



2-6-08  
(Laura & Nikki Hammons)

When I asked Nikki Hammons of Lebanon, Virginia if she ever thought she would be graduating with her mother, she emphatically said, “No!” Nikki didn’t realize when she began attending my GED class in August 2007 that her mother would soon be coming to class with her.

In May 2006, Laura Hammons, Nikki’s mother, was involved in a domestic violence incident that left her shot and critically wounded. Nikki stayed by her mother’s side as she underwent treatment in a hospital for forty-three days and recovery at home for several months. Nikki, a tenth-grader at Lebanon High, missed school during that time and missed taking her final SOL tests for that year.

When school started in the fall, Nikki discovered that she was far behind the rest of her class. She enrolled in an independent studies program offered by the school but soon found herself struggling with that. In August 2007, after Nikki had turned eighteen, her instructor suggested that she might benefit from enrolling in an adult GED program. That’s when Nikki entered my GED class.

Nikki began attending class even though she dreaded it at first. She had grown to dislike school and was expecting the same results with the GED program. To her surprise, she found that the class was small and that she was able to receive individual instruction there. She immediately started experiencing success by passing the Official GED Practice Tests. She then commenced passing the official GED Tests, one by one.

One day in class, Nikki approached me to ask if her mother could speak with me after class. I quickly agreed to meet with Laura Hammons, thinking she must want to speak with me about Nikki’s progress. Much to my surprise, Laura asked me if she could possibly attend the GED class with her daughter. I was ecstatic! A mother and daughter in my class together- how great was that!

Laura excelled as quickly as her daughter. In fact, she actually completed her GED testing two weeks prior to Nikki’s completion. Both were able to earn their GEDs just before the Christmas holidays! Both were very excited and happy to achieve their goal in such a short time.

Laura was proud that she could accomplish such a goal. She had always wanted to earn her high school credential since dropping out of school to get married in 1989. She even attempted to attend a GED class seventeen years ago but was discouraged to do so by her husband. This time it was Nikki who encouraged her mother to complete the task. She said to her mother, “Why don’t you just come with me.”

These two ladies have had obstacles to overcome, but they have succeeded in achieving an important goal- earning a GED certificate. What’s next for these two? I expect to see them walking side by side in caps and gowns at the GED graduation ceremony in June. Nikki has expressed interest in military service, and Laura is interested in a career in nursing. The GED has opened the doors to many future opportunities for these two ladies.

If you or someone you know didn’t complete high school, contact Southwest Regional Adult Education at 889-5424, or call toll-free at 1-866-581-9935. You could be the next GED success story!