MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Two people wearing black ski masks and white jump suits robbed a convenience store on the outskirts of town just hours ago. Police are now on the scene. Kaitlyn Beghtol wants to be on that scene. The 23-year-old specifically wants to be a crime scene investigator or a police detective.

Kaitlyn is now enrolled at Bryant and Stratton, an online college, to make her dream a reality. In fact, she has already successfully completed one semester of college. Just a few months ago, however, her future didn’t look so bright. “I left high school right before winter break of 2009, “ Kaitlyn recalls. “I was 17 and decided I was going to get married. It was a stupid mistake. ”

After a divorce, Kaitlyn made a spur-of-the-moment decision to travel. She soon found herself in Colorado, a new boyfriend at her side. Two miscarriages later, she was pregnant. The boyfriend didn’t even show up at the hospital to see their newborn daughter. Kaitlyn was on her own to raise Lylianna.

“Having Lylianna made me more responsible, ” says Kaitlyn. “I now not only have to look out for myself, I have to look out for her. I’ve grown up a lot. She is the main reason I wanted to get my GED. ”

Earning her high school credential was also the first step toward her goal of working in criminal justice. But Kaitlyn not only had to care for her child, she also had no transportation and little money. However, she did have desire and determination in abundance.

Fortunately for Kaitlyn, KET had recently launched a brand-new way to prepare for high school equivalency tests. The Fast Forward online learning system also solved another problem: Kaitlyn didn’t need to leave home to use it. Best of all for Kaitlyn, it was designed to get learners to their goal— as the name says —fast.

The computer-based Fast Forward covers all subjects and critical thinking skills, and features online tools and a format conducive to doing well on the GED exam. Learners have the added benefit of practicing with the kind of technology they will use on the test. Kaitlyn chose to work on one subject at a time. Her pre-test showed she should be able to pass language arts and science with a little review. Her social studies score was borderline. Her math scores were most concerning.

Kaitlyn recalls: “I would work before Lylianna woke up. I would do as much as I could until she took a nap and then work again after she went to bed. ”

“I liked Fast Forward a lot. It explained things to me that I didn’t understand before. Like with multiplying and dividing fractions, I never got that in school. The way the teachers taught it on the Fast Forward video just clicked in my head. ”

Pat checked in with Kaitlyn by phone every week or two. “She was humming away, ” Pat says. “Transportation was a huge issue for her, so Fast Forward allowed us to break that barrier. ”

Math was the academic barrier that most concerned both teacher and student.

“I hadn’t had anyone pass the math test without coming into the center and going through our program, ” Pat says. “Kaitlyn told me she thought she had it after doing the Fast Forward math section. She passed the math test on the first try. She passed all the subjects on the first try, even earning an honors score on social studies. I was amazed. ”

Kaitlyn herself is naturally proud of her achievement, particularly as a role model for her daughter.

“Someday when she gets older, I will tell her about this, ” Kaitlyn says. “If your mom can do this, you can do whatever it is, too. I will tell her she should find a way to just keep on going. ”

KET helps Kentuckians become college and career ready. Donate now at KET.org. Thank you!