

## WISH BOOK: Mom is highly motivated for a better life

Single mom at transitional home works toward a bright future



Taylor Anderson, 23, and 3-year-old Braden take time for a photo at St. Elizabeth's Center.

NEW ALBANY — When donors tour the St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities campus, administrators show them Taylor Anderson's room.

The 23-year-old transitional program resident keeps her living quarters tidy and organized. It's a window into the life of the woman, a single mother of 3-year-old Brayden, who has already checked off several goals in her journey to a better future.

"She's a star client," New Hope Services case manager Amy Lewis said. "She really is able to multitask really well. She has a lot of things going on between education goals and childcare needs, her employment goals. There are all these facets of daily life that she's managing by herself with her little guy."

Anderson has only lived at St. Elizabeth for six months. Already she's found a job, enrolled her son in daycare and is preparing to start school at Ivy Tech Community College in January. That's a stark contrast to the life she left behind in Louisville.

"When I was living with my mom, I was just stuck," said Anderson, who speaks softly yet matter-of-factly. "I didn't know where to turn to. I was just stuck."

Anderson's mother also raised children without a father — seven of them, actually — some of whom live there still. Anderson said her mom wanted her to forge her own independent life with her son. Plus, they had their disagreements.

"There were always arguments going on, and I just didn't want my son around all of that," she said.

But Anderson didn't have a job. So, she did a quick Google search and discovered St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, a nonprofit organization that helps young mothers and expectant mothers.

"She's willing to accept help," Lewis noted. "I think sometimes that can be a real barrier to folks, but the fact that she took initiative herself to even call St. Elizabeth's all those months back ... she's eager to make a real positive change for her future."

Anderson sat on the waiting list for three months, a period during which she pondered attending culinary school at Sullivan University in Louisville. When she discovered the tuition costs, however, she decided to scrap that plan.

"The next day, St. Elizabeth's called me and said they had a room available, so we just came on over here," she said. Now, she and Brayden have their own room, their own bathroom. They only share a kitchen with one other resident. "It's made my life better," Anderson said. "It feels like a home. It's safe here."

It didn't take long for Anderson to get to work. She scored a job at the New Albany Floyd County Public Library, to where she walks when she has shifts. On Jan. 17, she will begin taking classes toward becoming a licensed practical nurse. She's also on the waiting list for subsidized housing through the New Albany Housing Authority.

Of course, not everything is easy. Anderson said getting by on one income would be "extremely hard" if it weren't for childcare vouchers through River Valley Resources that make daycare affordable.

The hardest part of her journey is "just raising him alone and trying to get everything situated and in order so we have a better life in the next few years," she said.

She's helped by the other residents of St. Elizabeth, who bond in their shared experience of motherhood. That's one of the best parts. "We all talk, everybody in the house talks about their problems, and we all get to know each other and help each other get through," Anderson said.

She hopes to eventually earn a bachelor's degree as a registered nurse and buy her own house. Brayden will attend school in Southern Indiana.

"I've been really impressed by her," Lewis said. "She has got the long-term vision. She's not just thinking, how am I going to provide month to month. She's thinking, how can I posture myself better in the long term to live a sustainable, independent, successful life for her and her son."

## **HOW TO HELP**

The best way to assist families is with a financial donation with which items will be purchased. With each of the profiles of five families being featured Nov. 28 – Dec. 2 in the News and Tribune and at [www.newsandtribune.com](http://www.newsandtribune.com) will be a list of items needed.

Donations can be dropped off at **New Hope, 1302 Wall St., Jeffersonville.**

Checks can be mailed to New Hope to that address.

Call 812-288-4304 or email [patricia\\_kitehannon@newhopeservices.org](mailto:patricia_kitehannon@newhopeservices.org) with questions.

To donate with a **credit card**, please go to [www.newhopeservices.org/donate.html](http://www.newhopeservices.org/donate.html) and designate it as a **Wish Book** donation. The deadline to donate is Dec. 15.

**PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR FAMILY NEEDS**

## **ANDERSON FAMILY NEEDS**

- Twin-sized bed for Brayden
- Tablet or laptop for Taylor's education
- Queen or twin-sized bed for Taylor
- Kitchen table and chairs
- Kitchen appliances such as a microwave
- Furniture
- Clothes (Taylor: Size 12/14 in pants, large in shirts, 8.5 in shoes;
- Brayden: 5T in pants and shirts, 9 in shoes)
- Coats
- Headphones
- Bathroom items such as towels
- TARC tickets for Taylor's education
- Tennis shoes
- Scrubs for Taylor

## **WANTS**

- University of Louisville clothes
- Blender
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toys
- Angry Birds toys
- Thomas the Train wooden train set
- Tools workshop
- Bike for Brayden
- Laptop bag
- Bean bag or couch for Brayden
- A year of service at Crossfit in New Albany

**By Elizabeth Beilman**

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