



PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF FOR EMPLOYEE

When Ebony thinks about the best job she's ever had, all she has to do is think about the next workday, when she will again start her day as a custodian.

She loves that it's full-time and brings in a steady income, and she loves the environment, meeting new people, and making new friends. The job is comfortable and satisfying, and at the moment, the 32-year-old Maryland woman couldn't imagine doing anything else

But that wasn't always the case.

Ebony started working on a Chimes contract in August 2014. Prior to working at Chimes, Ebony had done warehouse work, said her employment specialist with Rehabilitation Opportunities Inc. in Lanham, Maryland -- an agency like Chimes that provides employment support to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Ebony was not used to the bending and other physical aspects of janitorial work. For the first couple of months, even though it was only part-time, the job seemed impossibly hard.

"In the beginning, she was like, 'I don't know if I can do this,'" recalled Cassandra Coates. "There were times when she had little episodes of crying, and she really

wanted to quit.

"But I was like, 'No, you can do this.' And she did -- to the point where she adapted so well and did such a good job, they decided to put her in the day care center working full-time."

Ebony, who lives in Greenbelt, Maryland with her mother and sister, smiles now at the memory. "I pushed through," she said.

She's happy she did, and so are the folks she works along side. "Any of her supervisors will say she's an excellent worker," Coates said. "She's dependable, always comes to work, the staff at the day center loves her. There are no complaints."

Not that work is Ebony's whole life. She expects to start studying at Prince George's Community College soon, and enjoys weekend outings with her mother, sister or friends to go shopping, eat at restaurants, or take in movies. (Her favorite genre: "Funny movies.")

Oh, and she's also engaged to be married!

She leads a full life, and it's gotten fuller with a full-time job that took a lot of perseverance to earn and succeed at, but one she is elated to have.

"I just want to keep doing what I'm doing," she said.