

My African American Heritage, My American Dreams

By M. Williams

2016 Stipend Awardee

My name is Miracle Williams, and I am writing to say thank you in advance for the Migration Heritage Foundation to help pay expenses for my upcoming college tour. As a high school student, I always had the dream of becoming a teacher and working for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.(DCFS). As a young African American woman from Chicago's west side, I learned many lessons about my heritage and background that will help me reach my future goals.

Living on the west side, I faced many struggles. For example, gun violence, but that still didn't stop me from becoming a strong Black women. I have many role models, for example, Ms. Totty and Ms. Gist. Ms. Totty faced many struggles in college, but that didn't keep her from becoming a strong Black women. Ms. Gist didn't push herself enough in high school or didn't have teachers to hold her accountable for the things she did, but that still didn't keep her from becoming the strong woman that she is, a woman with very high expectations.

Growing up, I always thought it was my mission to help others, specifically children. I never really had anyone to teach me right from wrong. When I was in the 6th grade, I always took school as a joke until one day my teacher told me, "Miracle, you'll never be anything! Suspended again, Miracle? Going down the path, you are you're not going to make it to 12th grade. You'll be in jail by 9th grade." That's what made me believe I wanted to become a teacher and a DCFS worker. Just by those words, I had to prove my 6th-grade teacher wrong. As a teacher, I could help other children who were in the same predicament. I know that they could be anything they wanted to be in life. I always told myself I would never let my struggles determine who I am or what I will be in life.

When I came to Butler College Prep during my freshman year, I realized that I had to "keep on pushing," and I had a lot more fun and pushing myself to become a teacher and a DCFS worker Butler has allowed me to be surrounded by so many positive people. I had no other choice but to push myself. It was also at Butler that I met two wonderful women by the name of Ms. Gist and Ms. Totty, both of whom encouraged me and told me to not to let my struggles and situations stand in my way. They said, "trust me everything will get better."

Ms. Totty, Ms.Gist, and many of the other staff members at Butler are the reasons I accomplished so much and want to pursue my dreams. Look at me now; doing better than ever, from D's and F's to A's and B's! From principal office meetings to college tours. From crying because I thought I did not know anything to laughing because am happy to be 18. I learned never to have someone else make up your mind for you, always go for what you want and never stop. Everyone has a purpose in life, don't let yours go to waste.

I am excited to be a part of the class of 2017. It took a lot to get to where I'm now, from crying to late nights, up studying for a test so that I could become that teacher and work for DCFS.