for granted.

I would 100% recommend this program to others in my community. I wish I had discovered this program years ago. We learn some valuable lessons in this program. Not only are we building our financial lives, which has a direct impact on our families, but we are also building relationships, which in turn strengthens our community.

Thank you all for your hard work and commitment. This program has been truly transformative! Please let me know how I can support you in the future.

Kind Regards,
Lashaunda W.