

#GetaHeadStart: Dr. Bernadine Futrell

[Music]

Dr. Bernadine Futrell: The classroom had a bright blue carpet and like little bookshelves. Everywhere.

You never know when your moment will come. You just have to be ready to grab that opportunity when it opens up. For some, that moment is when others take a chance and open a door, welcoming a future that otherwise may never have been possible. And at that moment, our world changes. It did for me.

I grew up on a small farm in Emporia, Virginia. But my mom and dad had some challenges and then separated. We showed up at my grandparents' house in the middle of the night and said, "Hi, Grandma and Grandpa. We're moving in. We're here. And we're part of your life now."

But around 4 or 5, my mom started to be more sick. My sister got an invitation to get me enrolled in Head Start. I love my sister. I feel like she is my guardian angel. When my grandfather passed away, she was the primary caregiver for all of us.

[Clip begins]

Is this pizza?

Superintendent: This is cheese.

[Clip ends]

Dr. Futrell: I'm Dr. Bernadine Futrell, and I started here in a Head Start center in Virginia, where I grabbed my moment, going on to help others grab their moments. I became a Head Start teacher because I want to change the world, and I want to be a part of the solution.

Families experiencing homelessness, they can enroll in Head Start and get connected, and then you see it and you can feel it. And you know that the kids going to live better for it.

And now, I am the director of the Office of Head Start, where we serve over a million children and their families every year. That's quite a few moments so that other leaders can grow up and build back America, one community at a time. Those moments add up to something bigger than ourselves.

[Clip begins]

Dr. Futrell: Brown bear, brown bear. What do you see?

Student: It's so giant.

Dr. Futrell: And what is this?

[Clip ends]

Dr. Futrell: Bringing more of our children into a cycle of learning so they can become our future leaders.

[Clip begins]

Dr. Futrell: Can we all give your teachers a big hand and say thank you?

[Clip ends]

Dr. Futrell: And make America's moment. Our moment.

[Clip begins]

Dr. Futrell: Do something fun.

Students: Bye!

[Clip ends]