

## San Diego Futures Foundation 2016 Success Story

Tomoree Randall's story is not the average story when it comes to recognizing the success of a student participating in SDFF's Youth IT Program, a workforce program developed to engage low-income youth in potential IT career pathways to promote sustainable living.

Tomoree entered the program in 2012 and was part of a new iteration of the Youth IT Program that has since evolved into a robust workforce program. As many programs like this begin, there were some bumps and bruises at the beginning for staff and students. In fact, many of the students who entered the program with Tomoree didn't complete the program.

Unlike many of his peers, Tomoree was determined to complete his certification and pursue a career in technology. Despite some personal barriers he was facing and the need to work full-time hours to help support his family, he was still committed to the program and his career goals.



Because of his unwavering commitment to the program, he was chosen to participate in a Computer Technician Internship with Qualcomm. This experience inspired Tomoree and confirmed his passion for becoming an IT professional. All he had to do next was pass his CompTIA A+ certification test so he could begin applying for IT jobs. Though passing a test sounds like a simple next step, for Tomoree, this was what kept him from pursuing his dream career.

Like many people, Tomoree experiences major test anxiety. During his practice tests before taking the real exam, he would pass with flying colors, but when he had to take the real thing, he just couldn't seem to pass. After a few failed attempts to pass his test, Tomoree decided to take a break from studying and focus on his full-time job at Best Buy and continue to support his family.

In October of 2015, SDFF launched its IT Professional Mentor's Program where they matched one of their youth IT students with a volunteer IT professional. Though Tomoree was taking a break from the program, SDFF staff asked Tomoree if he was interested in having a mentor. He was, so SDFF staff matched him with a Senior Computer Analyst from Hitachi Data Systems.

Having the support and encouragement of an experienced IT professional boosted his confidence and inspired him once again to persevere and make his career dreams come true.

With the support of his mentor and SDF staff, Tomoree began studying once again. He was determined to pass his test. After a few months of hard work, despite a few more failed attempts, Tomoree passed his test in June.

Since passing his test, and with the same determination he used to complete his certification, Tomoree has been interviewing with IT recruiters and applying for jobs on a daily basis. Though it has taken him some time to get to this point, his IT journey will continue, and there is no doubt in our minds he will land that dream job.