

Success Stories . . .

Rockford MELD

ROSE'S STORY

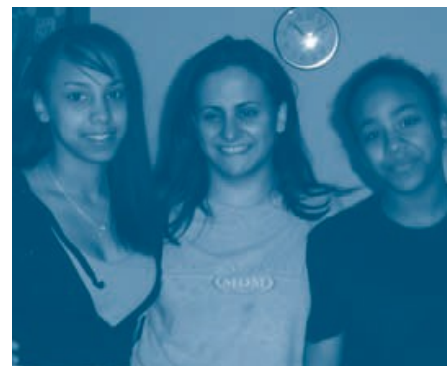
I would not be where I am today in life without the help and support of my mother and MELD. To tell you where I am now is to explain my past and I couldn't tell my story without expressing my gratitude to my mother and MELD and all the support and knowledge they provided for me. MELD is a wonderful program for young girls that find themselves mothers.

I started with MELD in 1987, I was fourteen and about seven months pregnant. I began attending the MELD Young Moms groups at a local church. Not only did MELD provide a place to meet, but a dinner each week, transportation to and from group, and childcare once my daughter was born. I was the youngest in the group, but always made to feel very welcome. This was a place I could talk with other young moms going through the same experience as me, people I could relate to, since my core group of friends at school were carrying on with their own lives, lives that didn't include pregnancy or babies.

The facilitators for the MELD support groups, women who had once been teen mothers, presented information or brought in organizations to present information to all of us. Topics included parenting, child development, employment opportunities and continuing education. I was able to build friendships, connections and references I will have for a lifetime.

MELD provided me with the tools to know that I could continue my life goals, with a young daughter at my side. I continued attending MELD groups for seven years, until I was too old to attend.

Well, I did finish high school and actually graduated one year early, with my diploma and my daughter on my hip as I walked to accept it. I attended Rock Valley College after high school; I did not graduate with a degree, but learned a lot. Although, I can't say I am a college graduate, I am a success no less. I worked hard and bought my first home at the age of twenty-one. This was a very exciting time, since I came from the Jane Adams projects. (continued on the next page)



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I am the Director of Patient Accounts and Information Technology for a local surgical group. I recently opened a medical billing company, providing services to other local physicians. I own and manage two four family rental units and am creating another company to pursue my real estate interests.

My daughter is now 20, and if you were to ask most of my work colleagues, if they knew I was a teen parent, you would get the same astonished look or comments I get, when I open up and explain how I got to be me. Most importantly, my daughter is in her junior year of college. She attends Rockford College and plans to further her education and become a corporate attorney. She has been on the National Dean's list for the past two years. She currently lives in her own apartment and works full-time, and has no children. My two younger daughters and son are active in CAPA and sports through their schools, also working towards continuing their education in college.

These children are the product of a teen parent; SEE WHAT SUPPORT AND A GREAT START CAN DO TO END THE CYCLE OF TEEN PREGNANCY. Again, I have my mother, friends, family and MELD to thank for mine and my children's success. They all played a huge part in my success and I will forever be grateful for them all.

THANK YOU MELD.



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