



Mrs. Candice Staton is the owner and director of Guilford County Youth Academy. Guilford County Youth Academy is a daycare program the Mrs. Staton created from the need of affordable childcare. Mrs. Staton was pulled out of Dudley high school when she had her son at the age of 15 in 2001. However, that did not stop her from attending Guilford Technical Community College, where she earned her High School Diploma in 2002. Mrs. Staton continued her studies in Computer Science at Bennett College from 2002 until 2004. At the time, the job market for the skills she obtained was in low demand which pushed her to find another solution. She decided to go the Carolina Beauty College in 2004 until 2005, when she decided that cosmetology was not something she wanted to pursue. Mrs. Staton went back to Guilford Technical Community College and enrolled in the Business Administration program in 2008. She did not like that program either and stopped in 2009. Mrs. Staton was final able to find a program that answered her higher calling, helping people. She enrolled in a Criminal Justice program at Strayer University in 2010 and earned her Bachelor in Arts in Criminal Justice in 2014. Mrs. Staton became certified in Peer Support in 2021

Through the ups and downs of her academic journey Mrs. Staton is what you would call an ambitious person. She was not hesitant to explore options. She also did not settle and kept going until she found herself and what she's passionate about. Her attitude was one of the best attributes in her entrepreneurial journey. I see was someone that did not want to settle with something that did not make her happy or help her fulfill her purpose.

Mrs. Staton first job was at Infonxx, an information technology and service company located in McLeansville, for about six months in 2005. She left there and began working at AT&T in 2005 and stayed with them until 2017. During her time working at AT&T, Mrs. Staton started a non-profit called the Stanton Family Foundation in 2013. The Stanton Family Foundation was founded with her siblings John and Ronnie. The Stanton Family Foundation focuses on supplying resources for underserved communities. They are committed to breaking the cycle of poverty with a focus on youth development. After leaving AT&T in 2017, Mrs. Staton began working at the Register of Deeds and she continues to work there today to help supplement her income. In 2018, she also began working at the City of Greensboro Library. In 2020, while working at the library one evening, Mrs. Staton was having a conversation with her new manager, and he asked her what she wanted out of life. She told him about her program, and he gave her the push she needed to act. He told her to stop procrastinating and being afraid. After consulting with her husband and being assured that he would have her back in her venture, Mrs. Staton decided to finally take the leap of faith. The journey for Mrs. Staton to start her business was not an easy one.

In 2014, Mrs. Staton gave birth to her youngest child and felt that was a setback. In 2016, she was denied funding to start her business. She was told no and to revamp her business plan because the investor's wanted to control her vision. Mrs. Staton suffered a significant personal and financial blow in 2018 when she became a single mom and had to file for Chapter 13 bankruptcy. About a year later she became the caregiver for her mom when she became ill until she passed in 2019. It was during this year, where Mrs. Staton decided to work on her business plan and became more serious about getting started. She credits the hardship of being a single mother, making too much money for assistance, but not enough to place her children in a quality childcare program, for the purpose of creating her program.

The Guilford County Youth Academy is an after school, weekend drop in, and summer camp program. It goes against the traditional format of daycare. Mrs. Staton's vision is to create an environment where children can express themselves freely without restriction. They are allowed to flourish emotionally and psychologically. The program teaches children how to be aware of themselves and their emotions. Children develop skills that will follow them through life such as, community building, communication skills, coping skills, confidence building, and much more. The program also offers a virtual learning hub. Mrs. Staton saw a need and supplied a solution. She overcame obstacles, including her own self doubt to bring a revolutionary childcare curriculum. When she first opened her doors in 2021, she did not enroll her first child until a month later. That exemplifies staying positive when results are not immediate, is rewarding. We live in a world now of instant gratification and it is refreshing to see that there are still people that are patient and trust the process. She lost friends along the way but is now viewed as resourceful and motivational by community members that appreciate her vision. Mrs. Staton is the personification of Gumption.