



Youth Education Success Story by Sabina Iurillo

Working with youth can be challenging and exhilarating. As a Youth Educator at Family Transition Place (FTP), I have met thousands of young people who inspire me. These young people are on their way to adulthood. They have formed opinions, yet are still open to hearing different perspectives. In my work I have come across so many young people who

impact me and give me hope. These young people are our future, the game changers, and the policy makers.

One of the most inspirational people I have met is *Karen*.^{*} I was in her high school class delivering presentations and she stood out as a bright young woman who thrived on being educated. She was like a sponge in class just absorbing the information being delivered. I thanked her for her participation and level of engagement, and assumed I would not see her again.

One night we ran into each other while out shopping. She took the opportunity to express how important the healthy relationship program was that I was teaching and how it really made an impact on her. I relayed that I was very impressed with her. She asked if she could help out in any way and thus began a three-year volunteering opportunity. She co-facilitated groups for young females, inspiring them to be their best versions of themselves and to believe in themselves. She spoke at one of our events. She helped manage donations when it was busy. Then she was off to get her post-secondary education and I again assumed I would never see her again.

Fast forward four years later. She has graduated, she is living in the city, and she has reached out looking for volunteer opportunities. She wants to use her newfound education to try and benefit FTP and future generations.

When I think about the word hope and I think about my experiences in class, *Karen* is one of the people who comes to mind. She gives generously of her time, she is passionate about violence against women (VAW) work, she is committed to making our world a better place, and she is amazing.

Karen: I wish you all the best as you continue your new journeys in life. May you always continue to inspire people and provide HOPE.

^{*}*Name has been changed for privacy.*