

NEXUS CHAMPION

KAHLIL CALDWELL



“ Nexus changed my life, I feel much healthier now and have better behaviors. ”

Kahlil’s parents were desperate. They had enrolled him in clinical trials and weight loss camps, tried pharmacological and dietary interventions, and learned everything they could about Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS). Still, Kahlil struggled with weight gain — particularly during his first year in college.

He excelled academically, but the behavioral challenges associated with readily available food on campus took his family by surprise. He gained weight rapidly; at his highest, he weighed 325 pounds. The excess weight caused fatigue and a loss of interest in physical activities he enjoyed, such as walking, basketball, Zumba, and bowling.

“I felt unhealthy,” said Kahlil. “I wasn’t moving as much and I was more tired.”

Then his parents found the Jump Start Program at Nexus Children’s Hospital. During his two-month stay, Kahlil lost 30 pounds and improved his diabetes numbers. His positivity, tenacity, and compassion made him a role model for other residents.

“Kahlil was very committed to his goals and was an inspiration to others,” said Jump Start Program Director June Finnerty. **“He has a very motivated spirit. He set high goals for himself and demonstrated steady progress to achieve them.”**

Since returning home, Kahlil and his family have continued to implement the strategies they learned at Nexus. **“His physical activity has gone up significantly,”** said Kahlil’s mother, Celika Caldwell. **“He’s gotten back into Zumba and is working with a trainer. We weigh every day and try to follow**

the same schedule he had in the program. We also learned a lot from the nutritionist, such as the importance of keeping meals simple and not adding extra calories.”

Thanks to his fierce determination, the knowledge he gained at Nexus, and the unwavering support of his family, Kahlil now weighs 264 pounds. He is currently learning to train cats and dogs through a program at the Montgomery County Animal Society — a natural fit given his love of animals and aptitude for nurturing others. The behavioral management strategies he learned at Nexus have also allowed him to interact with his girlfriend, Bella — whom he affectionately calls his beautiful future wife — in a healthier way. Both Bella and Kahlil’s younger sister, Kendi, are immensely proud of his achievements.

“Jump Start gave our family the knowledge, guidance and confidence to support Kahlil’s journey to being healthy,” said Leon Caldwell, Kahlil’s father.

Kahlil agrees — Nexus provided he and his family an invaluable opportunity to recalibrate his relationship to food and exercise.

“Nexus changed my life,” said Kahlil. **“I feel much healthier now and have better behaviors. I loved being at Nexus and wish I could have stayed longer.”**



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