



BROWN MACKIE COLLEGE

SOUTH BENDSM

Founded as Michiana College

While growing up in the South Bend, Indiana area, Alyssia Collins did not have what would be called a charmed life. Her parents were divorced, her mother worked two jobs to support the family, and Alyssia helped to raise four siblings. When she found out she was to become a mother herself during her senior year in high school, Alyssia decided to take control of her life and make it better for her and for the family she loved.

“Factory work is not for me,” says Alyssia, 22, referring to the blue-collar industries that employ many people in northern Indiana. She decided to go to college, even while she was pregnant with her daughter, Hailey.

One day, after considering many colleges in the area, Alyssia and her mother saw an ad online for Brown Mackie College — South Bend (founded as Michiana College). Immediately Alyssia knew that it was her school of choice. “I was drawn to the class hours, the way the courses were set up. I would need to spend four years at the other schools, but here I could complete my degree in only two years.”

Beginning in 2001, Alyssia began her studies in the Physical Therapist Assistant program. “I have always wanted to go into the medical field, and studying physical therapy fit my dream perfectly. Plus, this college has the only Physical Therapist Assistant program in the area, so combining that with its flexible class schedule made it an easy choice.”

While taking early morning classes and raising her daughter, Alyssia worked 30 hours a week as a sales associate at a local department store. Though it seemed as if she was following in her mother’s footsteps, Alyssia was able to turn a different corner and pursue a college degree.

“Brown Mackie College — South Bend gives students like Alyssia a chance,” says Jennifer Kyser, a member of the Physical Therapist Assistant program faculty. “Our students come from many different backgrounds, and we strive to give individual attention to every single one of them. We’re a tight-knit group of teachers, and we are always there for the students.”

While studying physical therapist assisting with a focus on pediatrics at Brown Mackie College — South Bend, Alyssia started an externship at Children’s Therapeutic Services in Nappanee, Indiana. When she graduated in 2003, she was offered a full-time job at the clinic doing what she loves to do — being a physical therapist assistant — and now she has a thriving professional career after some tough years growing up.

“This college definitely changed my life,” says Alyssia. And now, armed with her associate’s degree in Physical Therapist Assistant, she is directly changing the lives of others.

www.brownmackie.edu



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1030 EAST JEFFERSON BOULEVARD, SOUTH BEND, IN 46617 574.237.0774 1.800.743.2447