

LEIGHA
SAN JACINTO COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT



 **PASADENA, TX**

Health Career Pathways Partnership

A mother overcomes adversity to help others who are struggling.

Leigha grew up in La Marque, Texas in a low-income home. Her mother worked at different healthcare facilities as a certified nurse aide (CNA) with long night shifts. Despite her mother's efforts, it never seemed to be enough to keep their family stable.

Her mother's healthcare career exposed Leigha to the field at an early age. Leigha loved the thought of helping others. Her mother exemplified a deep gratitude for her work and compassion despite the challenges of the job. Leigha admired her mother for persevering through her struggles and desired a career that would help people overcome adversity.

After graduating high school, Leigha began working at Clearlake Regional Medical the healthcare facility where her mother worked. She started as a patient sitter, providing supervision and comfort. Leigha gained first-hand experience in patient care while becoming self-sufficient. During that time, she also realized she wanted more.

Leigha started attending classes at College of the Mainland. However, after three and a half years, she became pregnant. She could no longer afford to go to school and stopped working at the hospital. After giving birth to her son, Leigha felt stuck. She wondered how she could put herself through school while also making sure life was stable for her son.

Her son's father was very supportive and assured her they would find a way for her to go back to school. When they were finally in a place to start saving money for school, disaster struck. Hurricane Harvey took what little they had built up. All of her baby's items were gone as well as their car. They had to stay with friends and relatives to survive.

With this setback, Leigha thought that pursuing her education was impossible. One day she went into the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office for a breastfeeding support group. Here she met a counselor who remembered her interest in healthcare. She gave Leigha a flyer for the Health Career Pathways Partnership HPOG program at [San Jacinto Community College District](#). It advertised free CNA classes. Leigha thought, "Well I don't have any certificates now; it couldn't hurt to get this one." Leigha attended an HPOG information meeting and was blown away. It was so much more than just a free class. It was an opportunity to change her life.

Leigha was accepted into the Health Career Pathways Partnership program in November 2017. She felt absolutely overjoyed. Through the HPOG grant, her dream of becoming a CNA was reignited. The program provided education, training, and support services to Leigha. She completed the CNA program in May 2018.

Leigha was determined to not stop there. She passed a certified billing and coding specialist course in December 2018. Today, Leigha is the breastfeeding counselor for WIC at the Galveston County Health District, making \$12.26 an hour. The counselor at the WIC office who gave Leigha the HPOG flyer is now Leigha's coordinator.

Leigha is eternally grateful for the opportunity and assistance she received and will continue to receive through the HPOG program.

This success story was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.