



## Student Stories

### *How CATC changes lives, gives hope and opportunity*



**"I tend to have patients who are in their teens...I notice them in their room all day, no visitors and they have cancer...They start out saying 'no, I'm OK,' but then they start to let me do things...get a DVD, make a slushy. If they want 10 slushies I'll make them 10 slushies."**

**-- Miranda F., employee of the month, Cincinnati Children's,  
CATC Bridging the Gap graduate 2011**

In Miranda's neighborhood a lot of people don't graduate high school and if they do, that's often considered good enough. But Miranda watched her siblings struggle, including a sister who had a baby at 17, and she wanted to do more. So when friends said 'let's go hang out,' she studied instead, or, a star athlete, stuck by her basketball friends. She was athlete of the year--"I beat out the jocks," she grins--and graduation brought sports scholarship offers. Miranda was that good.

In a way, all that made it harder to say 'no-- not just yet' to college. Miranda was still considering what she wanted her life to be. She had completed nursing-assistant training through Bridging the Gap, the CATC workforce program, and began working full time at Cincinnati Children's. After a few months on the job she decided to join the navy. "I wanted to do nursing and also serve my country." She could travel and get help with college. Miranda began combat medical training.

But it wasn't to be. Incurable inner-ear problems emerged and forced a choice: ear health or the navy. It was a shock, but what came to mind just then was her CATC drawing instructor, Mr. Mike. He didn't like erasers, she recalls. "He'd tell us 'life isn't going to be a straight line; just keep going and make that squiggly line work.'" So now you need a plan B, she told herself. "What can I do? I'm not going to be defeated. Work harder, figure something out."

Miranda hadn't burned any bridges when she'd left Cincinnati Children's--one of many lessons she learned at CATC--and was welcomed back. She was recently named employee of the month, an honor usually reserved for higher level staff like nurses, who often ask 'you do a good job, why aren't you a nurse?' Miranda's co-workers like to follow her on shifts. "I want their shift to start out well, closets stocked, safety checks done, beds made. It won't bum me to leave 15 minutes later. "

Maybe most important, her heart is with her patients and she'll do whatever she can to make their stay as good as possible, including taking time to talk. "It's been a blessing to hear patients' stories," she reflects. "They didn't expect to get sick. I could be in a hospital room; I'm grateful for what I have." She makes an extra effort for those who have no visitors. "I notice them in their room all day, no visitors and they have cancer. They start out saying 'no, I'm OK,' but then they start to let me do things...get a DVD, make a slushie. If they want 10 slushies, I'll make them 10 slushies."

Next stop: college, and becoming a pediatric nurse. "Now that I have the working experience and have done things, I feel like I'm ready." Miranda is touring colleges and hopes to start at Cincinnati State, then switch to University of Cincinnati.