Driven to succeed

Stephanie Pike overcomes a lifetime of adversity to finally graduate

By John S. Adams

When Stephanie Pike graduates with a degree in Medical Administrative Assisting this August, it will be the culmination of a long, tortuous journey, one with more heartache than most could ever endure.

Stephanie had bounced around between 13 different foster homes by the time she turned seven. She was finally adopted into a wonderful family at 10, but then her adoptive parents both died: her dad when Stephanie was 12, and her mother when Stephanie was 16. That left her no place to go but back into foster care. So she emancipated herself at 17, and lived with a friend for a while.

“My life has not been fun,” Stephanie said, but “for the most part I strive to have a positive outlook. I am definitely a survivor.”

A single mom with a full-time job, Stephanie now has two lovely children: Bella, 12; and Ethan, 7, both of whom face serious medical issues. Bella is a Type 1 diabetic and must wear a pump to help regulate her blood sugar. But the pump doesn’t always work reliably; sometimes it kinks and gets clogged and Bella goes into diabetic ketoacidosis. She’s been hosp-

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talized many times. Sometimes Stephanie must leave work to go and give Bella an insulin injection.

Ethan was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, a congenital condition where the left side of the heart does not develop normally. He has undergone three open heart surgeries (the Norwood procedure), the first at three days old, then at six months, and finally at two years, to reconstruct his heart and ensure proper blood circulation.

Despite the challenge of growing up with what is essentially a half a heart, Ethan is basically a normal kid, Stephanie says. He’s been taking karate lessons for two and a half years and is a “little dragon.” Bella also studies karate and is going for her black belt in August.

It’s hard being a single mom of two children with special needs, going to school and working a full-time job.

Finally, Stephanie is ready to graduate and get on with her life. “Most people with my past history would be spiteful,” Stephanie said. “But I want to do better. I always strive for the best.” Someday she’d like to buy a house, pay off her loans, and have a steady career so her children will look up to her. “I am a very ambitious person,” she said.

Stephanie started at Bryant & Stratton College in the fall of 2015 after transferring from a community college. She chose BSC because it gave her the flexibility to be a parent, pursue a career, and keep her job in an upscale clothing boutique.

If Stephanie has any advice to other students facing adversity, it would be this: “Pursue your dreams because anything is possible, no matter how hard your life has been.”

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Interviewing Tips from Career Services

While interviewing for a job can be challenging at times, preparation and practice can help alleviate any anxieties you may be experiencing. Be sure to research the company in advance and provide a couple of facts you learned about the company during the course of the interview. Some common questions you may face are as follows:

Tell me a little bit about yourself. (Discuss education, work history, volunteer activities, going back no more than 10 years, and career goals.)

What are your strengths? (Identify 3 and provide examples.)

What is one of your greatest weaknesses or challenges? (Identify an opportunity that you are improving.)

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? (Indicate that you want to grow and advance in the organization.)

Tell me about a time that you were faced with a difficult situation and what did you do to resolve it? (Employers want to hear about your problem solving abilities and solution techniques.)

There are additional questions available in the career center. Be sure to discuss a few projects in your portfolio as well throughout the interview. Always ask 3-4 questions about the position (not specific to salary and benefits) such as growth plans, advancement opportunities, typical day, training, software, etc.

Upcoming Events for Spring Semester

July 29
ABG Friendly’s Fundraiser
See flier page 4

July 29
Graduation Breakfast

August 13
Official Last Day of semester

September 7
Fall Classes Begin

Business club Vice President Jessica Spinali mans the club’s raffle table last week. The raffle features an outdoor camping basket which includes a BSC hoodie, snacks, bug spray and a First Aid kit, and a “Pamper Yourself” basket with lotions, make-up, nail polish and a hoodie. The raffle runs through July 28th.
Alpha Beta Gamma

is hosting
FUNraising event at Friendly’s!

Come join the fun

on Date July 29, 2016

from Time All Day

because 20% of all sales will be donated to our organization.

Come join us at:

Friendly’s Restaurant 3873 State Route 31,
Liverpool, N.Y., 13090
315-546-0217