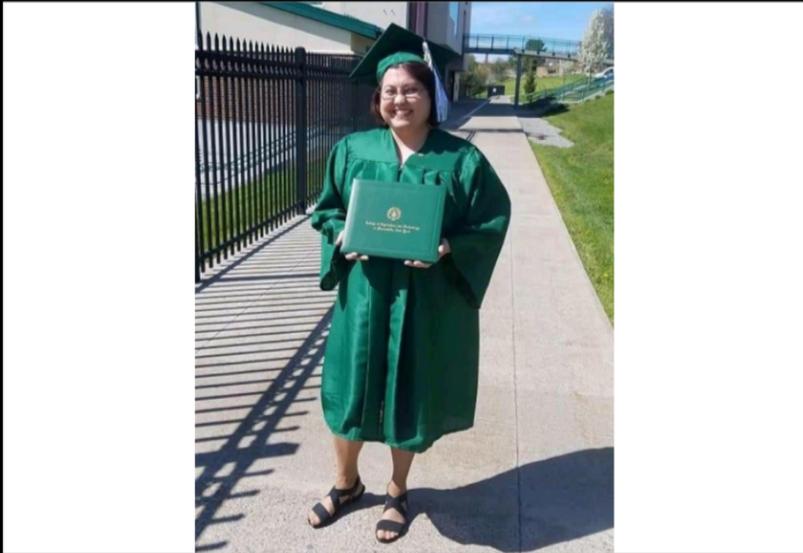


A Bit of Me

This series of profiles on SUNY Broome community members is a part of the Student Village diversity calendar initiative. We will be highlighting members in our community who identify with or can speak on the diversity theme or topic for each month. The topic for December is persons with disabilities. To be featured in this series please reach out to Pamela Alvarez or Alexandria Donkor.

Mary Richardson

SUNY Broome Parent



Background: Mary Richardson is the mother of one of our very own Resident Assistants here in the Student Village!

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

My role in the community is an Employment Specialist/job coach. I obtain and maintain jobs for people with disabilities.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR CAREER?

I have many things that I love about my career, but my favorite thing? That's tough, I guess I'd say meeting new people and being able to adjust my schedule as needed.

HOW DID YOU COME TO CHOOSE THIS CAREER?

I knew I wanted to be an Employment Specialist about four years ago. I had been working two different jobs at that time and going to college as well. One of my jobs consisted of being a Community Habilitation Worker. I learned about the job coaching position through Com Hab. I immediately knew I would love it and it would be a great fit for me.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

I define success by doing what you truly want to do, but also makes you happy. If you get paid well on top of that then that is an added bonus!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SUNY BROOME STUDENTS?

The advice I would give SUNY Broome students is, I was in your shoes not that long ago. Stay focused, don't give up on yourself no matter what! Life is going to throw curveballs, duck and power through!

HOW DO YOUR DISABILITIES AFFECT YOUR LIFE?

My learning disability I kept very quiet much of my adult life. It wasn't until I began working as a job coach that I realized how lucky I was to be able to have an immediate connection with the individuals that I serve!

WHAT'S THE MOST SURPRISING THINGS ABOUT YOUR CAREER?

Definitely the most surprising thing about my career is that I learn something new everyday, and when I learn something from the individuals on my caseload, well that's just amazing!

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

Honestly, my proudest accomplishment is both being a mom to the strongest person I know, and actually obtaining my college degree that I worked so unbelievably hard for!

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT DISABILITIES?

I wish more people knew that disabilities aren't scary, but rather another way of thinking and living.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CELEBRATE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MONTH?

I feel it's important to celebrate Persons with Disabilities Month to show that we all want what everyone else wants, to be heard.

HOW CAN SOMEONE BE A GOOD ALLY TO MEMBERS OF THE DISABLED COMMUNITY?

Someone can be a good ally to members of the disabled community by using the golden rule: treat others the way you would want to be treated. If you see someone with a disability being treated unfairly, stand up and assist in any way possible.

IF YOU COULD DO ANYTHING FOR A DAY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I would love to travel to Italy!