

## William Puller's Journey to his "NEXT STEPS"



What is it about the human psyche that gives us power to hold on? What is your motivating catalyst, force or spiritual energy which, allows you to succeed where others have given up? Some have endured hardship, tragedy, homelessness, bouts of depression and loss of family and friends. Yet it's not the tragedy that forms the essence of a great comeback. It's the tenacity, perseverance; will to win, and the triumph of the human spirit. How is this great trait cultivated or learned? The answer is simple...nurturing support and resourceful opportunities.

Through the support of UPO's visionary, Dana Jones, Next Steps Program was developed out of his continued faithfulness to UPO's mission: "Uniting People with Opportunities". **Next Steps Young Adult Empowerment**

**Program** is designed as a comprehensive multiple services, intervention, workforce development program, to facilitate the transition of youth in the foster care system into the labor market.

One of the participants in this unique program decided that he would take his life to the, **Next Step** and utilize UPO's program as a catalyst to his dream of success. William Puller started his journey in August 2012, with Next Step, by attending the workforce development 8 week workshop and seminars. Mr. Puller missed no days and arrived early each day with a positive attitude, stepping up as a leader to his peers. He embraced the fact that he would have to climb that career ladder and learn his trade from placing himself among the best. He never took his eye off of his goal and because of the programs design of placing the interns into their desired career pathways.



In October 2012, William was placed into an internship at the family owned, Ben's Famous Chili Bowl Restaurant in Washington DC's famous U Street corridor, within 3 weeks he was hired as a full-time employee at Bens Chili Bowl and Ben's Next Door Restaurant. He is praised as an "excellent" worker by his manager and co-workers and is currently being mentored by the store owner, Mr. Ali. William is setting and accomplishing his goals of gaining employment, purchasing a car in the near future, as well as apartment searching, because of a community based program that allowed him to cultivate the greatness that is inside each and every one of us.

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