

Student Speaker Kesha Westbrook

Kesha Westbrook is graduating from the College of Southern Nevada with an associate degree in General Studies. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's in social work at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, with plans to apply for its advanced-standing master's in social work program. She is honored to be chosen as CSN's 50th anniversary student commencement speaker.

Kesha, a veteran, a cancer, and stroke survivor, has overcome many challenges to achieve her educational goals. She was introduced to her life's new purpose by CSN's Prison Education Program while incarcerated for a financial crime. Upon her release in 2019, Kesha enrolled in on-campus classes. She credits the Prison Education Program with giving her hope during the darkest time in her life, and actively advocates for it on and off campus.

Kesha feels a responsibility to share her story to show through action that rehabilitation does really happen and to help others release their guilt and shame. If sharing her story helps to empower just one other person, then putting herself out there was well worth it. Kesha says she is not the person she used to be. She absolutely refuses to be defined by a past bad decision or to let it color the rest of her life. She took responsibility for her actions and successfully served her time. She believes that it is time to move forward with her life and accomplish great things in the world.

Kesha is extremely grateful for her experiences at CSN and to the people who believed in her and supported her in achieving her goals. She is excited to pursue her passion for social work, advocacy, and social justice reform.

When Kesha is not immersed in her studies, she spends her time raising her youngest daughter and volunteering in the community. She currently has an internship with the Mass Liberation Project, she collects food, clothing and supplies for distribution to the homeless or victims of domestic violence, and she has worked with the Nevada Prison Education Project for the past 3 years.

Kesha wants to use her education along with the lessons she learned through overcoming many personal struggles to make a positive impact in the lives of others and the community. She plans to stand in the gap for others, the way someone once stood for her. Kesha aspires to continue her journey of becoming a woman and leader that CSN, her community, her parents, mentors, friends, and especially her two beautiful daughters can be proud of.