



Student Spotlight: Laurie Haworth

Perseverance and the determination to overcome setbacks are two of Laurie Haworth's most marked characteristics. She has triumphed over adversity many times and is using the empathy and understanding she gained to help those less fortunate than herself.

Haworth, 40, who has attended the Western Campus since 2011, is majoring in social work. She is set to graduate from Tri-C this summer with an Associate of Arts degree and will transfer to Cleveland State University this fall to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Haworth's path to Tri-C began when she was working for renowned Cleveland catering company Sammy's. She worked her way up through the ranks from bartender to general manager. In fact, her employers valued her so much that after she moved to Florida, they flew her between there and Ohio so she could still oversee their most important events.

After she moved back to Ohio, Haworth became an award-winning salesperson for the company. But after reaching what she termed her "highest potential" in this area, she left to pursue other opportunities. That was when she discovered that even with all of her experience and skills, it was nearly impossible to advance in a career without a degree. She then enrolled in Tri-C's Women in Transition program to develop her next plan of action.

"The Women in Transition program was just what I needed to figure out what I was going to do next," said Haworth. "Through this program, I received academic advising (and) tutoring and attended workshops in financial and career planning, which were all designed to keep me on track and give me the tools I need to excel in my career choice of social work. I am especially grateful to Linda Lanier, the director of the TRIO program at Western Campus. She was my fairy godmother."

Inspired by another student in the WIT program who was deaf, Haworth began taking sign language classes and volunteering with deaf people.

"I started volunteering when I learned there was an opportunity to give people rides to Columbus for a holiday party for the deaf," she said. "More opportunities came after that, and I currently work with a woman who has low vision and is hard of hearing."

Haworth is a student ambassador, peer mentor and math tutor. Through the Women in Transition program, Haworth was introduced to agencies such as All Faiths Food Pantry, Community Corner and Greater Cleveland Volunteers. Her volunteer activities include working at food banks and delivering meals to the elderly.

Last fall, Haworth received a \$1,000 scholarship from Zonta International, a group of professional women who work to advance the status of women worldwide.

"I've been through some really tough times in my life, and there have always been people there to help me," said Haworth. "I feel it is really important to help people less fortunate. I want to set a good example for my children, and helping others gives my life purpose."

Haworth is not yet sure in what area of social work she will practice. She would like to work with mentally disabled or deaf clients, possibly in a hospital or school.

“I do know, because I can sign, I will get a job immediately upon completing my bachelor’s degree and will be able to command a higher salary,” said Haworth. “What I also know is if we do good things, good things will come to us, and rather than get discouraged by the bad things that happen to us, we can use these experiences to learn and grow stronger. This is what I want to impart to the people I help.”

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