



## Planning for My Future

BY HOLLIE WILLIAMS

For most of the time that I was in foster care, I was the queen of AWOL. Looking back, I see that what I hurt most was my education. When I was in school, I was a great student. My consistent absences, however, made me fail classes. When I returned from AWOLing, I had so much to make up. Trying to catch up on all I missed stressed me out. I started to have panic attacks.

Preparing to age out of foster care with a baby, I knew I needed financial security for my son soon. The educational specialist at my foster care agency went over different trades that would let me support my baby without years of training.

I enrolled in a one-year training program to become a home health aide or do other medical or administrative work. Caring for my mom through her relapses to alcohol showed me I had the heart to be a medical assistant.

I'm happy about where I stand. ETV and financial aid covers all my tuition, and I will get my medical assistant degree about a month before my 21st birthday. Then I get an unpaid externship, and if I do well, I could be hired by that employer. I'll be able to support my son and myself while doing a job I actually enjoy.

*-By Hollie Williams, former youth in foster care, excerpted from ["The Best Mom I Can Be," Represent](#)*