It's been a busy summer for Dawn Loggins. Working as a custodian at Burns High School in North Carolina, where she graduated this past spring, the 17-year-old is saving money for Harvard. She plans to study biology or maybe biomedical engineering.

"When I visited Harvard, I liked it. That's why I decided to go there," she said. "I feel like every college student is excited to begin college."

Every student entering Harvard probably feels that way, too, but it's exceptionally exciting for Loggins as her dorm room will be her official home.

You see, this bright, college-bound young student is technically homeless. Luckily, she was able to finish her senior year in high school by living with a school bus driver whose daughter is a friend to Loggins. After learning about her situation, Sheryl Kolton offered her home so Loggins could finish her last year and begin the next stage in her life.

"I was glad to live with Sheryl because it enabled me to continue going to school and working. It gave me the opportunity to succeed because I had stability," Loggins said. "I stayed there when school started and I'm still staying here so I can continue to work."

And it wasn't just Kolton who helped out. From teachers to local businesses — Loggins even received free toothpaste and toothbrushes from a local dentist — most who learned of her situation, responded with clothes, money, a ride to school or a place to sleep.

Loggins being accepted to Harvard despite experiencing numerous setbacks throughout her life, including being homeless, made media headlines in the spring.

Upon returning from a prestigious academic program during the summer, she discovered that her parents had left the state, and they didn't tell her where they were. She ended up staying with different friends until she received an offer by Kolton.

With her job at the school as a custodial aid, Loggins would ride with Kolton on her bus to school early in the morning. She then would hitch a ride home from different people once her

shift ended. She rode the school bus off and on during high school, but stopped after being harassed by some students.

“During my sophomore year I stopped riding the bus and started walking 45 minutes home vs. seven minutes it takes on the bus,” she said. Even her school bus memories from middle school were bad ones, as children would ridicule her about her personal appearance and living conditions.

Yet the hardships never stopped Loggins from focusing on her education. In fact, they motivated her even more to study so she could make a better life for herself. “It was difficult in many ways, but knowing that I needed an education is what kept me motivated,” she said.

Loggins added that she isn’t upset at her family for leaving her behind. She understood their circumstances, and does communicate with them. In talking with this soft-spoken young woman, it was evident that her driving spirit was not shaken by the unfortunate circumstances in her life.

And Loggins represents hundreds of thousands of students who are homeless in this country and are doing what it takes to complete their K-12 education. At the recent STN EXPO held in late July in Reno, Nev., student transporters discussed the growing number of homeless students who are bused to and from school.

One transportation supervisor noted that she’s seen a rise in homeless students of middle-class families who now live with relatives, at motels or in their cars. As these students move around, they cross district lines, and some school districts begin to argue over which entity pays for the cost of transporting them.

Regardless of who pays, transportation officials at the show agreed that they must always say yes to bussing these students, then ask questions later.

Who knows, they could be transporting many other smart and college-bound Dawn Loggins with a bright future ahead of them.

We wish Dawn the best of luck.