

Training Provides Her a Career Path, Recognition

BIG RAPIDS – Amanda Smith knew she wanted more for herself and her future – she just didn't know where to get help. After graduating high school in 2007, Smith enrolled at Baker College so she could pursue what she's always wanted to do – become a nurse. However, finances were tight and she could no longer afford to attend school. Disheartened, she dropped out of college and began working different factory jobs to keep her afloat.

Little did she know a year later she would work with a Michigan Works! youth employment services provider, Eagle Village, and get the help she needed to create a better life for herself and her family. Through Eagle Village, Smith received CNA training and employment at a local healthcare facility.

Soon after her transition to another employment opportunity, she became pregnant and needed to find a temporary clerical position until her baby was born. She contacted Eagle Village again to see if they could help her find a position where she could still use her medical skills. Eagle Village arranged a work experience for her in Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital's surgical unit. Because they were so impressed with Smith and her abilities, they wanted to hire her after her baby was born. And that's just what they did.



“Amanda is one of those employees who knows what to do before you tell her,” says Beth DeLong, Smith's supervisor. “We really appreciate that she's always willing go above and beyond and learn new skills, which will greatly assist her on her career path.”

Smith and 24 other individuals across the state received recognition at the 2011 Michigan Works! Alumni Celebration held in Lansing on January 25. The celebration recognized these 25 individuals from across the state for working with their local Michigan Works! to gain employment. As Michigan Works! alumni, their stories speak not only of personal triumph, but of the innovative programs and services at work in our state.

Smith works 40+ hours a week and will soon enroll at Muskegon Community College to work toward a registered nurse degree. Despite some of the barriers she's faced, she never gave up during her time with Eagle Village and Michigan Works!.

“I am so thankful for what Eagle Village and Michigan Works! have done for me,” says Smith. “I certainly wouldn't be where I am today without their help.”

For more information on Michigan Works! West Central or Eagle Village's Youth Employment Program, call (231) 924-3230 or visit www.michworkswc.org.

Photo Caption: Amanda Smith receives special tribute from Senator Geoff Hansen at Alumni Celebration in Lansing