



Jazzmen Anderson: Building A Future for Herself

The third eldest of nine brothers and sisters, Jazzmen Anderson came to Lincoln College Normal by way of YouthBuild USA, a program that gives young people the opportunity “to build their futures and their communities through education, leadership development, job training, and the rehabilitation and production of affordable housing.” Joining YouthBuild without a high school diploma, Jazzmen quickly attained her GED, all the while helping to build affordable houses in the McLean County area. GED in hand, she then enrolled at LCN, taking classes while still building

houses. Asked what kind of work she did on those houses, Jazzmen emphatically responds, “Everything but pour the cement.”

YouthBuild not only brought Jazzmen to LCN; it also led her to destinations across the country. Jazzmen traveled to Washington D.C. as a member of YouthBuild’s Young Leaders Council. Next, Jazzmen traveled to Gulfport, Mississippi over Spring Break to help rebuild houses damaged by Hurricane Katrina. She describes a drive they took up the coast to survey the damage: “In some places, all we saw were the front steps. Whole houses were just gone.” In addition to putting up dry wall, Jazzmen’s group built a front and side porch on the Gulfport house to which they were assigned.

Now a YouthBuild alum, Jazzmen keeps in touch with YouthBuild and receives support when needed. Intent on finishing her Associate’s Degree, Jazzmen is carrying a full load of classes this semester, two of which are with Mrs. Mary Adams: “I find Mrs. Adams challenging. I’ve never had an instructor quite like her. She’s all about education. She makes you do your assignments the right way and makes students really work on improving which is something I admire about her.”

The admiration is a mutual one. Mrs. Adams commented that it amazed her that Jazzmen could keep on top of her studies while meeting her work program requirements. She also gave rave reviews for Jazzmen’s academic commitment: “ She’s always prepared for class, and I see her in the Quiet Study Area working on school work every spare minute. I love her positive attitude and hard work. I’m sure her work ethic will bring her success in whatever she undertakes in life.”

Tall and slender, Jazzmen hopes someday to be a model or, if not, to open her own business. To that end, Jazzmen’s academic goal is a Bachelor’s Degree in Business. When Jazzmen does have

spare time, she enjoys drawing, especially portraits, and dancing, especially to Hip Hop and R & B, one of her favorite artists being Ciara. Her advice for fellow students: "Make sure you attend class and stay on top of your work."