

## **How Kishwaukee College Changed My Life**

By Tanisha Jones-Robinson

As a 25-year-old first-generation student, I did not always see education as a pathway to anything but overwhelming debt with nothing to show for it. I was raised on the south side of Chicago by a single mother of four on welfare. Growing up in an environment where opportunities were scarce, I existed solely by surviving and not living. As I grew older and became responsible for my own well-being, I recognized that I wanted more for myself. I knew I could push past the barriers that hindered me, but I just needed a helping hand. That helping hand was the amazing community of Kishwaukee College. From the moment I stepped onto campus in a new environment, I was met with a substantial sense of change and confidence.

During my first semester, I took a part-time position at the Student Services office, where I learned the ins and outs of campus life and made connections with people who had diverse experiences. Attending Kish, I saw how countless people from varied levels of society all ended up together in this small speck of time. This school gave me a deeper appreciation for the resources available to students, and the people I met became a part of my support system. With the help of Kishwaukee's Career Services, I was able to start my very first engineering internship which gave me tremendous experience in the field I am interested in.

Paying for school was a huge factor in my decision to get a degree, but Kishwaukee College made it so accessible that I did not have to let financial barriers stand in my way. Scholarships, financial aid, and reasonable tuition costs have made it possible for me to pursue my education without the constant stress of overwhelming debt. Though I have only been here for a brief time, Kish has been the foundation of my growth.

As I entered my second semester, I realized that this college was the key to unlocking an

updated version of myself. My professors exude love and compassion for their prospective fields and seeing this has inspired me to truly go after what I love. I see how my education could empower me to change the course of my existence, not only for myself but for my family as well.

Kishwaukee College has done more than just help me further my education. This school has shown me that dreams are not just dreams; they are within reach. This small community college in the even smaller town of Malta, IL, has offered me the chance to rewrite my future. As I continue obtaining a higher education, I will always remember how community college changed my life.