

# NCWorks NextGen Success Story

## DENZELL SPRUILL

Denzell began working with NextGen in August of 2013 as a Columbia High School student. Initially, Denzell had very little to say, but was always on time for scheduled meetings. His interaction during his meetings was reserved. When asked what he wanted to do after graduating from High School he would respond with multiple options as most young people do, but he seemed to be more unsure than usual of what he would be able to do because of the geographic restrictions and lack of resources, as well as his lack of confidence educationally. Denzell



attended numerous events and trips hosted by the NCWorks NextGen program and began to open up more with his Career Advisor. After graduation, Denzell was not ready to go to college and struggled to find employment in Columbia. He needed to gain employment skills which made him the perfect candidate for a Work Experience (WEX). He accepted the opportunity and began working at Stiletto's Manufacturing which is a boat building company located in Columbia and completed 400 hours with the WEX. There he learned that he had confidence working with his hands and felt that he would love doing something in that area full time, but didn't want to work at that particular location. Even after graduation and the WEX, Denzell continued to develop himself by taking advantage of the tutoring offered through NextGen program to brush up on needed skills as well as prepping for interviews. He later found employment at Food Lion in Columbia, but the work was only part-time and the pay was not sustaining. While employed there, NCWorks NextGen adjusted their policy allowing youth participants 800 hours for a WEX which gave Denzell 400 more hours to develop more employment skills. Phillip coordinated with Columbia High School's principal and set up a 400 WEX for Denzell as a School Janitor. He worked extremely hard, came to work on time, and willingly did anything asked of him. When his WEX was over, he was discouraged because he enjoyed working at the school so Phillip suggested he request to volunteer at the school while searching for other employment. Denzell wasn't allowed to volunteer immediately, but he was asked to come back during the summer to assist with cleaning. He took that opportunity and worked as if it he was a full-time employee. Just before the school year started one of the janitors was injured and a position became available. Denzell applied for this position on his own, interviewed, and was hired as a full-time employee of Tyrrell County Schools. He has been employed there for a little over a year and is still doing well and enjoying his work. If you visit the High School Denzell can be seen cleaning with a smile and is continuing to strive to achieve all that he can while overcoming barriers along the way.