

Stephanie Williams
January 5, 1973 – December 18, 2008

Stephanie Williams scuffled into my office at Flagler Home in July of 2008. Walking was difficult for her due to worn out hips and knees, but she didn't let it stop her. She was on a mission to make a better life for herself and her family and nothing was going to get in her way.

As I got to know her and listened to her life's story, it became clear that Stephanie was well acquainted with struggle, disappointment and grief. Life had not been good to her, but still she smiled and a sense of peace emanated from her. She found great joy in her children and was determined that her little ones would have a different life than she did.

Stephanie enjoyed making others happy and her cooking was a sure way to do that. She was a professionally trained chef and her macaroni and cheese and cornbread always drew a crowd! She also enjoyed good conversation and had the gift of being able to speak her mind without attacking other people. She spoke with conviction and strength, exasperating some and inspiring others, but always making certain that her voice was heard.

Her days ended much too early when she died at age 35 last year. Her life touched many lives but it was in her passing that numerous lives were changed. As Flagler Home clients began to process her death, they came to realize the true value of each life, the importance of living every day to the fullest and the necessity of treating others with respect, dignity and care. We witnessed a transformation as individuals were more kind and understanding to one another and seemed to appreciate the time they spent together and with their children. There was an abundance of hugs as the power of Stephanie's memory moved folks to express themselves more deeply. Her spirit lives on and all of us that knew her consider ourselves blessed.

Teresa L. Major