

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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[Sabrina Chambers and her COHS diploma image](#)

**Libraries = Strong Communities;**

**Flexible Career Online High School Program removes barriers for adult students seeking better career options.**

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FL — 4/09/19 This week, the St. Johns County Public Library System joins libraries of all types in celebrating the many ways libraries build strong communities by providing critical resources, programs, and expertise. April 7-13 is National Library Week, the perfect week to share Sabrina Chambers' story of success.

Sabrina Chambers recalls making a few short-sighted decisions as a teenager, but one really stands out to the now 35-year-old: "I dropped out of high school thinking that I would still have job opportunities without having my diploma. Boy, was I wrong."

When Sabrina realized her mistake, she set a goal to earn her high school diploma no matter what obstacles life threw her way. Unfortunately, trying several GED and online high school completion programs made Sabrina realize that achieving this goal would be harder than she expected. Some of the programs were accredited, some were not — and some were too expensive for her limited budget.

"I could tell from the very moment I picked up the Career Online High School brochure at St. Johns County Public Library System (SJCPLS) that this would be different," said Sabrina.

And, indeed, it was.

Career Online High School is an accredited high school completion program offered by the library through a partnership with Gale, a Cengage company. The program is 100% online, and students in the program are supported by dedicated academic coaches. These coaches provide extra motivation as students work towards a high school diploma — not a GED — and a career certificate in a fast-paced, in-demand career field.

"Nelson Mandela once said, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.'" The success of our Career Online High School graduates proves this to be true," shared Library Director Debra Rhodes Gibson. "Our students have shown strength, determination and courage to complete this first step on their path to success. This program has changed their lives, and, in turn, they see and experience their worlds differently, not afraid to make their own contributions and changes."

So far, SJCPLS has seen ten students earn their diplomas and career certificates through its Career Online High School program. Some of these graduates, like Sabrina, have moved on to higher education and at least one has become eligible for a promotion at work.

“All of our students have benefited greatly from how flexible the program is,” said Michelle Kiley, Youth Services Librarian. “Many have jobs and families that they have to tend to and being able to access coursework 24/7 makes it easier to balance these competing priorities. In addition, the coursework covers many highly relevant topics — conflict resolution being one example — that can be applied on the job and in personal situations right away.”

And Career Online High School continues to become even more flexible. Not only can students transfer credits earned in core courses during high school, but a recent update to the program made it possible for students who have successfully completed part of the GED to use those credits towards their accredited high school diploma. “Just now we have a student who began her coursework four months ago and her studies are already 90% complete! This program is really removing barriers that kept our community members from realizing their educational aspirations,” added Michelle.

For Sabrina, the Career Online High School program is such a perfect fit that she’s already recommended it to several family members as well. “My mother, sister and cousin are also enrolled in the program now!” she said. “They were inspired by me earning my diploma and enrolling in college — I’m now a student at the Florida Institute of Technology, where I’m pursuing my BA in Business Administration.” Sabrina has truly leveraged her education to change her world: Her dream career in computer information systems is now reachable, and she can’t wait to leverage this interest that she’s had since her early high school days to make a better life for herself.

Sabrina added, “as my diploma hangs on my wall, I am reminded every day about the courage, strength and perseverance it represents – it’s my motivation in all I do!”

SJCPLS still has scholarships available to residents who are 19-years-old or older and able to complete a 15-question online self-assessment, participate in an in-person interview and pass a 2-week prerequisite course with a grade of 70% or higher. To get started with Career Online High School, [click here to take the self-assessment before May 6, 2019](#) or [visit the library’s website](#) for more information.

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*The St. Johns County Public Library system serves the community by providing access to technology, facilities, collections, programs and services that help people meet our mission: **Connect, Learn, Enjoy @ Your Library**. For more information on the St. Johns County Public Library System, visit [sjcpls.org](http://sjcpls.org).*