Imagine helping lead the program which change your life for the better. That’s the story of 35-year-old Kenyata Tate. Kenyata is a Birmingham, Alabama native who found herself at a crucial crossroad in life when, at age 24, she found herself as a single mother to three young children following the death of their father. For many years after his death, Kenyata searched for purpose and direction as she assumed the role of caregiver, while also being active in the US Army since 2002, being in school and working jobs which provided finances, but not fulfillment. In her own words, she was missing “purpose, commitment and leadership skills.”

Fast-forward to 2016, when a timid, soft-spoken Kenyata interviewed for an available AmeriCorps position through the YWCA Central Alabama’s *Building Communities, Bettering Lives* AmeriCorps program. She stated in her interview that she wanted to make a difference. In her two years of AmeriCorps service between 2016 and 2018 she made a difference, and so much more! Kenyata soared under the stabilizing support of AmeriCorps. She helped create and lead need-meeting programs and services for the YWCA’s *Family Resource Center*, a bustling community hub in the midst of an impoverished neighborhood. She planned initiatives, garnering dozens of volunteers to provide free dance lessons, music lessons, tutoring, gardening efforts, financial literacy support and healthy cooking lessons for children and families. She planned and successfully ran *CREW*, a workforce and life skills program for more than 25 teens each summer. She was a trusted team leader among her fellow AmeriCorps members and a media fixture who was called on to use her newly developed public speaking skills to share the good news about AmeriCorps. Kenyata was also twice selected by her peers as AmeriCorps Member of the Year. She did all of this while raising her growing, well-adjusted children, being in school nine hours per semester and being actively enrolled in the United States Army (where she served until 2017). Following her AmeriCorps service, Kenyata was selected as a United Way Loaned Executive, where she helped raise more than $38 million for Birmingham nonprofits. She received the Team Choice Award after raising $340,685. That’s not bad for a person who thought public speaking wasn’t her strong suit.

It has been an honor to see Kenyata’s spirit of service shine on her life and others. She now has a humble confidence and certainty about her value and her future. She’s a leader among leaders who’s proficient in program management, recruitment and retention, fundraising, conflict resolution and other transferrable skills.

Most notably is Kenyata’s recent career path which has taken her full-circle back to square one. Kenyata is now the Administrative Assistant for the YWCA’s AmeriCorps program. She is truly a life-saver helping keep members and the program compliant and on track. She says because of her AmeriCorps experience, serving well while facing and overcoming many challenges, she’s able to encourage with insight and empathy from both sides of the national service spectrum. Kenyata is truly amazing!