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## Mary's Shelter helps resident and new mother gain essential medical certifications needed to obtain a full-time job

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STUART – While many people are absorbed in the frenzy of holiday shopping and commercialism, it is often easy to lose sight of what the season is all about: giving, hope, support and love. The daily efforts of the non-profit organization Mary's Shelter of the Treasure Coast exemplify these core values and a recent success story is a reason to rejoice this holiday season.

Bridgette Hunter was 20 years old when she lost her father to brain cancer. The experience of caring for him during his illness inspired her to find employment in the medical field, so she obtained her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate. She powered through her grief, gained employment, and was living as an independent and self-sufficient woman. Bridgette then became pregnant and was fired

from her job.

Pregnant, unemployed and alone, she found herself sleeping on couches, essentially homeless and without any true support. She called Mary's Shelter and became an official resident on May 27, 2014.

During her pregnancy, Bridgette completed Mary's Shelter's in-house training programs, which included job readiness, bible study, financial counseling, group therapy, mental health counseling, parenting classes, breast feeding classes and other life skills training. Mary's Shelter's assistance did not end there. Bridgette was supported financially and emotionally by Mary's Shelter. The organization helped pay for her classes at Paramount Training, where she received certification in Phlebotomy, EKG and as a Patient Care Technician.

Bridgette gave birth to her daughter, Amirah, on October 7 and still resides



Bridgette Hunter, resident of Mary's Shelter holds her baby, Amirah. Bridgette recently worked hard to earn certificates in the medical field leading to full-time employment.

at Mary's Shelter. She was recently offered a job at Parkway Rehabilitation Center and is preparing to begin work as a full-time nursing assistant. Bridgette was able to get

Amirah into a daycare program at Reed Daycare Center in Stuart with assistance from the Early Learning Coalition and CareerSource Florida.

"Our hearts are warmed

by Bridgette, her beautiful daughter and her amazing story. We are happy and humbled that we were able to lift her up and contribute to her success," said Gina Thompson, Mary's

Shelter executive director. "We hope that she will continue to live here until she is ready to rent her first apartment as a gainfully employed, strong and independent woman."

Mary's Shelter of the Treasure Coast is a transitional home centrally located in Stuart, Florida that provides residential and non-residential services for expectant and new mothers who are in need of a supportive environment because of a lack of suitable housing or favorable family relationships. While caring for women in need, Mary's Shelter prepares mothers with newborns for independent living and a vision of hope for the future through empowerment, education and training. To connect with Mary's Shelter visit <http://www.facebook.com/marysshelertc>. For more information, call 772-223-5000 or visit <http://www.marysshelertc.org>.

