

Aims Purpose Laudable Unremitting Strength

A-PLUS African American Postal League United for Success

This is the first in what will be a series to Highlight A-PLUS members' stories of Successful AIMS and PURPOSE.

LAURA DANIELLE

Laura Danielle has spent 27 years at the USPS, the last 14 of them in a support function for Tennessee District. After entering as a clerk at the Chattanooga Remote Encoding Center (REC) and moving to the plant as a clerk, she transitioned to Complaints & Inquiry Clerk in 2008 and later to Contract Technician for Finance, working in Nashville. She was also attending school for Paralegal Studies, as she had her eye on the USPS Law Department, and applying for a spot there when the time was right. An on-again, off-again member of Nashville Chapter, she finished school this year and was ready to make her move.



First stop: Milwaukee for the A-PLUS National Convention. "I got serious this year, and I knew I was ready to advance," she says. "I needed to take some action, so the convention was perfect timing."

She participated in Spotlight on You, and got some great feedback on her eCareer and HERO Profiles while networking with members and others. She found that when she voiced what she wanted to do, there were people willing to help her achieve her targets. A job she wanted became vacant during the convention and she asked for help with her eCareer; she got it and the process to promotion was on.

"Without A-PLUS and Carl helping me with my KSAs, reviewing and redlining them, taking me under their wing, preparing me for the journey," says Laura, "I wouldn't have gotten as far as I did, with my application, interview, everything." And how far did she go? "I got promoted to a level 15 Legal Administrative Assistant for the U.S. Law Department, in the Centralized Distribution Office based in Atlanta. I moved from Nashville and I was so ready for it!"

She's been in the job since August 15. "I feel like it was made for me," she says, "I work with a great team, they're very helpful and accepting, I fit in right away." She recently attended the Southern Region Conference in her new city, canceling plans for a conflicting event to be with her black and gold family. "I've got much love for A-PLUS, this is where I needed to be."

All members are invited to submit stories of members' successful

AIMS and PURPOSE. Submit to: easternregsec16@gmail.com

#MakingTheCase #AimandPurpose #TelltheStories



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Bianca Simmons has had an interesting and somewhat adventurous career at USPS. In 2016, after years in the tech industry, she started as a PSE in Greensboro Post Office. Her first career appointment was as the secretary for the District Finance Manager two years later.

That position exposed her to virtually every function in the district. One function she saw daily was Information Technology (IT), as she worked with numerous applications regularly. And from her years working as a contractor before USPS, she saw some glaring weaknesses in the district's webpage and

shared her thoughts with the IT manager. To her surprise, he accepted her feedback and even allowed her to help his department improve some functionalities of the site. Her acumen with the applications got the attention of the Operations Support department, which offered her a detail as an Ops Specialist in 2019. The following year, she was promoted to that same position.

When USPS restructured, Bianca landed in Virginia as the level 18 Postmaster in Spencer. There she found a network of helpful clerks, postmasters and other employees who "had each other's backs" and learned her job quickly. However, she always kept her eye on jobs in IT, but in applying had been told to "only use examples from your time in the field." The technical requirements of the jobs she was attracted to made it difficult to fit her PO experience in, but she did as she was told. Alas, she got very little attention.

However, she did get the attention of A-PLUS member Cynthia Coles, another PM in VA, who saw Bianca's potential and talents and sponsored her as a member in her chapter, Triad in Greensboro, and things started happening.

"Before A-PLUS I just couldn't crack the code," she said. "A-PLUS helped with everything; they made me focus, make my points on the application clearer, and basically told me what the rules were. I needed that because I wasn't following them." In addition, Triad put her in touch with Debra Clayton, Triangle Chapter member and recent retiree from the Information Technology Service Center (ITSC) in Raleigh, which posted many of the tech-type jobs Bianca was applying for. Debra provided invaluable guidance and opened her network of IT professionals to Bianca, which reinforced that she was on the right track.

By now a level 18-B PM in Pelham, Bianca attended the regional conference in Virginia Beach. About a week after the conference, she got the call: she was promoted to the level 21 Network Architect position.

"The best advice I have received was when I was a PSE and thinking about quitting," says Bianca. "A newly converted clerk told me, 'Don't make a long-term decision based on short term circumstances.' No truer words have ever been spoken. If you want to make a career change, then go after it. But realize and be accepting of the fact that your opportunity may not come when and how you envision it. Just know that it is coming!"

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PATRICE JOHNSON

Patrice Johnson has been in the Postal Service for 26 years so she knows a thing or two about details and promotions. She also knows about being mobile and relocating; she's been in at least seven districts in her career, and she's returning to one of them for the most recent promotion she earned: an MDO job, one that she's always wanted, in Atlanta, GA.

Patrice spent her early years in Chicago, entering USPS as a Mailhandler in 1996 and Chief Union steward for the Mailhandlers Union, before transferring to Houston in 2012. She also received her Master of Science in Counseling & Human Resources from National Louis University, Chicago

in 2011. She is also a certified sexual assault crisis counselor- for rape victims. She interned as a Cook County Probation officer in Chicago, IL. After receiving her master's degree, she worked part time as a counselor with Ex- Felons - providing therapy for them and their families as a part of their mandated probation requirement.

Patrice was afforded many details while working in Houston. In 2016, the year after joining the local A-PLUS chapter, she got her first promotion as an SDO. She spent the next several years on several details in numerous districts – Atlanta, Florida, New Orleans, Macon, GA and Alabama. In March 2019 she was awarded her first Manager's position as a level 19 MDO in Florida. In July 2020 she was awarded Manager, Business Mail Entry in Alabama. She lost her position due to the USPS reduction-in-force (RIF); and accepted a job as Sr. Employee Development Specialist, level 19, in Louisiana District in 2021.

Meanwhile, she was picking up valuable career tips in A-PLUS. "I went to the convention in Philly in 2017, and in a workshop learned about the new program coming out called HERO," she says. "They said it would be the next big thing, so when it came out the next year, I completed it right away and got selected to participate in a district program. It turned out I had a First-Class HERO Profile even before they were calling it that!"

Fast forward to the national convention in Milwaukee earlier this year, when Patrice participated in Spotlight-on-You, and after sharing her goal to be a plant manager, she was pulled aside by one of the panelists, A-PLUS Eastern Region VP Howard Patterson. "He said for me to get more consideration, I should change the format of my application in certain areas, like my job descriptions," Patrice recalls. "Once I did, I started getting interviews for the higher-level jobs I was applying for. It didn't seem like much, but it helped."

And today? "I'm about to start my new position at North Metro (GA) P&DC as a level 24 Lead MDO!"

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Demetria and Latrice Holmes

It's always a fun story to hear about the journey some people take to advance their careers, and even more so when A-PLUS influenced it. When it happens with two sisters, and nearly simultaneously, then the fun quotient goes to a different level. Case in point: the recently promoted sisters, Latrice Holmes and De'Metria Holmes.

After years in the Energy business, Latrice joined USPS in 2014 in Columbus, OH as a mailhandler assistant (MHA) at the plant and was promoted to a Supervisor Distribution Operations in 2017. Always the

ambitious type, she sought and was selected for detail opportunities in Columbus as an Attendance Control Officer (ACO) in 2020, and later that year in Columbus P&DC and Detroit P&DC as a Network Specialist. As an ACO she joined the Cincinnati/Dayton Chapter, and soon after arriving invited her sister De'Metria to join. De'Metria was a PSE in Louisville P&DC and became a member with her sister in Ohio.

"A-PLUS showed me how much excellence there is in the organization, and I was impressed to see it all together at one time, and how it had members reaching back to elevate others," said Latrice. "I'd chartered a similar chapter while working in Energy before USPS, so it resonated with me. Plus, I knew that even though I was having fun on these details, I was still a level 17 – that had to change. I needed a job that gave me a greater challenge and a higher level!"

Latrice attended the A-PLUS national convention in Milwaukee in May 2022 and was hooked. She networked, participated in Spotlight on You, and shared her career goals with many of the executives and other attendees there. Within a few short months, Latrice was promoted to Manager, Distribution Operations (MDO), level 19 at South Bend (IN) P&DC.

"In Milwaukee I found my tribe and it is awesome!" says Latrice excitedly. "I was networking with likeminded individuals, met members who I had only engaged with via Zoom chapter meetings, and reconnected with other members that I trained and worked with cross-functionally. I have done the work and A-PLUS is an outstanding organization for mentoring and coaching for advancement."

De'Metria had joined USPS in November 2019, and by March 2022 was an acting supervisor at Louisville P&DC. In part from her sister's encouragement, she began leveraging her A-PLUS membership to network with other members to enhance her eCareer profile. In doing so, the members she spoke to encouraged her to keep applying, and to not be satisfied with being a good craft employee.

Demetria and Latrice agreed to attend the Eastern Region Conference in September. Before going to Virginia Beach, and after submitting several applications, Demetria got the word: she was promoted to Supervisor, Distribution Operations (SDO) at the Southern Maryland P&DC!

"A-PLUS is an awesome organization to be a part of," she says. "You get to meet so many good people who want to make a change, and who want to show you that the opportunities at USPS are endless."

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SHARON DOUGLAS

Sharon Douglas is a postal employee of 30+ years who spent most of her career as a clerk at Roswell (GA) Post Office. She spent many of those years longing for the chance to do something different, to apply her skills in a different function basically, to expand her horizons away from Roswell. However, she found it tough to find opportunities outside of her office for various reasons, or to find support to point her in the right direction - any direction - to try something new.

She did, however, find out about A-PLUS, and joined the Atlanta Chapter in 2015. After attending meetings and seeing

others succeed, she decided to attend the National Convention in Indianapolis in April 2018 and participated in her first Spotlight on You session. And while the session did not produce an immediate job offer, it impacted her in other ways.

"Doing the Spotlight on You gave me the confidence to step out of the shadows, and to introduce myself to people I wanted to work with," she says. "I started to show up more often where I can be seen as someone who is serious about her career."

Later that year, at the Southern Region conference, she did the Spotlight on You again, this time in front of the HR Manager, who decided then that he wanted her on his team - and soon after she got her first detail opportunity as an Acting Training Technician, level 7. Two years later she became an official Training Tech in Atlanta. Her role in that function gave her exposure, opportunities to meet others, and assignments to stretch her skills and abilities to handle almost any tasks. It led her to a promotion in March 2022 to her current job as a level 17 Business Services Network Rep in Atlanta.

"I'm very thankful for A-PLUS," says Sharon. "The many trainings, conferences and networking opportunities have proven to be invaluable. I'd be remiss if I did not give special thanks to Carl Walton, A-PLUS Eastern Region President.

"To Carl ... You've been a fantastic mentor; an integral part of my elevation. You have inspired and motivated me during difficult times, when I needed words of encouragement and support the most. Thank you for your guidance, words of wisdom and kindness. I value your insight and input, even to this day. Thanks for offering a non-judgmental listening ear and for your patience, useful advice, and positive attitude. I admire your dedication to A-PLUS and your commitment to helping others to be the best that they can be, and I look forward to seeing where you will help to lead this great organization."

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A-PLUS MISSION

The mission of A-PLUS is to promote the goals of the United States Postal Service, unify and mentor African-American PCES, EAS and craft employees and to monitor the statistical progress of minorities in hiring, promotions, separations, details and assignments while forming beneficial alliances with members of the Heritage Coalition and organizations such as the NAACP, LUNA, corporate sponsors and other supporters.





PURPOSE

The purpose of A-PLUS shall be:

- A. Promote the goals of the United States Postal Service in the economical and efficient delivery of products and services in a safe manner.
- B. *Mentor* and train African-Americans and others.
- C. Support and assist in developmental opportunities for career and personal advancement.
- Develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of the United States Postal Service's African-Americans and others.

- E. Unify African-Americans and others into a cohesive and responsible voice of consciousness in the United States Postal Service.
- F. Serve as a networking vehicle for African-Americans and others in the United States Postal Service.
- G. *Foster* communications among the members of the organization and the United States Postal Service.
- H. Foster partnerships within the African-American and other communities.
- Monitor the statistical progress of African-Americans and others in hiring, training, promotions, separations and detail assignments















Does the ELEVATOR PITCH offer SOLUTIONS?



LEADERSHIP

- Inspire People Empower People Shared Vision

- Lead Change

2023 Goals





(3)





Occupation Factors Work Professional Successful Education Development Career Professional Coaching Experience Ching Experience Ching Experience Competency Experience Competency Experience Ching Experience Competency Experience Competency Experience Ching Experience Competency Experience Ching Education Motivation Progress



Additional stories of AIMS and Purpose are welcome. Submit to:

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