

# Looking At The ISSUES Stark Education Partnership

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## College "Comebackers" Say I'm Ready, and I Can Do It!

Personal achievement is the prime reason a "comebacker" returns to finish school, and supportive school faculty and staff was the top factor that helped them persevere. – New America, [The Comeback Story](#)



There are many reasons students stop out of education after high school. They include discomfort in the system; little or no guidance; lack of a goal; financial hardship; and/or a change in circumstance. Re-enrollment is not easy, but Stark County is having success through the creative approaches at our local colleges and universities. Two examples from Kent State University Stark and Stark State College are Lucas and Ashley.

Lucas started college at Kent State Stark but soon ran into rough waters when he had to find a new place to live. He left school for a year and set aside his studies as an education major. *"I've been thinking about my goal and called my advisor to say that I wanted to start again,"* he explained. *"I filled out paperwork including an essay, and my advisor told me that she thought I was ready. I am grateful for the support and financial help from Kent. I still have loans, but I am back on track and taking it one semester at a time."*

Ashley's academic path began with challenges. *"I went to college because I was supposed to, but I didn't think I was good enough,"* she explained. *"I didn't understand my studies, and I gave up."* Ashley began working and had a child. She re-enrolled as a full time student and started over while beginning a new job and caring for her daughter – a difficult pathway.

Ashley found success when her mother encouraged her to enroll in an STNA certificate program. *"I earned my certificate and found self-esteem – I can do it!"* A letter prompted Ashley's next steps on her academic journey. Stark State reached out to encourage her to enroll in the *Restart Your Career* program. *"The timing was perfect for me – I had lost my job, due to Corona, and I had the time to begin earning my Practical Nursing License."*

Stark State's financial aid and academic advising services have become vital to Ashley's comeback. *"I'm grateful for Stark State's encouragement and financial support."* Ashley is well aware of the campus services available. *"I need to move at my own pace to be successful. When I started I was afraid to ask for help. Now I know there's every reason to ask for help in order to reach my goal."*



To help adults connect with local opportunities to earn a certificate or degree, Stark organizations have engaged college and career connectors like [\[email protected\]](#) and [\[email protected\]](#).

For more details, read the recent *Issues* article [Adults Restart College and Upskill Stark County](#).

The Stark Education Partnership (a 501(c)3 non-profit organization) collaborates with education, business, civic and community members across the entire spectrum – cradle to career – to create and respond to opportunities that will provide ALL students with education and career success.

