



## **Irma Palencia – Outstanding Young Adult**

2016 Governor's NCWorks Awards of Distinction

Irma enrolled in Youth Works in January 2016 and began a work experience position at the Gaston County Battered Women's Shelter on March 3. Typically, young adult participants are not recommended for work experience until they have been in the program for twelve months. However, based on Irma's consistent and reliable follow through and her eagerness to explore diverse career options, her Youth Works Specialist reached out to the Gaston Workforce Development Board's Business Representative and together they worked to find a site that would provide Irma with experience and the ability to gain knowledge of one of her career interests.

While working an average of 30 hours per week at The Shelter, Irma earned her silver North Carolina Career Readiness Credential, completed her federal application for student aid, and earned her adult high school diploma. Irma has also worked with her Youth Specialist and the Basic Skills Success Coach at Gaston College to transition from Adult High School to Gaston College as a curriculum student.

In March, Irma attended the Youth Summit in Greensboro and was energized by the experience. She enjoyed meeting new people and gaining new and valuable information. She loves her work experience job with The Shelter, where she uses her bilingual skills to overcome language barriers with clients and provides service to others.

In this position, she assists with answering the Crisis Line, helps clients on site, and assists with transitioning them to independent living. Irma reports that her supervisors at The Shelter are extremely pleased with her work and are very happy she is on their staff. Cathy Cloninger, the Director of The Shelter, states that Irma is clearly dedicated to helping the residents.

She is compassionate and provides enormous support to staff, especially with her bilingual skills. "We are so fortunate that Irma was interested in working at The Shelter", said Ms. Cloninger. "When she interviewed with us, I knew right away she would be a perfect fit".

Irma is currently enrolled at Gaston College as a pre-nursing student. Her career path is a reflection of her commitment to help others.