





## FROM CNA TO LPN, RCC ALUM SHIQUITA “SHANE” MCCRAE EXCELS IN HEALTHCARE

In 2016, Shiquita “Shane” McCrae of Rowland, took a leap of faith and enrolled in the Nurse Aide I program at the RCC COMtech campus in Pembroke. It was the first step in what she now calls a “new journey in life.”

“The class was originally supposed to be 12 weeks, but Hurricane Matthew disrupted everything and so we started later, and it was only 10 weeks long,” McCrae recalls. “I loved Mrs. Terry Oxendine; she was my teacher.”

Shortly after completing the course, McCrae found employment at Scotland Health as a certified nursing assistant.

“Becoming a CNA, you learn a lot,” McCrae said. “I learned how to get vitals, how to know what to listen for to get blood pressure, and how to take care of patients.”

“I loved being a CNA, you get to hold the patient’s hand, and you get to talk to them and sit beside them,” McCrae stated. “It really helped me grow personally and professionally.”

But McCrae was wanted to be able to do more.

“It was during COVID, that I was working alongside nurses as a CNA and saw how they were able to do more to help patients, and so it made me want to become a nurse too.”

“I just love to help people and to understand what is going on so that I can advocate for the patient, family, friends,” McCrae said. “My Mama was sick, and you know, you go to the doctor and you don’t really understand what is going on, and you want to be able to be there for them and help them get answers.”

McCrae’s mother died in 2020.

“She had congestive heart failure and end-stage kidney failure, just so many health issues,” McCrae remembers. “She died of a heart attack.”

“My Dad had a stroke at about the same time, suffering from deficits to his right side and he was unable to walk,” McCrae said.

Although he has recovered, her father still has some health problems.

“He’s my go-to person and he’s going to push you over the edge but in a motivational way to get you out of your comfort zone.”

“My Mama and Daddy were so proud of me when I became a CNA,” she said. “Both of my parents were an inspiration to me to become a nurse.”

Seeing the success she had already experienced with training from Robeson Community College, McCrae looked into the nursing programs that were available.

“I knew that RCC was going to prepare you for what was to come in nursing,” she said. “The reputation that Robeson Community College nursing program has in the community is that you pass state boards on the first try, so that’s why I wanted to come here.”

McCrae received her acceptance letter in May 2022 into the practical nursing program, which cleared the way for her to become a licensed practical nurse.

“When I first started, I was definitely nervous, but I was excited to embark on a new journey,” she said. “Being in the practical nursing program was definitely a learning experience.”

When Shiquita started the program, she had confidence from her years of experience as a CNA.

“I just knew I had it the first semester,” McCrae said, laughing. “I had worked in the field, and just knew what to expect, but I quickly found out that I didn’t know anything.”

Not one to give up easily, McCrae accepted the challenge and persevered through the program.

“The first semester broke me, the second semester changed me, and the third semester made me,” McCrae said.

“The first semester got me out of the mindset that I knew everything, the second semester changed my look on how to access patients, and the third semester made me the nurse that I am today,” she said. “In that last semester, they are training you for a job and there’s nobody holding your hand, they expect you to know what to do by then.”

“In the beginning, I was terrified, I’m like, what did I get myself into,” McCrae said. “But Dr. Hedgpath, she encouraged everybody in class and kept saying, you got this, you got this... so it was worth it.”

McCrae graduated from the practical nursing program in May 2023.

“I don’t know how I made it,” McCrae says. “It must have been God, it was a fight or flight, and I kept fighting for it.”

She credits her classmates and study partners, Toni and Kedsmond, for always being there for her and pushing her to keep going.

“It was just the three of us,” she said. “You definitely got to have study buddies in nursing school.”

She also says her five children – Shayla, Malaysia, Jveion, Zaylen, and Rayla – were also a source of motivation as she stayed up late many nights studying.

“My oldest was the most understanding,” McCrae says. “But they were all proud of me... Shayla would study with me and sometimes she could get the material quicker than me... she wants to go into healthcare too.”

“My co-workers, the nurses, at Scotland also helped me out,” McCrae said. “I especially want to thank Natasha, Tiexeira, and Latoscha, they become mentors to me...they listen to me even now.”

“I’ve learned that you just got to be ready, and you got to be focused,” McCrae stated.

As she completed the program, she accepted a position at Scotland Occupational Health as a Licensed Practical Nurse.

“We do physicals for new hires for different companies,” she stated. “It’s a doctor’s office.”

Since her time there, she has already made quite an impression and has already achieved many accolades including the Good Catch Award and received the Sunshine Award for being Employee of the Month.

“I knew that I was doing the best that I could do as an LPN, but receiving these awards made me like all those long nights were worth it,” McCrae said.

“Getting the Good Catch award was the best because I received it for intervening and stopping the line, which helped save a patient,” she said. “If you ‘catch’ something and stop a doctor’s path, it gives you more time to figure out what is wrong with the patient, it’s giving your recommendation to the doctor that helps change the course of medical intervention.”

“I received it during my third semester at RCC, and it made me feel like what I was getting taught was right,” McCrae stated.

“You have to be nominated to receive the Sunshine Award and be recommended by other people,” McCrae said. “So that means a lot to me to be nominated by coworkers and to be recognized on that level.”

Becoming a nurse has truly transformed Shaquita’s life in ways she never imagined.

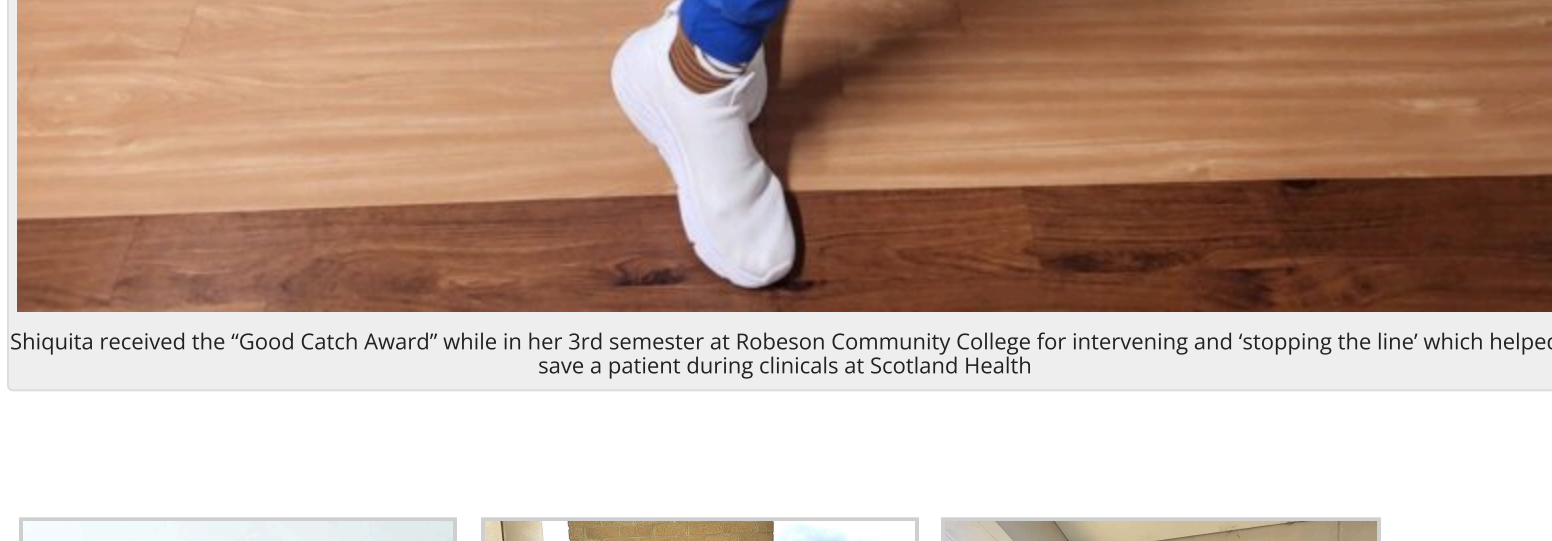
“It has helped me financially so I can better take care of my kids, but it has also motivated me to be more in the community,” she said. “I thank Robeson Community College for building a new me, a better version of me.”

With that said, she is considering coming back to RCC to become a registered nurse through the associate degree nursing program.

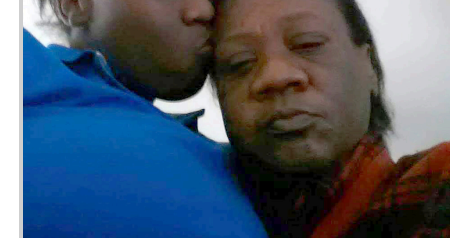
“You have to have another round in you,” McCrae stated. “That’s the next step, one more time at Robeson through the LPN to RN Bridge program... I planned on doing that and hopefully in the next year or so, I’ll be back.”

As she continues pressing forward in life, she encourages others to follow their hearts and to pursue the things that they love.

“Like I said before, stay focused, keep pushing, definitely keep pushing.”



Shiquita received the “Good Catch Award” while in her 3rd semester at Robeson Community College for intervening and ‘stopping the line’ which helped save a patient during clinicals at Scotland Health.



Shiquita with her mother before she passed away in 2020.



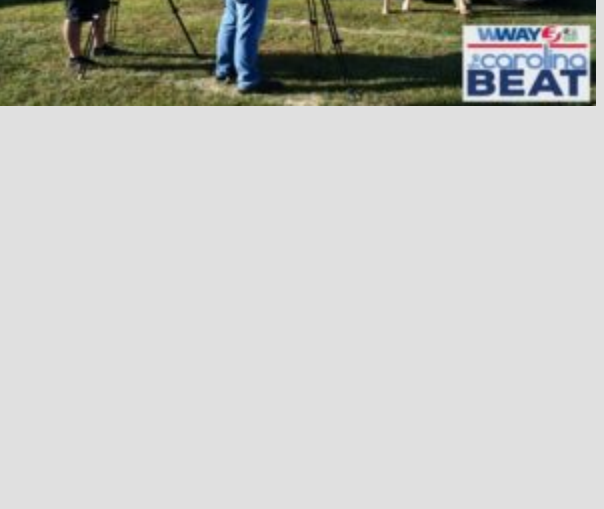
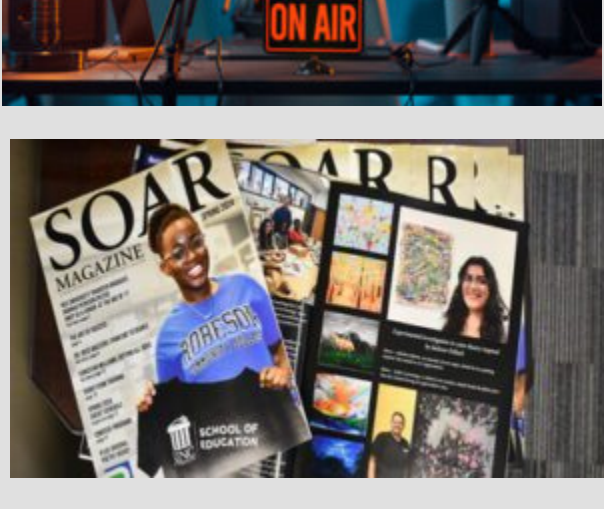
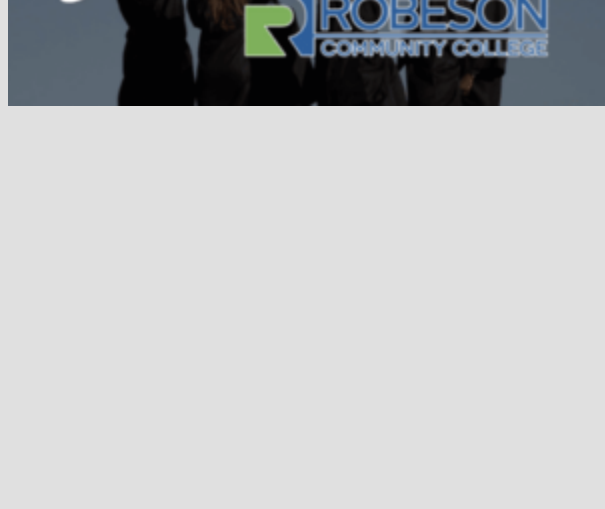
Shiquita and her 5 children, from left to right Zaylen, Shayla, Rayla, Jveion, and Malaysia



Shiquita stands with her Father and Grandmother who helped raise her after her pinning ceremony, officially marking her rite of passage into the nursing profession as an LPN.

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