

GRASP News

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Meet GRASP Alumna Kenneisha Edmonds

Kenneisha Edmonds

Petersburg High School
Class of 2011

Old Dominion University
B.S. in Health Science, 2016
Concentration in Public Health

Eastern Virginia Medical School
Master of Public Health, 2018
Focus on Health Promotion and Education



What is the best thing GRASP has done for you? The best thing GRASP did for me was giving the support that I needed to finish college. I cannot even begin to thank GRASP enough for believing in my abilities and helping me to achieve my goal of being a college graduate. Taking a chance on my dream helped to boost my confidence in my abilities because there were people out there who did not know me personally, but felt I had what it took to be my best self. Even though I have graduated, I looked forward to the emails and keeping in touch.

What are you doing now? I currently work as a research coordinator at the Hampton University Cancer Research Center. I find my job to be really exciting and I enjoy the ways I get to help me. I create materials that educate people on precision medicine, which involves moving away from the one size fits all model to health care to a more personalized method using one's genetic background. I am also working on a research project geared towards understanding minority men's needs in terms of taking charge of their health. I also oversee interns who help with making health posters and giveaways for our community events. Lastly, I take hard scientific data and translate it into a more easily digestible language. My work is great because as the only social scientist in my office, I get to help my coworkers under the

theories and ideologies of public health when trying to get people to make hard behavior changes. I love that I am helping people like I always planned to, but just in a different way.

What one piece of "educational advice" would you give to high school students? NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK! It is never too early to start making valuable connections that will last a lifetime. Make sure to use your network with internships, professional development, and mentorship. The one piece of advice I recently got in regards to effective networking is no matter your experience level, you always have something to offer. Don't sell yourself short as "just a student." You are so much more than that. Make sure to connect with people who also have different backgrounds and interests as well.

What is the biggest life challenge you faced relative to your educational path? The biggest life challenge I have faced during my educational path is self-doubt and fear of the future. If I am being honest, at numerous points in my educational path I doubted my abilities, cried over course grades and did not have an answer to the dreaded "What are you doing after graduation?" question. I had to learn that it was normal, I was not the only person feeling the pressure. What I had to learn was that I had to succeed on my own timeline, not compare myself to others, and not follow a path that was not my own.


What lies ahead for you? I found that in my studies and work I continue to evolve in my interests. I recently have taken an interest in entrepreneurship and would like to open a public health firm in 2020. I hope to merge my understanding of health disparities with urban planning to help design healthy communities. I would like to take it as far as getting into land development and architecture for health! I have plans for a nonprofit and podcast all geared towards community revitalization and education that I plan to roll out later this year with the right team.




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