

I was in school for nursing, but I was on MFIP [government assistance] so they sent me to St. Stephen's for job counseling. This was eight years ago. St. Stephen's helps with using their computers, with a resume, making copies. They make everything available to you. One time when my daughter was young my car broke down and St. Stephen's helped to have it fixed.

I had to do part time school to take care of my daughter, and then I also struggled with depression, I guess because of everything I had going on. It took me a while to finish school. I was going to St. Kate's, but it was too expensive. I eventually graduated from Hennepin Tech and got a job as an LPN [Licensed Practical Nurse] and got off MFIP.

Then last year when I was twenty-four weeks pregnant with my son I got rear-ended and I also had preeclampsia so I had to stop working for the rest of my pregnancy. I had to go back on MFIP, so I asked to work with Cynthia at St. Stephen's again.

Cynthia was so encouraging. She always, always said, "You're gonna do it! I can't wait!" It made me feel good, like someone was there for me.

Now I'm back at work full-time as an LPN making \$19 an hour. I live in Edina and I work with long-term Alzheimer's patients. I love my job. The residents might not remember my name from day to day, but I can see they remember my face and it's good to be there for them. It's a hard time in people's lives.

I think Cynthia knew I would succeed because she knew about my background. I come from an alcoholic family and Cynthia knew I wanted to make a complete change, go in a completely different direction than that.

I know there's a stigma about people on MFIP, that they are just sitting, collecting taxpayers' money and that's incorrect because the State of Minnesota doesn't let you just sit. You have to look for a job, or be in school, or work a certain number of hours. There are probably some people who make a bad name for it, but it's supposed to be a stepping stone. For me it was a stepping stone to better my life.

Miranda



St. Stephen's

Employment and Family Services

program helps parents on government assistance (called the Minnesota Family Investment Program or MFIP) to improve their employability and obtain livable-wage jobs.



Miranda and her children, Kyla and Anthony.