



Kristine &

Richard Allen Youth Academy

Last spring Kristine, just 20, was homeless and jobless. She and her mother were staying at a shelter and counted on public services for support. They had no idea of how they could get back on their feet.

As a last resort Kristine returned to the Next Generation Zone, where she had gotten her GED in 2008. She had heard about a summer employment program and wanted to find out more. After meeting the qualifications and enrolling, she and her counselor hatched an employment plan to get her work experience (WEX) in the field of child care. Kristine started her WEX at Richard Allen Apartments' Youth Academy.

Through SYEP, Kristine received training in State Training and Registration System (STARS), basic CPR, and First Aid. She completed nearly 300 hours at the daycare, gaining valuable skills. When her WEX came to an end, Richard Allen Youth Academy offered her an incredible opportunity. Kristine jumped at it and was hired as an assistant teacher.

Last fall, things were looking up for Kristine. She was employed, found a small apartment for her and her mother and could pay all her own bills.

When the Next Generation Zone recently caught up with Kristine, she was still working at Richard Allen Apartments, but has been promoted to the Lead Toddler Teacher position. She has her own class of seven energetic toddlers to look after. She works 40 hours a week and has some basic benefits.

"Kristine is a very dependable person," Lisa Morris, Richard Allen Program Supervisor said, "and she does a great job."

Observing Kristine as an intern first prompted Richard Allen Apartments to consider hiring her after seeing her great work ethic. Kristine would not have had the same opportunity as a youth with barriers turning in a résumé. Jean Smith of Richard Allen, hopes to partner with the Next Generation Zone in the future to offer another young person like Kristine the chance to work in early childhood development.

Kristine soon hopes to go to school for early childhood development, with the goal of owning and operating her own daycare someday. Kristine is yet another example of a young adult whose life was forever changed for the better and was given a chance to succeed with the Next Generation Zone.



Kristine with her WorkSource Specialist, Brandie Batt