

## AOK-Why AOKY?

Over the next few days, we'll be sharing information about Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky (AOKY).

# AOK Why

The biggest reason "AOK-Why" that AOKY is valuable is its benefit to students. AOKY allows GED® students to earn the credentials they need to get the careers they want – while simultaneously working toward earning their GED® diplomas. AOKY provides contextualized instruction and the wraparound services to help ensure that its participants succeed.



*GED® graduate Jacqueline Hicks (third from left) is shown at a press conference June 27 at which a new scholarship program sponsored by WellCare Kentucky was announced. Jacqueline, who was awarded a scholarship for 30 college credit hours, shared her story at the event. She is pictured with (L-R): KCTCS President Jay Box, WellCare President Bill Jones, State House Representative Attica Scott and Kentuckiana Works Executive Director Michael Gritton.*

### From GED® graduate to future MD: One AOKY participant's story

Jacqueline Hicks dropped out of high school to provide care for her ailing grandmother, the woman whom Jacqueline says "was more of a mother than her daughter, who gave birth to me." She began working toward earning her GED® diploma (as she promised her grandmother she would) a couple of times, but her own health issues and other extenuating circumstances caused her to stop.

One of the biggest obstacles Jacqueline faced was the premature birth of her son, who was born with several health complications, including esophageal atresia, radial aplasia, hypospadias, exotropia, asthma, bilateral clubbed hands, sensory issues and developmental delays.

"I have dedicated the last four years of my life entirely to aiding my son's life in any way possible," Jacqueline says. Seeing what he has gone through has only strengthened my resolve of wanting to become a pediatrician. I began working on my GED® on my own until I found the AOKY program through JCTC, which allowed me to complete my GED® and work towards certifications while in college at the same time."

Jacqueline, despite some health setbacks, says, **"Thanks to my support system and my (AOKY) advisor Gina Embry, I was not only able to complete my GED®, I also graduated with flying colors."** In addition to earning her GED® diploma, Jacqueline has also earned certification as a Medicaid Nurse Aide, as well as a Healthcare Basics Certificate.

She's not stopping there, though.

"I am currently vice president of service in Phi Theta Kappa and hold a GPA of 3.59, which I will continue to improve," Jacqueline says. "I will be taking some courses of U of L starting this fall. I am a member of ULtra, working on being able to transfer for my pre-med and MD through U of L. At the moment, I am working on obtaining an associate of science with specialty in biology through JCTC."

Jacqueline says, "For all that I've accomplished, I still have much to do, including raising my son to realize he can do anything he sets his mind to. He's the primary driving force in my life, and as with most parents, I want him to be proud of his mom and show him nothing is impossible if you're willing to work hard for it. But perhaps the most important lesson that I wish him to learn from my own experience through this journey is that he will never be alone. **To achieve greatness, you need the drive to do so, a good support group and the passion for what you are aiming to achieve.**"

Accelerating  
 Opportunity  
 Kentucky  
Education and training on the fast track

To discover more reasons AOK-Why, read KCTCS President Jay Box's [blog entry](#).

For more information about AOKY, visit [aoky.kctcs.edu](http://aoky.kctcs.edu).