

Testimony of Dollene Bailey

My name is Dollene Bailey, and I am a proud mother, grandmother, and current college student. Ever since I was a little girl growing up in Guyana, I dreamed of becoming a nurse. But coming from a poor family, college wasn't an option. After immigrating to the United States in May 2000, I worked hard to build a life. I went back to school while working full time and caring for my grandmother with Alzheimer's.

In 2007, I lost both my career and my home during the market crash. Though I kept going for the sake of my children, the weight of working, caregiving, and trying to go back to college made it impossible to pursue my degree. I only had time for certificates that helped temporarily.

Since moving to Maine, I've been given a second chance. My two oldest children now have families of their own, and my youngest just started college, with the support of the same program I'm in. This program has been life-changing. It guides us through financial aid, helps us navigate classes, and supports us through career transitions; mine from CNA to RN.

Returning to college in my fifties was intimidating, especially being in classrooms with students the age of my children. But the Adult Education staff have created a space where I feel welcomed, supported, and connected. The tutoring and academic help have made a world of difference especially since I had taken some of these classes before but needed help remembering key details.

This program is not just about getting a degree it's about rebuilding a dream I had to put on hold decades ago. That's why it's so important to continue funding College and Career Success positions. They are not just staff, they are lifelines for adult learners like me who are trying to build a better future, not only for myself but my family.

Dollene Bailey
Adult Ed
LD 1705

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