

A BOOST THAT LEADS TO CAREER & HOMEOWNERSHIP

Lindee White grew up in Savanna Woods. She is the middle of five children. As a young child, Ms. White found a mentor, and a lot of fun activities and support at the on-site YWCA afterschool program as a child. She later found the same support from CHA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program as an adult. And both made all the difference in her life.

YWCA. When Lindee was growing up in Savanna Woods the YWCA offered an on-site afterschool program in the Community Room. "They gave me a mentor," Ms. White said. "I had someone to talk to and she really encouraged my creative side," she added. Ms. White said she always felt a little different because she was so creative, but the mentor, Ms. Kimberly Howard Roseboro, encouraged her to develop this artistic/musical side.

Today, Ms. White is pursuing an associate's degree at the Art Institute of Charlotte and is building a business as a photographer. She says she specializes in general family photography — weddings, birthday parties and family portraits. She does not believe she would have gotten this far if it had not been for this mentor, and for

CHA's Family-Self Sufficiency Program. Ms. White became a mother at 19 and needed the affordable rent offered by public housing at that time. She said, "I signed up for the FSS program so I could get the support I needed to get out on my own."

Ms. White is extremely hardworking and takes nothing for granted. In addition to being an artistic entrepreneur, Ms. White drives a CMS school bus five days a week and attends school at the Art Institute. She is now the proud mother of two young children, Amier (age six) and Jayden (age 1).

Ms. White said the program helped her clean up her credit so she could be eligible to apply for the Habitat homeownership program. Through CHA's FSS program Ms. White had the support from Martie Bennett to guide her through the process and access resources she needed to be successful. She says, "The FSS program has helped me pay for both child care and school, and my case manager has been wonderful support."

Recognizing her blessings, Ms. White serves as a mentor to the middle school students who ride the bus she drives. "I try to encourage them like my mentor encourages me," she said.

Ms. White closes on her new home May 12. She says the budgeting classes have prepared her for the costs of homeownership and she is ready for the responsibility.

Her advice to others is to never let where you were brought up shape you into who you are going to be.