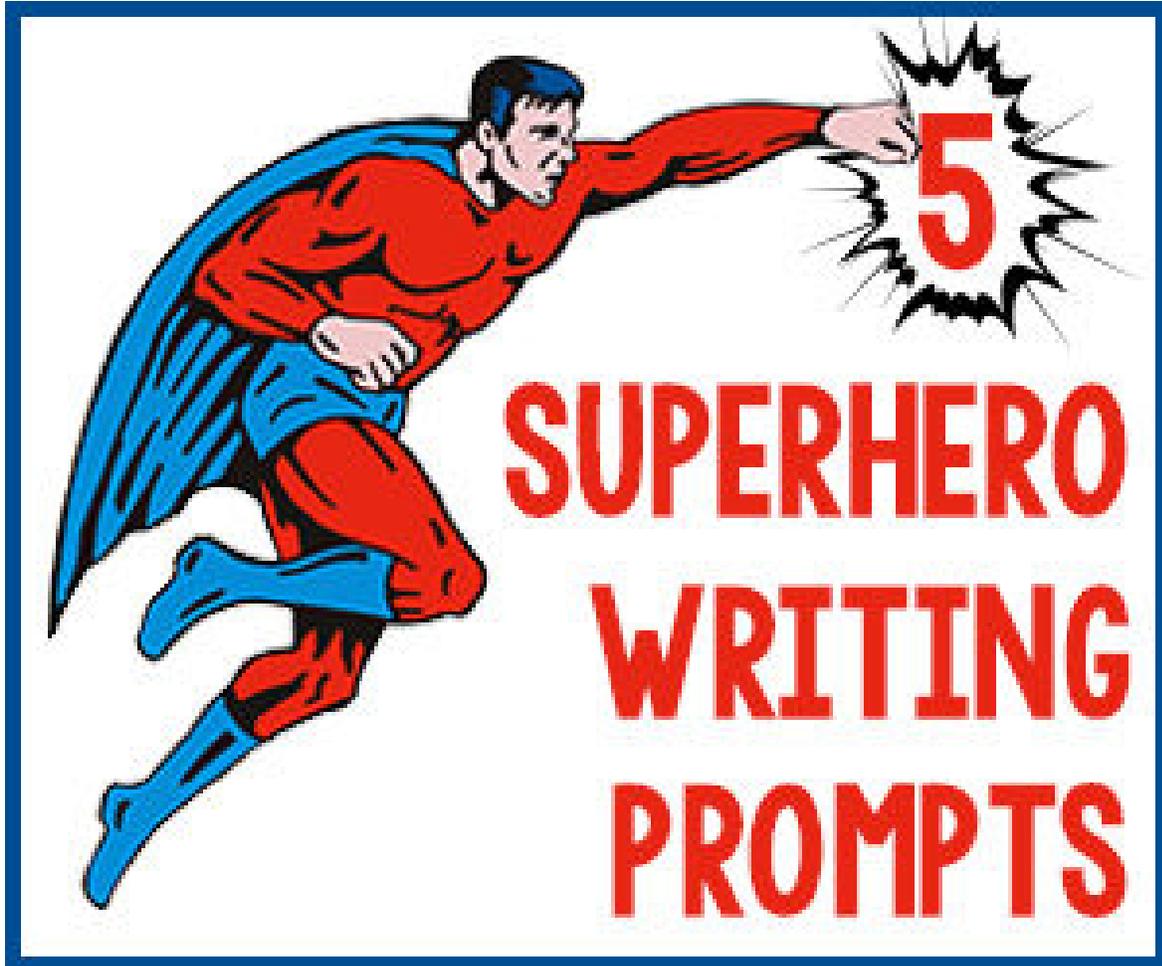


AS I SIT HERE ON A HAZY, BUT RAINY SUNDAY MORNING, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK OF THE MANY BLESSINGS THAT WE HAVE HERE AT CLEVELAND CENTRAL CAHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL. TUESDAY OF THIS WEEK WILL BE THE LAST DAY FOR THE SENIOR CLASS AND THEY HAVE REMINDED ME EVERY SINGLE DAY, SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, ABOUT ALL OF THOSE BLESSINGS I MENTIONED IN THE FIRST SENTENCE ABOVE. THIS CAULDRON MAGAZINE IS A REMINDER OF THE BLESSINGS THAT WE HAVE, THE ONES WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WE HAVE AND THE ONES THAT ARE ON THE WAY THIS VERY SECOND. I AM HUMBLD TO BE A PART OF THIS GREAT SCHOOL, THESE AMAZING, TALENTED INDIVIDUALS THAT I GET TO CALL, "MY STUDENTS" AND "MY FAMILY." THESE SELECTIONS ARE REMINDERS OF THOSE BLESSINGS WE HAVE IN OUR LIVES AND THE BLESSINGS WE HAVE EVEN WITHIN THE STRUGGLE OF OUR LIVES. AS I LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW OF MY CLASSROOM IN ROOM 301, I SEE A LANDSCAPE OF DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND, I SEE THE TREES IN FULL BLOOM AND I SEE PROGRESS AND BLESSINGS THAT SEEM TO FILL THIS ENTIRE ROOM AND SCHOOL WHEN OUR STUDENTS ARE HERE. TAKE A LOOK INTO THE MANY BLESSINGS OF OUR STUDENTS WHEN YOU READ THESE SELECTIONS AND LOOK INWARD TO SEE THE MANY BLESSINGS YOU HAVE.....

IT'S YOUR WORLD.....PAY ATTENTION

BLESSINGS TO ALL OF YOU.... MR. ROCK

The Writing



Jason Alexander

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Adopted Boy Catastrophe

“ Everything negative - pressure, challenges - is all an opportunity for me to rise.”

-Anonymous

In my life, I've dealt with and have been through a lot of obstacles. At 18 months, I got adopted and me and my 6 Other siblings were all adopted. Before we were adopted, we were living on the street, homeless going door to door begging for food, no clothes, shoes, etc. When I was about 15, my brother and sister told me that my mom gave us up for drugs. To this day, she still chooses drugs over us but I don't bother trying anymore because it's nothing new to me. My mom lied to me about who my father was this whole time the man she was telling me was my father wasn't and once I got about 15, my mom started coming back into our lives, still on drugs and she would come around me very high and thinking I didn't notice to this day all 4 of my uncles died from drug overdoses. I always thank my adopted mom for taking us in and keeping a roof over my head out of the cold and feeding me, being there for me to this day and I still don't know who my father is. I'm the youngest, yet my mom never shows me love, attention or acts as if I don't exist and it does have an effect in my daily life because it messes with me mentally. But I've been beating an obstacle half way because it used to make me want to kill myself with different ways, but I'm more calm and know that with faith and love, anything is possible.

Rubin Berry

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Mess I Was In

“The tests we face in life's journey are not to reveal our weaknesses but to help us discover our inner strengths. We can only know how strong we are when we strive and thrive beyond the challenges we face.”

— **Kemi Sogunle**

This is basically the origin of what I have become and what I had to become. Everything started when I was 16 years old, my family moved out of my grandparent's house. We decided to rent a house that was owned by my mother's old friend. He became a new landlord and my mom was confident that he was a good one. But it didn't go as planned and he wasn't as good as she thought. There was a lot of damage that hadn't been fixed like he promised. We would get into various arguments with him about it. It got to the point where the damage was so bad, one of our family members was injured and we had no choice but to leave because we didn't want to get hurt. I felt disappointed because I couldn't do anything about it because I was the only man in a family of women that were “stressing” about where we were going to go. I would try day and night to try and find a job, but no luck because at the time, it was hard to find a job and I was only 15 or 16 at the time. So, I had to improvise and find another way to make money, so I would

go outside to do a neighbor's yard work for cash. It helped a little, but not a lot so I still felt bad because what I wasn't doing wasn't enough. We were homeless for a little while, yet it didn't do anything to stop me from finding a job. Eventually, I got one and I'm still working hard to do what I have to do so we will never have to go through that again. Those dark times made me who I am today and the light at the end of the tunnel starts with education.

A'millyan Bonds

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The True Role Model

“I think a role model is a mentor – someone you see on a daily basis, and you learn from them”

-Denzel Washington

My mother is my rock, my soul, the reason why I get up in the morning and breathe in the morning. Since I have been on this Earth, she has done nothing but support me and love me. My mother is my role model because she had cancer 3 times and that didn't stop her from doing anything. She still made sure I was on task, healthy and still made sure I was doing well in school. The first two times she got cancer, I did not know she had it because of how strong she was and she didn't tell me because I was a little young at the time, but as I got older, I noticed

how she didn't let her health stop her because she still got everything she needed done to be done.

My mother is a survivor and has taught me many lessons about love, faith and dealing with hardships while raising a young woman that wants to emulate such a powerful woman. The third time she had cancer, when she woke up, I was right next to her just like she was right next to me the first two times. The reason I chose the quote for this essay is because I am with my mother on a daily basis and I learn something from her everyday. Without my mother, there would be no A'Millyan and I would not be where I am right now.

Nastassja Boone

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

It's a Weird & Wonderful World.

The time to worry about flying is when you're on the ground. When you're up in the air, it's too late. No point in worrying about it then.

-Denzel Washington

I vividly remember it. It was the day after Christmas 2017. A few pieces of Tommy Hilfiger clothing caught my eye and I could not resist the pull toward them. I had to have them, so I took

them, and boy was it a mistake. Through my mistake though, I grew and learned more than I thought I could from the experience. My mind was so young then, the feelings and adrenaline were rushing through my body as I was stepping closer to the exit. I was relieved when I got through. I thought I had accomplished my mission....but I was wrong. They took me where only they could lay their eyes on me, my heart was racing and I was so angry. I knew at that exact moment that I had messed up big time. So many questions that I couldn't answer, fear and angered faces filled the room. It was only a matter of time before she arrived. The only thing that was on my mind was my sister's face. The disappointment my parents were feeling. Soon, I got home where another lecture was waiting for me. Things were limited for my possession. Tears were my best option to be forgiven but things didn't work out that way. A few days later, a letter came, involving a \$200 fine. I never thought such small things would run me broke. I sat in my room and thought about the decisions I made in the facility. Weeks went by and I learned that if you don't have it now, get it later. A lesson for life, a lesson I will never forget.

Alaysia Bowie

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

"There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits."

- Michael Phelps.

In this life, there are times when an individual learns valuable lessons. Lessons about friends, lessons about life, and valuable lessons, such as becoming a responsible adult. This is a story of one time, when I was sixteen, driving with my temps, with no adult in the car, and being pulled over. The day had started off normal, I was with my friends earlier that day and we were all just hanging out together at my friend Maria's house. We were having a good time and then we decided to start riding around with no destination.

We had no idea where we were going, but we just wanted to get out of the house. I was driving my car with my friend Nique in the passenger seat and my friend Maria was driving her car with a girl who we are no longer friends with, so I won't say her name (that's a story for another time). When we were riding around, we ended up in University Heights by Whole Foods and Boiler 65, but we were also down the street from Swenson's which is a drive-in restaurant which is basically like Sonic except they come to your car to take your order and they don't skate, they run. We pulled into their parking lot and parked next to each other and waited for somebody to come to our cars. We got our food, but Nique didn't want Swenson's, so we went to the Chipotle down the street from it. Nique and I went into Chipotle but she didn't have a mask, so she had to go back to the car and by the time she came back in the line, it had about 5 people in it. Maria and the other girl (we aren't friends anymore) had just pulled into the parking lot but since Maria is Nique's stepsister and she had her license at the time, her curfew was later than mine, she went with her. As I was driving down Warrensville Center Road going towards Shaker Heights, I saw a police car and then I realized my headlights weren't on but when I turned them on, it was too late. He turned his lights and his sirens on and I was pulled over. My heart started beating fast and I started crying, the officer then came to the car and he started asking me if I was alright. I could barely talk so I called my mom and he talked to her, he told her she could just come and get me and the car. After about 10 minutes she came and got me and the car and we drove home. Lesson learned and many more to come.

Danelly Caraballo

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Miss Independent

"Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."

- Napoleon Hill.

When I was around the age nine or ten, we had to move out of our house because my mom had just lost her job because we were in a custody battle with my little sister's father. My mom had so many problems with my sister's father, she would have to call off work just to go to her court dates. We were living in the car for three days and after that, we were able to live in my aunt's basement for a year. After, my sister's father got custody of her and the only way we could get her back was if we got a stable home in a month. So, my mom was working so much and I understand that I was young, but I always had to make sure my other siblings were good, so I was helping them with their homework and personal things they needed help with. So, ever since I was very young, I had the mindset of "you got to do this for your family." I am always the person people rely on and it's kind of hard because when I go through things, I just keep it to myself. Also, I was the only one out of all my mom's kids to not have a father figure and sometimes they would throw that in my face but I just brush it off now, I can't think about that subject without feeling pain. Out of all that, I am trying so hard to do the best for them and be the first one to graduate high school and go to college. I got a job when I turned 16 and I have been

trying to graduate on time so I have to do 11th grade and 12th grade together because when I was in kindergarten, I was held back, so I have been trying really hard to just get through school. Now, I am graduating in 2022 and I am so excited, proud and thankful for everyone that helped me through it and pushed me to just do better.

Zaria Goodrum

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

A Dream Of Mine

“The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.”

– Molière

There are a lot of things that capture my mind and throughout my life, I have noticed I have taken an appreciation for life itself and as the years went by, before I knew it, I was a 17 year old female turning 18 in February. I am a senior that goes to Cleveland Central Catholic, I never would have thought I would make it this far, especially with the things that I am interested in. All of my life, I have always been there for my mother, who I would call, “my ROCK,” or “Mama Bear.” The thing I realized most in my short lifetime is that I love to help people, it's a passion that I like having, but it can also be scary if the wrong people come into your life and use you.

I never saw that as something that should stop me from doing something that I love doing the most. Helping others with everyday problems, relationship advice or simply just sitting there as they vent to me is truly an exquisite experience to have with another person and to be able to help someone, always makes me lose track of time.

Aiyonna Hill

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

My Life Obstacles

"Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."

- Napoleon Hill.

I have faced a lot of obstacles in my life, starting from my childhood. When you first look at me, my smile may be infectious, yet behind the smile and personality, there are a lot of stories from my past that made me who I am today. Here is just one of those stories. When I was young, my mom struggled a lot with bills, but one thing I can say for sure is that she made sure we never needed anything. As I got older, it seemed like things got worse for me, I was traumatized at a young age. Certain things I went through and saw as a child, nobody who is young should see and go through.

In 2016, I was going through depression, I ran away because it's like these voices in my head wouldn't go away. I was so stuck and didn't know what to do. In 2019, I lost my grandfather to cancer, he was my best friend and he showed me what it means to be loved unconditionally. After I lost him, I slipped back into depression. I was diagnosed with bipolar depression and PTSD. In 2020, I was sent to a facility to get help. I was deep into depression and I almost took my life. Till this day, I still go through a lot but going through those things only made me stronger and allowed me to "go harder" for what I want in life.

I want the best life for me and if I have kids, I want my future kids to know that anything is possible. I never want them to ever have to need anything or go through what I went through. My only regret is that I didn't really have anybody who listened to me until I was at my breaking point. Life is hard, but at the end of the day, you have to keep going. Life is a gamble and you choose how you want your next move to go. There are no handouts, if you want the life you dreamed of. It isn't always easy, there will always be obstacles to overcome, but you have to keep pushing through and your blessings will come eventually.

Daylen Houze

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The True Believer

“Don’t treat people how they treat you....”

-D Houze

I’m not the type of person who tries to “woo” people over. I give people the raw and uncut version of myself and if they like me, they like me. I wasn’t put in this world to try and impress people, but yet I was here to worship my God and be who he called me to be. The worst obstacle I go through in life is believing in myself and understanding that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Growing up, I never believed that I could do things that I’ve seen other people do. When I was younger, people always told me that I would be special and an awesome man but somehow I didn’t believe that yet. Believing in myself was the hardest struggle I went through, so that made me have a tough time in school and I would get in trouble a lot. But there was one person in my life that came here and showed me otherwise. That person was my little sister named Saniyah Nicholson. She came into this world and believed that I was her biggest hero and that I could protect her from the world when she needed me. She was here for a short amount of time, but during those times, she gave me the best laughs and joy at times. I can sit around and mope about the bad things but no, I think about the good times we had and rejoice in it. I believe that my sister is always with me and is watching over me. She really helped me and I began to believe in myself just by her believing in me. After she left me, I went into this type of deep depression for a while but I picked myself up and went on with life and accepted the fact that she was gone. I never believe in people helping me with my problems unless they have gone through the same thing. I do believe in people being there for me through the trials and tribulations.

Chyanne Leffew

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Struggling

“Everybody is a genius but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid”
-Albert Einstein

I grew up with my mother, siblings and grandparents and it wasn't always easy. My mom worked so hard to take care of me and my four other siblings. She didn't have help from any of our fathers and still managed to put herself through college while having two jobs to provide for us. My mother was also the first in our immediate family to graduate highschool and college. I aspire to be like my mother in every way possible.

I wasn't raised in a traditional household where there were two parents and had someone to help me with my homework or get ready in the morning. I was raised by my sisters and grandmother, so I had to learn how to do a lot myself. I became independent and started babysitting my new born brother when I was 9 years old. It was a struggle, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. Growing up fast at a young age helped me realize how hard things really are but it also taught me how to get through situations and understand how to make them better.

I can't wait to make my mother proud when I actually make something of myself. I want her to know her hard work and labor didn't go unnoticed.

Willie Mason

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Roughest Year Of My Life

“I gotta go harder.. move smarter.. think wiser.. stack more..talk less

- King Von

What captivates me is when I lost my grandmother. This is a very sensitive topic for me because when I lost her, my life changed for the worse. I was getting in trouble a lot and getting suspended from school and getting suspended off of the school bus and a lot of other things. I say it changed because she was always there for me and she was like my best friend and I lost her in 2016, 5 months after her husband, my grandad died. So, 2016 was a rough year for me but it made me change how I live my life nowadays. That is why I am so quiet and stay to myself because that situation changed me. The days leading up to before she passed, she wasn't eating and she started getting really skinny because she suffered from dementia. She was alert to who we were; she just couldn't remember or speak to us. So, the day she passed (she is my great grandmother) we were at her daughter's (my grandmother's) house and we got a call that they thought that she passed because she wasn't waking up or moving, so we drove over there and called someone over. I forgot what it's called, but they confirmed that she was gone and we all

just started crying and then my mom came out and told us we could go see her and we got to see my grandma's lifeless body and I was talking to her and just telling her how I would change my life around for the better and promising her how I would do right and then I hugged and kissed her one last time. That incident scarred my life because I got to see my grandma, someone who I loved so much just laying motionless and that was very tough for me to see at such a young age.

I have to work harder everyday for my great grandparents because if they were still here, they would tell me to keep pushing myself everyday. "Moving smarter" is to do what you do but don't let everyone know what you have going on. "Think wiser" is to think differently from everyone else and have a different mindset from them. "Stack" more and talk less is like to keep getting "money" and not talking to individuals that want to hold you back..

Michael Moguel

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

"High School Life"

"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it."

Michael Jordan

Life is hard for just about everyone. I didn't really feel pressure in high school until 12th Grade. My music teacher is pretty hard on us, but I know she means well. In fact, none of my teachers were ever that hard on me. In 9th grade, things started going easy for me and my

teachers were really nice. I even had a special handshake with my math teacher, Mr.K. In 10th grade, things were both easy and hard, but I managed to get it done. But then the Pandemic started and no one could have predicted it would happen next. We had to close school and finish the year online. The computer I have at home didn't have a microphone, so nobody could hear me when we had a class meeting online.

I was wondering how we were going to do things when we went back to school in August but we learned we were going to wear masks that we were going to do online learning. It was optional if we wanted to stay home or go to the school building. I chose to do both. The school even gave us chromebooks for those of us who wanted to do online learning. It was fun doing both. When I was doing in person learning, I could go to school and see my friends and teachers. When I was doing online learning, I could sleep an extra hour , go to classes in my pajamas and be home with my pets and Dad. It was an awesome year.. When the school year ended I cleaned out my locker, and the theology teacher told me that he was leaving. I was sad to hear that, but I was still happy for him. Over the summer, I realized that I was taking music class for senior year and I thought about how I could take music class if I'm on the computer, but my parents told me that we would be doing in person learning all year. When 12th grade started, I saw how tough my music teacher was. I realized that it was going to be like this for the rest of senior year. But if I want to go to college, I have to get through it. I may not be a perfect student, as I have made mistakes in my life, but I will get through music class and I will go to college. In 10th Grade, I decided to go to Kent State University. I looked it up online , it looks like a really awesome school. I know that high school can be rough and no one said that senior year was going to be easy, but I will finish it. I really want to walk across the stage and receive my diploma. When I go to college, it will be an awesome 4 years because I will work hard, never give up, never talk

back and never fall behind. I will continue to do what I've been doing for the past 3 years of high school, which is following the rules and doing what I'm told and what is expected of me. I'm sure I will do amazing things when I go to college. First, I have to finish senior year of high school! I have faith in myself and I know that my teachers have faith in me and that is enough to get me going. And with that, I will get through my senior year.

Janiyah Negrón

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Disaster Covid 19!

"Nothing is more beautiful than the smile that has struggled through the tears."

-Demi Lovato

The last year and a half was probably the WORST year of my life! Covid really came so unexpectedly, it was like someone or something sneaking up on you, it's the worst feeling ever. I had so many things going on in my life before Covid, I was honestly so hurt because all of those things I was working so hard for got taken away from me in a matter of weeks. I can say this year is starting to look better. I'm so happy to be in school with my friends, to see my sport's teams play in games, and to participate in school events, to just be IN PERSON.

I was in softball practice and everything seemed normal, but at the end of our practice, my coach called us around the bench and she told us we were going on an early spring break. Little did I know, that would be the last time I would be at practice or in school for a year and a half. I was also training to be a lifeguard for the upcoming summer. I was mostly done with the class, I paid the money to the Red Cross to become certified and everything. I got to the pool, I was training at and my trainer told us we wouldn't be training today. The mayor was shutting down all of the recreation centers due to Covid and my trainer had no idea when the rec center would open back up. So, I go from me being busy most of the day for 5 days a week, to me doing absolutely nothing, barley leaving the house, just laying around the house.

Danasia Robinson

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Downfall to Online

“Sometimes you don't realize how far you've gotten until you look around at the people who are still trailing far behind you.” Nicki Minaj

It all started in March of 2020, when they said that there will be no more in person learning and we have to do online school. My thoughts were that I would do bad, I was doubting myself

and thought I wouldn't succeed with online learning. Before I went online, I was having a good, fun, and productive school year. This definitely changed my life because I was so used to getting up in the morning and going to real school to learn and see my teachers and friends.

When online learning started, it was not as bad as I thought it would be. I adjusted to it quickly though, it was very easy after like 2 or 3 weeks of doing it. I was feeling like something was missing though, like I wasn't learning anything really. As if I was just doing the work and not learning anything, but turning it in at 11:59 p.m., when it was due. I doubted myself, but with me doing that, it definitely made me stronger and made me want to do better. Online learning definitely helped me grow, expand my knowledge, and become more independent over the time that we were doing online.

I realized I had to leave some of my friends behind because they weren't on the same page as me. They just wanted to goof around and not pay attention, I can not be around people that don't have something going for themselves. I just want to be successful and have successful friends. When people say you are who you hang around with I believe that, because you feed off of the energy that you're around. Looking back at my friends from before online and to now, it's very different. My friends now, they have something going for themselves, like they want to go to college after high school. Now, they are doing cosmetology things such as hair, nails, makeup or lashes while we are in high school. My friends from before online learning are still just like out in the crowd and not really trying to do anything. I am hardworking and I just love being around hard working people, I love pushing them to do better because they do the same to me. I did well with everything, I finished Junior year with a 4.0 GPA and had Honor Roll all school year, I'm very proud of myself.

Yusif Salti

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Covid-19

"You can't be afraid to fail. It's the only way you succeed. You're not gonna succeed all the time and I know that." - LeBron James

When Covid first started, people thought it was something small. School was out for two weeks and not one person took it seriously. Everyone was excited for two weeks without school! The two weeks then turned into a month, then to a year. Students all around the world are having trouble doing online classes, and just want to be back to school in person. I can definitely say my biggest problem was that I don't do very well in online school. It was a great challenge for myself and millions of kids who had to learn from a computer. I personally believe that I am a hands-on learner, and I also learn way better in a classroom setting instead of an online classroom. Covid-19 didn't only affect schooling, it affected millions of people's jobs, and it got to the point where some people even lost their jobs due to the new setting of masks. People had to wear masks, it was a law.

When Covid-19 first started spreading, I didn't take school seriously because I didn't see it as a priority due to bills, money, and needs for the house. After I saw where I had messed up, I tried my hardest to keep on moving forward, and move on to attempt for my dreams to become a

reality. Couple months later, I applied for a job at CVS, and started working in the front of the store. Nearly four months later, the pharmacy manager had told my boss that he really wanted me to be a pharmacy technician. Officially, my dream became a reality and I work as a pharmacy technician now.

The next thing I want to do in life is become an actual pharmacist, and I personally think I am ready for the new stages in life. I really like learning from my mistakes, and trying my absolute best to do better than before. I enjoy schooling, sports, friends, and being a part of the community for the school. It took me a while to adjust to the new environment, and setting for COVID-19. I strongly believe that COVID-19 was my biggest step-back experience because of all the new changes in such a short period of time. I personally try to try my best in school and get that education to truly make the changes within this world that everyone can learn from.

Mariam Shahin

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. -Dr. Seuss

Life is hard as it is..... This is my story. I am currently going through probably the toughest problem I have ever faced through my life. I never had a good relationship with my parents and they barely support anything I want to do. They always showed favoritism with my other siblings and I have always been the least favorite. I know I'm the least favorite by their actions

and they basically tell me too. That part of my Life always has been difficult and resulted in me having issues when I got older because I realized that I'm going to have to become independent since they do toxic petty stuff already to me to prevent me from getting the best future that I can so that means I'm going to have to be my own support system. I never realized how bad they treated me all my life until when I always want to start crying, whenever my older female or male teachers compliment me or tell me that they are proud of me, I always get emotional whenever

Shahin 1

They tell me that because I rarely heard any of those nice words from the people I wanted it from the most, my parents. I always get sad / jealous, whenever I see my friends actually have a good relationship with their parents and see them getting along. I feel like all of my life, I had to walk on eggshells and try my hardest not to cause unnecessary problems with my family (relatives included), while my two younger brothers get away with anything no matter what they did. I'm about to turn 19 in December and my parents still haven't changed their toxic ways towards me and still treat me like I'm 15 , they are extremely toxic and controlling to me only and over the years, it made me grow more hatred towards them than love. Once I reach my goals and become more independent. I am planning on cutting off all family related to me for my own sake and in order for me to grow how I want to and I realized the big decision I had to make and that is to cut off all contact because I want nothing to do with them and I don't want to make my future kids life worse with my family involved with them. I am sad, scared, and worried for my future always now since I'm very close to starting a new chapter in my life. I am feeling those emotions because I just hope I'm able to support myself how I want to without anybody's help. Even though life right now is hard I feel like it will just give me more

motivation to be the best I can be.

Intelligent Smiley

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Online Death

Life is like a wheel of fortune u got to spin it and go - 2pac

Online school was alright. I get to do my work at home while eating food and drinking protein shakes, watching movies and relaxing for “real,” yet sometimes it gets depressing. I Wasn't even listening in class, but I was just doing the assignments. My grades were better freshman year and sophomore year combined.

I was so proud of myself. I miss school because I missed lunch and talking to people. I missed some of the teachers. I miss the rallies too. I hope my senior year will go better than freshman, sophomore and junior year. My goals for senior year are to get straight A's and get into Cleveland State University and go or become a robotic engineer and invest.

Jer'Rontae Smith

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The World is YOUR Stage

“Life isn’t how many breaths you take, but it’s the moments that take your breath away.”

– **Will Smith**

I want to become an actor. The reason why I want to become an actor is because I like playing different types of characters. It is so fun, especially if I don't understand how the person is acting. Having different roles makes me feel like I have different personalities.

I want to be the next Will Smith because he can be any role that he wants. What I mean by that is he makes the role better than what it already is. If you ask anyone what character Will Smith does the best, everyone would agree that every character was great. He is just such an inspiration. If they make a movie about him, I would love to play him. Will Smith, I love this man. He is a role model. Smith has the best movies, for example, *Gemini Man*, *Bad Boys for Life*, *Focus*, *Aladdin*, *Men in Black* to name a few.

Bryajha Weeden

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

My Setback

“I never really had the classic struggle. I had faith.” – **Denzel Washington**

Over 4 years ago, I lost someone very close to me. My uncle was killed. His death was a very hard obstacle in my life that I had to overcome. Losing him was a huge setback in my life that affected me a lot, making me think and feel like I would never be the same. His passing made me want to “go harder” and graduate for him. We always talked about what college I wanted to go to or what I wanted to do in life. It took a lot out of me to get over his death because we were close and he always made sure me and my cousins were okay. I was totally different after his passing. It always felt like something was missing when we would all get together. After his passing, it made me look at life totally differently. It made me value life more, just because your life could be gone just like that. Him passing away took a lot away from my family. He was a crazy man but he was a good father to his kids and a good person to his family. I've never lost anyone that close to me before and seeing him every day to me not seeing him at all took a toll on my soul. I have become stronger after his passing because I have to graduate to prove to him that I did it and prove to my family that I also did it. Also, to prove to myself that I did it and went through things that could have broken a person's spirit, but it made me stronger .

Tyler Andrews

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Mama's Boy

Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.

- Michael Jordan.

Growing up without a father, but having a strong, intelligent, independent mother has made me into the young man I am today. When I encounter challenges or situations in my life, I find ways to overcome them. While playing basketball, I ran into a lot of obstacles. One was not enough playing time, or not being the strongest, being the tallest or being the fastest, but one thing I have is heart.

I have enough heart to make up for everything else. Another obstacle was when I'm trying to get a job, like having transportation, or focusing on basketball or other life situations. Friends are another thing that can get in the way of stopping me from what I want to do in life or my family too by distracting me from my goals. Yet, my biggest obstacle is myself. I can overthink something. Sometimes, I care about what others think because that's just how life is. Everybody has their own mind and opinion on things and I'm not any different. I am somebody who can make friends very easily because I care about people. Sometimes I feel like people take advantage of me but I still like to give the best of myself because that's how I was raised.

Shaniyah Bradley

Mr. Rock

College Essay

9 September 2021

Out of Focus

"You should never view your challenges as a disadvantage. Instead, it's important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages."

- Michelle Obama

Education is an important thing to have in life and everyone needs one. We tend to not take getting an education for granted knowing that others across the world don't have access to getting an education and how poorly the school system was set up generations ago but what happens when you do take it for granted? My junior year of high school was one of the worst years of my life. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools turned to online learning and it honestly seemed like one of the happiest moments of my life as I left school towards the end of my sophomore year and began online classes. Two weeks after the pandemic hit and school transitioned to online courses, March 30th, 2020, my younger brother, Amir Bradley, who was 15 at the time was murdered suddenly that Monday morning. I was devastated and fell into a depression quite quickly. School became more of a struggle and less of a concern and focus for me as I mourned my brother and helped my immediate family cope with his death as well. My teachers and classmates heard of what happened and sent their condolences as well as offering help with anything me or my family might need. I was extremely grateful as my teachers excluded me from many assignments following my brother's passing as they understood the

tragedy, this was the end of my sophomore year. To sum up everything stated so far, this pandemic was more of a tragedy than a plus for me as it was for other students.

August comes as time for me is slipping by faster than I expected and my junior year starts. I'm still mourning my brother, but depression isn't taking the best of me by this time and I have a little more "wiggle room" to focus. I begin my studies as we are still online. It became harder for me to focus though as I am at home in the comfort of my own room and easily distracted. This begins to continue and just like time, my grades begin to slip fairly quickly as well. I'm in a knot as I can't think of anything to keep me determined and going to focus on my studies as I begin to fall asleep logged on to class and when tests were given, I noticed this behavior and began trying to get myself back on track. I started reading and doing assignments when class wasn't in session and began doing my homework after class so I won't feel bombarded with work from my other classes and try to catch up on all my work. It was quite frustrating and difficult because I was still home and being distracted by family and friends. I managed to get some assignments done and began to focus in class more than usual which was a big change for me but made me proud because no matter how hard it seemed I tried my best and got my work done.

La'Donn Davis

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Money Mayhem

"Energy and persistence conquer all things"

-Benjamin Franklin

The smell of autumn is approaching. All of the sloshing around is coming to an end, it's time to take things more seriously. Straight A's for having a straight head, staying focused. The sweat from our big heads running down the sides of our faces, the nervousness when it is time for a test and our sweaty palms. Just breathe and be calm. God gives us obstacles that we may not think we can conquer but with "gogo" juice and 2 tablespoons of sea moss, there will be no sleeping on the job.

When you want something, you work for it and you work hard! With my great googly eye balls and my awesome parents, I'll be able to conquer all things, maybe even take over the world with my talents. 9 hours of sleep with sleepy paws, 3 healthy consistent meals each day and oh, let's not forget about your peers, the people that you surround yourself with is also an important part of conquering all things. HAVE FUN! Don't always be so uptight. It's senior year! You fall, get back up, don't stay down, you're strong, you got it . Never let anyone tell you you can't do something, anything is possible. Having energy isn't always physical, it could be mental as well but being active is very important to working keeping a positive mindset. I am a Cleveland Central Catholic Ironman, which means I give up put downs. I lift others up when they're feeling down and most importantly, put smiles on their faces . High school is not easy, but if you walk in the door with a good mindset, it's a guarantee that you will not be let down. It was meant for us all to win. Always seek wise people. Online learning is not easy for hands-on workers like me but if you want it as badly as I do, you'll get through it and you will win and be successful in the end, so smile, be happy, be thankful most importantly, get enough rest each and every day. Eat breakfast, you need the energy and in the end you'll have everything you've always dreamed of.

Jai'La Davis-Smith

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The hardest thing about life.....Is life!

-Jai'La Davis-Smith

I am an individual that basically suppresses all of her feelings, bottle or seal it up and with all of those anger issues, feelings and other teenage issues, the bottle stays sealed up until it is ready to ooze out all of these feelings that are kept hidden within my soul. The truth of the matter is that I used to be a person that allowed their feelings to show, but I would always get in trouble for speaking my mind, having an opinion and it eventually led me to being expelled when it came to middle school.

Bad things began to happen to me within my personal life and also my educational life. The domino effect all started with a death when I was four and how my mother reacted to my father's death. My mother is a very hard worker and really did not know how to be a single mom with a son and daughter who needed both of their parents at the time (my brother was a newborn during this tragedy). One can say that I was living in a "hell" for a very long time. It's been a journey

figuring out why all of these things happened within my life and family and finally I am finding the answers to all of these issues I have been hiding.

Today, I just live one day at a time, being emotionally faithful with my “God” and SHE has truly allowed me to get through the struggles that have made me into who I am. I am the FOURTH GENERATION OF INDEPENDENT WOMEN, who have struggled but have beat the odds and these odds are in my favor. My struggles have made me who I am, who I want to become and what I want to do in my life. I have a passion for medicine and the human body, how it works, thinks, how to control it and how to use it to become the best YOU! I am independent, with flaws, but the flaws are actually beautiful and in reality my flaws have made my life flawless.

ShyAnne Evans

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Mental Help

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

When Covid first started, it was bad news. What was a student supposed to do? I was supposed to be out of school for 2 weeks, then 2 weeks became longer and we never went back to school. We had to do all of our work on the computer. After that our government shut down the city, nothing was open; all we would do is stay in the house, it really wasn't a summer that year, I was bored in the house and I haven't had my hair done for two months because everything was closed: food places, hair salons, the movies.

I went into a sad place because I really don't like being in the house and mentally wasn't really doing well in school because we were online with our work. I will never want this to happen again and we still are going through the same stuff, just not that bad. I wish everything would go back to normal.

Britney Harbin

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Overcoming Obstacles Leading to Success

“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking.” *Steve Jobs*

When I first arrived at high school as a freshman, I was very nervous about getting adjusted to the environment. I never would have thought I could reach my goals of getting through middle school and high school. It wasn't always easy being the quiet kid that has a learning disability and less confident than others. I learned that it is alright to be myself and everyone learns at their

own pace. Also, I learned to surround myself with friends and family that are very supportive of me. They set good examples and I learned to think positive thoughts. When I'm feeling down or overwhelmed, I take breaks while listening to music and read "fanfiction" books on my phone. I would struggle with reading and taking tests in school, but I have improved in reading and writing since I first started school. I'm still working on different skills I can use to study notes for important tests. During part of my sophomore year and my entire junior year of school, it was spent remotely, which was difficult for the teachers and students. The reason why was because we had to learn how to use google classroom and a lot of work would get posted. Also, we had to figure out how to balance out our mental health and make sure to not get behind on work. But during the Covid-19 pandemic, there were different tragic events around the world; people passing away from Covid-19, the Black Lives Matter Movement and the tragic death of George Floyd. But with prayer and helping each other, we can make it through almost anything.

In conclusion, throughout this journey of growth, I know my goals can be achieved. Hard work, a willingness to learn new things and having an open mind. I will make sure to keep up with my work by writing down each assignment in my school assignment notebook. I engage in class by participating in class and asking questions. I'm willing to be open about new ideas and knowledge.

Brianna Harris

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Independent Woman

“ I’ve always felt the urge to express myself to overcome my emotions and to share those experiences to help others “ ~ Jhené Aiko ~

My Essay was named, “ Independent Women “ by my English teacher, Mr. Rock. He named it that because of the situation I went through my sophomore year. I had a baby in the middle of my sophomore year. It was difficult, but if you put your mind to your life, anything is possible and you can overcome anything . I’m so proud of myself because I was able to achieve a 4.0 my junior year with a child and that made me think that I have more to live for. He is the reason why I push myself to become the person I always wanted to be. People always say, “ once you have a kid in your teenage years, you're going to drop out.” If out of anything, a baby should be the reason why you should continue life because that’s going to be someone that is going to look up to you, such as a hero. I want my son to know that if you want something you have to work hard and push yourself. I wouldn’t be where I'm at today if it weren’t for my son and my family because they are always there for me. I can’t forget his wonderful Godmother, Summer Poke. I have new goals and dreams and they are to get an education and educate the world on my experiences. And we will be walking the stage together as one.

Danaysia Harris

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

“If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere.”

- Frank A. Clark

Challenges can be tough. Everybody can deal with it in a certain kind of way. Just about everyone I know has encountered a challenge before. It’s normal. One of my challenges that I had to face was getting diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder. I still have it, but it’s not as bad as it used to be. I used to not be able to eat right, check things repeatedly, repeat certain actions, and at that point I was not in a good place. But I will say that it opened my eyes in a way. I used to think that OCD was just a cleaning disorder, I was not aware that this is what it actually was until I got diagnosed with it. It changed the way I looked at certain things. I’m okay with talking about this to other people because it seems like a lot of people don’t know what it REALLY is and I’m okay with spreading awareness about it because just like them, I once didn’t really know what it actually was either.

You see the thing with OCD is it's like a little “bully” in your head telling you what to do. It takes a lot to have to tell yourself it's all in your head, and when I say a lot, I mean A LOT. You have to try and force yourself to understand that it is in your head and to not act upon whatever it is that your head is telling you to do or the OCD wins. It really is a battle but I know with God I am okay no matter what. Having OCD has taught me not to just judge a book by its cover. This means that even though OCD may be viewed as a cleaning disorder, it may have more meaning. This can be applied to any aspect in life and it is very important to understand.

Damarion Howard

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Mind Over Matter

“The Lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success.

Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience” -OBJ

I know how crazy this might sound, but someone destroyed something very important to me, my car and it actually made me work a lot harder now. I have to do things a lot differently. I have to get out of my comfort zone and get through this tough challenge in my life. Everything I go through, I use it as motivation and a learning experience to become the best version of myself. I first have to pick up a lot of hours at work as long as I find a way to Beachwood every day until I make enough to repair my car. What makes it tougher is that I have to go to school every single day and complete every assignment on time. Also, a lot of people depend on me and I have to be there to get it done because no one else will. So, am I under pressure? NO! I don't feel pressure. I don't think I'm under enough pressure, I want more, just so I can overcome it and become a stronger version of myself.

In life, nothing is ever easy and one must work extra hard to gain what they need in life. I learned that you have to use everything in life as a message from God, and the message was that he wants me to go even harder, I believe I can and I will.

Zavien Jones

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Obstacles

Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.

Michael Jordan

What would you do if you had to quarantine twice for something you didn't even have? This is my story of how Covid almost affected my senior year. It's very difficult because I missed out on so many things, I missed out on my football games, so that meant colleges couldn't see me play and that made my whole academic/sport year go "south" for a little while. School grades and learning and all I needed to graduate and to make my future bright, seemed to be on hold during this time. I had to be in my room for almost a whole month because of this pandemic, it ruined a lot mentally and physically. Before all of it happened, I had all A's and now I have almost all F's and that does not sound like me, so I finally was able to come back this last day in

September and I'm getting work done trying to get back on track to have good grades and get on my teachers to help me get them up quick as possible because the quarter almost is up and I don't know if I have enough time to get them up but I know GOD is going to allow me to get through these obstacles and I know I need to pray and work hard and I will succeed.

Quentin Latimer

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Size DOES NOT MATTER

*Whatever you see you gotta keep a sense of humor; you gotta be able to smile through all the bulls***. ... Tupac Shakur*

I have always been the shortest male in my school and I guess I can always put up with the jokes such as, "you need a pillow when you drive." I guess being short is a blessing and a curse at the same time. I was first called short by a class in the 7th grade. After I got out of middle school, I was called short but not by the same person. I was called short by my best friends. I was shocked when the person who called me short showed up to my school for his senior year. There are advantages and disadvantages to being short. The advantages are that you could be a long distance runner, shorter people live longer, and you can have less stressful life events. The disadvantages of being short are that women prefer taller men, short men are more likely to commit crimes, shorter people tend to be less secure and likable. Taller men are smarter, but

that's not always true because short people can be smart as well. Being short is a curse because most women don't want shorter men. I feel as if short people are discriminated against because short people are not likely to commit violent crimes. Shorter men are not less secure or likable either.

Rayshawn Ligon

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Covid Comeback

It doesn't matter what cards you're dealt. It's what you do with those cards. Never complain. Just keep pushing forward. Find a positive in anything and just fight for it.

- Baker Mayfield

The first time I encountered a setback was when we had to do school on computers. That was extremely hard for me because I wasn't really understanding things and I couldn't focus because I was getting side tracked. What I learned from that is that even when things get hard and you come back from it, it makes you stronger and you are focused more on things. You take things way more seriously than you used to.

What I learned was that I became more organized. Before the pandemic, I was never organized.

So, basically what I am trying to say is that online learning helped me with things outside of school. I am not saying it is a good thing, but without it, I would still be on the same path that I used to be on. I know that other kids did not like it, but it actually was not as bad as we thought it would be.

Kids that are in online classes mostly get low grades and they are most likely to do well in digital work and they are less likely to graduate than similar students taking in-person classes. So, basically everybody has their own opinions on how online learning is and is not. The good thing about online learning is that students learn according to their “Learning Styles.” You can enjoy your own comfortable environment and succeed at your own pace. It is always up to yourself on the success you want to have.

Geriana McMiller

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

Michael Jordan

Your high school experience should be something that is memorable and exciting. Making new friends and participating in school activities. My sophomore year had been robbed from me because of Covid-19. We were supposed to be at football games and basketball games cheering for our Ironman in the crowd. Instead, we are waking up and getting on a computer from 7:55a.m.-2:40p.m. Before the pandemic started, I was on top of my grades and school work. I would always have straight A's and never have any work missing. While doing online school, everything completely turned. My grades were dropping and I had a page full of missing assignments. It was really hard trying to stay focused. Eventually, I was able to pick myself up and get to work. There were days when I didn't want to do anything, but all I kept thinking about was graduation. The only way I would graduate was if I had passing grades. Now, I am in my senior year, everything I have been waiting for. It definitely has been one wild ride.

BUKURU NGUNGU

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

 Changes

A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.

-Elbert Hubbard

When I moved to the USA, I thought my life had changed. Life in Africa was bad, but at least I had food, water and clothes. The first time I went to school, people were laughing at me, which I did not care about because I came to school. It does not matter how I looked or how I wore my clothes, as long as I got something on. At first, I thought I wouldn't have friends. I met this girl and her name was Blessing. She was my first friend in the USA and became my first best friend. Since I met her, everyday when I was at school or church I became a happy person. I was alone. I did not have any friends but when I found her, my personal life started changing. Family is always there for you, but friends are like family. Me and Blessing? It has been four years going to five years in our friendship. Making friends helps a lot, you never know who will be there for you tomorrow. Your family can help you but there is something about friends, that friends help more than family does. It depends on the situation. Don't be with a friend who can't push you. Friends are there for each other, friends truly have your back. You can't call someone a friend when you do not get her/his back. Friends are there for each other no matter what. We all know family will stay forever. School was not easy because of the language. I tried my best and worked hard. If you give up when you are doing something, you will always lose, trying makes it better. Things get better when you push yourself; nobody will be there for you when you can't even try. I remember one day I went to school in middle school. I did not know what to do but whenever my teacher asked me if I needed help, I said "no." When it comes to the exams I sometimes fail. Being shy or nervous is not good for a person because you might lose a lot of things that you need. Talking to everyone helps you to meet new people and make friends, but being quiet does not help you, sometimes it makes enemies. We need to learn how to live with others. Nobody knows who will be there for you or who will stay for you. We are all different but it does not mean we have to choose who to live with or be friends with. When you see

someone is bad and you can't be "cool" with him or her, go to them and talk to them. You can change someone's life from bad to good. Many people are afraid to stay with bad people. Do not be afraid to help them talk to them and change them. It might be hard for them to change themselves without someone to change them. Life is not easy. Let's change each other, do not let your friends go the wrong way.

Summer Poke

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Tomorrow Ain't Promised

There's no slowing down as the globe spin round and round you gotta keep going

-Jhene Akio

This essay is going to be about how tomorrow is not promised and to love and cherish your parents while they're here because once they are gone, there's no coming back or running to them for help. On February 18th, of 2020 on a Tuesday, my father had a heart attack and passed away. Nobody was going to tell me until my two sisters picked me up from the bus stop and I knew something was wrong because my "daddy" said he was going to get me from the bus stop that day but he didn't and when I was walking to the car, they looked like they were holding in a silent cry.

On the way to the hospital, they told me they didn't know how to react and all I did was close my eyes hoping and wishing it was a dream. My father was my best friend and for weeks, I didn't cry; I didn't cry at his funeral, I wasn't able to cry at all because I was so busy trying to be strong for my mom and siblings. I forced this thought into my head that he was out of town and he was going to walk in the door one day, until I finally processed that my father was gone and wasn't coming back. I cried so hard for weeks after week, then my grades started to drop and I was starting to use my mouth more, meaning speaking up for myself and treating people how they treat me and not letting them run over me, but they were seeing me as the disrespectful and angry child that just came out of this experience.

It was as if I thought that my dad was not here now, so I got to protect myself from everything I think that's coming my way that's trying to hurt me. I didn't have to worry about it when my dad was here because he was right there by my side, not letting anything happen to me, but I'm back on track now and my mission is to make him proud of me by graduating high school with lots of awards; he loved awards and he always told me, "when you get awards that's just showing me and mom that you're doing something in school" and I can not wait to put the biggest smile on my mother and father's face when I walk that stage with a 3.5 or higher GPA and from this day forward, I understand what my challenge was, and my quote in the beginning of this essay is basically me telling myself that just because one tragic event happens, that doesn't mean drop everything and stop where I was as this Earth spins around and around and I'll continue to keep going no matter what happens and continue to make my "daddy" proud.

Leilani Rodriguez

Mr. Rock

College Essay

10 September 2021

Remember Me

“I'm known for proving people wrong. Remember that.”

-Cardi B

I have been doubted my whole life. “Leilani, you are going to grow up to be just like your mother.” “YOU will never ever make it through high school.” I am here today as a survivor, a teenage mom and this is my story of the power and empowerment of a young woman on a great journey. When I was little, I had a rough childhood. I was kicked out of houses a couple of times and lived with other people that judged me and doubted me. I was getting doubted being called dumb, I would always get bad grades as a little kid. As the years went on, I would try to prove my family members wrong to get good grades, at least try to get honors. As I look back every day at my past, I try to better myself. I've set a goal for myself to get past the things people have said about me. I look into my mother's eyes every day telling her I'm going to make it for her and for my daughter. I will walk the stage with my head up high in the sky, proving everyone wrong saying that I am not going to make it. I will walk the stage with my wonderful little girl in my arms looking at her saying " you are my motivation every day and you helped me accomplish my most important goal.”

Rubyn Semedo

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Myself, My WAY!

You gotta dream like you never got obstacles. - Unknown

I wanted to tell you a few things about myself that I really like a lot. The three things that are so special about me are that I'm short, a wrestler, a "jokester," and I can bend my arm in a weird way. The first thing I like about my height is that when I walk, I don't have to duck when walking up near low rising trees and most people don't see me when I walk by, so I can scare them. Some people believe that being short is bad because you can't get stuff high up, but it does help you climb better and having a short height helps me with my sport of wrestling.

The second special thing about me is that because of my shortness, I am quicker on the mat. The second thing that I like about wrestling, because it's like a lifestyle for me is that I live and breathe wrestling. Plus, it keeps me in shape and my body looks good. The third thing that I like about me is the way my arms bend because I like how it scares a lot of people and it's a cool party trick to do. The fourth thing I love about myself is that I can tell jokes out of nowhere and tell jokes to make people happy when they are sad. All of these things I told you about myself are great things I love to do or things I love about myself. It will be those qualities that will allow me to succeed in life.

Keyasia Evans

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

I Will Make It

"There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits." - Michael Phelps.

Growing up, life has always been a little harder than others around me. Just to paint a picture for you, I'm a young African American female. I am the oldest of four. I have three younger sisters and for the most part, I was raised by my mother and father but I like to think of it as we all raised each other. I grew up very talented and smart when it came to school. For the most part, I always did a great job. Growing up as a female minority is hard; being judged or overlooked because of who you are and who you identify as isn't right. I'm going to try my best to be someone great to make my family proud and to help my family financially. It's all on me right now. I am the hope. I don't have one specific time when I struggled or overcame an obstacle, my everyday life is a struggle and waking up with no hope is a struggle, stressing over how you will be great is a struggle. I go to war with myself every day, so many odds are against me. I'm not good enough, not smart enough, I'm a female and people tend to hate when females are in power,

especially a black one. I will overcome anything coming my way. When you're as brilliant as me you know you're talented. I truly feel like I'm special.

Nya Bledsoe

The eye is always caught by light, but shadows have more to say.

-Gregory Maguire

It seems that all of my life, I have been compared to my older brother. I can't even walk down the hall without somebody calling me "Nate's sister." My brother is a complete extrovert topped with being a football and basketball star and a tremendous amount of friends and popularity. With all of the "hand me down" teachers and peers, I've never really gotten to make a name for myself. We are different in many ways and different of course as in what our interests are, yet I have been stuck within his shadow for years. This year, my shadow has become a force to be dealt with. I have to come out into the spotlight, become my own person, and hold my own without him.

To start to make a name for myself, I have to insert myself. With this in mind, I've become involved in my school community in many ways. I've joined the student council so I can make my senior year the best it can be. I've joined G.I.R.L.S. Club so I can support the women and young girls in my school in any way I can. The Poetry Club invited me to join so that they can help me put my words into a more creative state. Not only to write poetry, but to make sure what I'm saying is articulated in a healthy, powerful way. My teacher says poetry is a great way to get your point across respectfully. Being in all of these associations is making me more social and brightening my leadership skills. This year isn't over yet, but I know for sure I would

absolutely love to carry these leadership skills with me into college and for the rest of my life. An association that I've been in since I was a freshman is the Black Student Union. In the group we empower, discuss and explore what it's like living in the world as a black person. I've been enlightened with so much information about my culture and where I come from than I have ever imagined. I've never felt like I fit in anywhere until I joined this collective. Learning about the black excellence that runs through my veins makes me feel more powerful than ever. It also makes me feel more in touch with my ancestry. This group, and our instructor, is why I am positive that I want to go to an HBCU. I want to be surrounded by people who go through the same experiences as me, while getting a five star education. I want to inspire others to be bright and feel comfortable in their own skin. I want to help others feel seen and included in every activity they do. I want others to know that they're not alone, that they're not overlooked, that we are not shadows. I am not a shadow, I am Nya Bledsoe and I am ready to cast light onto the world around me.

San'Shae' Bonner

Mr. Rock

College Essay

24 September 2021

Trials and Tribulations

“The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people.” – Randy Pausch

There was a time where I felt hopeless. I felt like the whole world around me was crumbling down. It was the start of Junior year, it started off kind of smooth once we finally got the hang of online learning. But, even though it felt as if life was only going up from there, things had taken a drastic turn. With COVID and everything else going on in the world, it felt as if the sadness and stress finally caught up with me. I started to feel more stressed and started to feel unmotivated to do anything for myself.

Working part-time only amplified those thoughts and feelings. I felt tired and drained from the amount of work that I felt, like I was endlessly drowning in all of this. My mind was clouded with nothing but sour-bitter words about how I couldn't do it. About how I felt like I would not make it to be the person that I want to be, but when there is darkness, there is light. I found my escape from all of the sour thoughts in my head. I finally found my inner peace. I started to write down those bad thoughts and reread them to myself as a way of saying, "this is where you came from mentally and this is how you used to feel and think, you don't ever want to be that person ever again." You acknowledge that this used to be you and your way of thinking. You cried, screamed and yelled all of the negative feelings out of your body. Now, it's time to start the new era; the new era of positivity, self love and hope. Even though I am still struggling to truly love myself, that doesn't mean that I can just give up. No, that means I just have to get back up, dust my pants off and go back better than before.

Shyann Chike

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Reach High And Touch The Stars

Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'M POSSIBLE!'

-Audrey Hepburn

Life is a constant battle. It's full of stress and hardships, but you have to be stronger than you think you can be and overcome it. I have grown up with quite a few struggles that I have overcome and some that I am still working on everyday. The biggest obstacle I had to overcome that changed my life for the better was where in middle school, my 7th grade year. I had a lot going on at school that year and I faced the most common problem kids that age faced. Bullying! I was bullied by most of the kids in class, I was quiet and stayed to myself and they took advantage of that. I got pushed around and was told hurtful things that I will never forget. It made me feel small. I went through depression and started to believe the things they were telling me. Not only did I face bullying that year, I faced issues at home as well, which had a bad impact with school. With everything going on, I started to fall and fail. I stopped trying and stayed to myself, my grades dropped and I was at the point where I didn't care anymore. I prayed and asked God for guidance to help me get through everything I was going through because I know God would never give me more than I couldn't handle. The biggest obstacle that was stopping me from doing better was ME. I learned that I should not live by the expectations of people around me. I needed to live for myself. I started to see how my life was going and I knew I wanted so much more for myself, so I started to push myself to show everyone who told me I could not make it that I can do it. Even though I face new battles everyday, my life has gotten better. I am currently in high school now doing amazing things. I started to focus on my grades again and now I get straight A's. I joined groups to help other kids that go through what I went through, to help the best I can and show that better days are coming and that they are braver than they believe, stronger than they seem, and smarter than they know. I learned through this

obstacle that the best view comes after the hardest climb. It might feel like you won't get through it but you will, you will get to see better opportunities and friendships and so much more after you make the climb. If you believe in yourself halfway there. Life is a constant battle everyone faces but you can't have a rainbow without a little rain.

.[pAutumn Cozart

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

I Can Overcome Anything

“ You may not control all the events that happen to you but you can decide not to reduce to them” -unknown

When I began to look up the meaning of depression and the symptoms about a year ago on the internet, the clinical definition of depression is; a mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life. As I sat there and pondered on what I just read, many mixed emotions and thoughts ran through my mind. Was I too doing the things that were being described in that definition? Did I not want to do the things that I would usually do? Yes, I had stopped going to work, playing a sport that I was so passionate about, I would decline all of my friends' offers to hang out. I thought that I was acting as my normal self and people would be exaggerating my mood

changes. The longer I sat there, I could feel the tears building up in my eyes as they were about to come pouring down. That was just the beginning of a long and hard journey of my depressive state.

I think back still to this day of what could have possibly happened to make me go into such a deep state of depression. As teenagers, parents become more protective of their children not because they are strict as some kids say but because they care about them so much that they want to be great and make better decisions and learn from their mistakes. I feel as if parents just don't know how much a young adult actually has to go through. It's not just school or sports. It's the feeling of rejection and the feeling of always having to look and act the part. High school played a very big part in why I began to become down. It was hard trying to maintain my grades, work an 8-hour shift everyday and practice for volleyball with 2-3 games a week. It felt as if when you're in high school, everyone is so judgemental about everything. What you wear to school, the hairstyles you have, who's more popular than who. A lot of unnecessary things that affect yourself. I never thought that people around me would have such a big effect on me because in middle school, I was the most nonchalant kid. I thought to myself as the best at everything I did, but in a humble way. After months of losing interest in everything, I stopped playing volleyball, quit my job and since we are in a pandemic and all of the schools were online, I would simply just not get in school and reject all of the work which had a huge impact on my grades and GPA. With the help from my doctors, coaches, some family and my closest friends, I have been able to overcome my challenges. I still have some days when I feel as if I can not do it and I must remind myself about how I want to be a nurse and have an amazing and successful life. I have to live out my dreams and that strives me to stay afloat and keep my head in the game.

Dashanay Debose

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2021

Foster's Child

"There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits."

- Michael Phelps.

A challenge that I have had to deal with in my life is coming to foster care and leaving my mom. This was the better way for me, but at the same time, no one wants to leave home and I do not like having rules where they can decide if or when I can see my family. It can hurt at times, but I look at the bright side of all of this. I am achieving great things and I am doing better than I have ever been doing.

My very first time going into the system was when I was four years old, at that time, I was so young, so I did not understand much about what was going on. Myself and my four siblings all stayed there for about two and a half years. To this day, we still keep in touch and still have a really good relationship. Growing up, living at home with my mom was something I really enjoyed and I just admired how much of a hard worker she was. She always made sure that all of her children were taken care of and that they had everything they needed. But there were times that it was a big struggle, struggle as in days where there was no food and she would take her last dollar literally and try to find something to help feed all of us without feeding herself. She would

walk late at night just to go to the store so we could get something to eat. I was bullied through most of elementary school because I would not have the best clothes and I got made fun of a lot for it. Still, I continued to do my best and work hard no matter what people kept saying about me. I lived with my mom for a few years and then I started to live with my grandmother because we had suffered a house fire and it destroyed mostly everything. In April of 2016 is when I came to the foster home I am currently in today. Of course I have my days where I get into these sad moods because I think about old times when I used to be at home. I miss my mother so much. We call each other like every other week, so I still get to talk to her but sometimes I just want to be home. I am supposed to be living a normal life but it just does not feel that normal for me. This is not a bad place at all and I am extremely grateful for all that she has been doing for me and my siblings but it is just not home. I guess my job is to spread knowledge to all that I meet to let them know that anything is possible under any circumstance.

Cieanna Dunbar

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Phenomenal Woman: That's Me

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.

-Maya Angelou

This summer made me look inside my life and myself a little more. My biggest fear was losing someone very close to me and that finally came to life. Growing up, I had a very bad attitude towards my family and I used to tell my mother I wasn't happy at home. I could never give her a valuable explanation or reason as to why I felt that way. Going from house to house and not feeling wanted is something no child should ever go through because nobody's going to understand and love you like your family. After being raped and abused, it took me a long time to trust people, open up, and just live for me again. I thought the worst was over, but it was only the beginning.

On June 29, at 12:39 a.m. I lost my dad, best friend, and one of my number 1 supporters. I never in my life experienced a heartbreak or pain like that. My relationship with my father wasn't perfect, but it was to me and it was everything a child could ask for from there. Before my dad passed, he told me all that he ever wanted was for his children to be proud of him and I told him, he doesn't understand how proud he's made me. I'm proud because he stepped up to the plate and took care of all his children without being asked, that's what made him a man and a real father. I'll never find a man that loves, cherishes, and adores me like him. He taught me the real definition of love and how a princess should be treated.

My title is called *Phenomenal Woman: That's Me* because I've faced so many challenges, obstacles, and more in my life and not once have I let any of that define my future or who I am. I'm a Phenomenal Woman because I survived a lot at a young age and here I am still striving every single day to get to my goals and there's nothing that will stop me from getting there.

Tyler Epler

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Dealing with Hardship

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

-John F. Kennedy

When I am dealing with hardship, I usually have friends and family that help motivate me to help me overcome what goal I am suffering on. Usually being motivated encourages you to keep going and helps you pass your goal faster. There will always be something that qualifies as a setback in your life. To me, what qualifies as a setback is someone who tries to drag you down because they didn't achieve or gave up on their goal. They try to make people suffer or become unmotivated because they did not succeed, which could be a distraction to some people. There are some people that can turn every experience that is either good or bad into something they can learn from. For me, I feel like I can turn any bad experience into learning something because the more you fail, the more you learn what to change, or do differently that can help you succeed. Also, the more you do good, the more confidence you grow which can also help you succeed. Some experiences that might illustrate this quality would be if you are trying to study for a test and you use some website to help you study, then the moment you take the test you end up

passing the test. That would cause you to want to continue using that website when you take more tests in the future to help you pass. Some people encounter some major (or minor) challenges in their life.

Some challenges that I encounter are sometimes not having enough motivation to succeed or do anything. If you are suffering from this challenge, one way to overcome it is to get people like friends, family, and maybe a neighbor to become some sort of motivation to you. The more people you have to motivate you, the more likely you will grow confidence and succeed. Other challenges people might face are just wanting to give up (losing confidence) because they just feel they can't do it anymore. If you are suffering from that sort of challenge just remember that you will have people that will help you, even if you don't think anyone is by your side, there will always be someone there for you to help you no matter what your issue is. I have suffered from that sort of challenge before, but once I realized that I have people there for me to help me, everything was alright and it encouraged me to keep on striving for my goal no matter what setbacks I have. The more you fail, the more you know how to succeed. Some setbacks that might happen is losing friends or family. It is very rough when that happens, especially if that friend or family member was really close to you, but you have to think before just stopping your goal because that person that was close to you passed away. You have to think about what they would want you to do, would they really just want you to stop everything just because they passed? Would they want you to give up your career of becoming a doctor, lawyer, veterinarian, etc? They 100% most likely would not want you to do all that, they would want you to keep going because you never know, if you become a doctor you could save someone's life and that is probably the best feeling a doctor could ever have. If you become a lawyer you could save someone that was falsely accused and would turn their 25+ year sentence to no time in prison at

all. That person would be extremely grateful for what you did for them which could put a smile on their face and yours. If you become a veterinarian you could save an animal's life which would make the owner extremely happy and thankful for you, which could also put a smile on your face. All of these jobs have benefits and downsides but that's just how life works, the downsides could help you figure out what you did wrong so you could change it and do it better which brings benefits. Benefits just give you the best feeling ever because you know you did something right and made someone else happy.

Robert Frost

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Future Leader

Don't believe everything you hear: real eye, realize, real lies.

-Tupac

Struggles come in many forms, shapes, and sizes. There are many stories that I can share with the world, yet I will start with the last four years of my life; enter my freshman year. At the beginning of the school year, in September, my "Granddad" died. We had to go down to Alabama to go to his funeral and no matter how hard I tried to hold it in, I still cried. I really do love and miss my Granddad, but of course, my mom was hurt the most because that was her

father. We would make sure that she was ok and make sure that the house was clean and made sure that she was ok, to be less stressed than she really was. Going on after he died was hard, but I had to keep up with my grades the best way I could.

I finished freshman year and moved on to sophomore year. In the month of September, I broke my wrist. At the same time, I was doing indoor track. Even though my wrist was broken, I still went to track practice and dealt with the pain. Luckily, before my first track meets, my wrist healed and I was able to get my cast taken off. Even while my wrist was broken and I was doing track, I still kept all my grades up. I finished my indoor track season, but not too long after that, Covid-19 hit and we all had to homeschool. Even though that came unexpectedly, I still managed to keep my grades at straight A's and A+'s. That's how I ended that complicated school year.

Next up, junior year of high school. I was handling the new school year very well, considering how we were online in the beginning. I was working and keeping my grades up at the same time, everything was going great, until, second quarter, when my grades started to slip. That's when I truly understood how hard it is to have work and to go to school at the same time. But, no matter what, I still managed to make sure that none of my grades were at an F or a D. That same thing went on to the fourth quarter. In the middle of the fourth quarter, I got in a car accident on the highway. I ended up wearing a neck brace for a couple of days, but after that, I was completely fine. After that mishap, I ended my school year by working a little harder. The truth of the matter is, life does have its setbacks, yet one cannot allow those setbacks to define your life. A setback is a stepping stone to success in one's future.

E'lysha Greene

Mr. Rock

College Essay

Friends in HIGH PLaces

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated.

-Maya Angelou

My first year of high school, walking into a building with very, very few familiar faces and none your age, was uncomfortable. All of my friends and classmates are enrolled at other schools and I came into freshman year, without any friends. My first day, walking into the building, nervous, yet calm and looking forward to time flying by for the next four years. It was time to get good grades, participate in sports, and get my diploma. Yet, fate obviously had different, eventful plans.

Having juniors surprise you at your locker one day is not something a freshman should expect. Those same juniors sharing sports, clubs, and lunches with you makes school a lot more fun than you would think. Making memories, learning new things and old things about the school, meeting new people including the staff has been worth it. Knowing that time is short when having fun made memories even better. Soon, eventually I had become friends with other scholars in my class and had great conversations to pass the time until I saw my close friends. I do not regret meeting people, knowing our time together. You see, one never knows when an obstacle will be a true blessing. I was afraid and scared, yet now I am bold and confident to get into the world and change opinions, ideas and education for the betterment of our world. All it takes is a little confidence and one small step to see what truly is important in your life.

Imanee Henderson

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Big Move

“If at first you don't succeed, then dust yourself off and try again”

- Aaliyah

I grew up in a small town outside of Atlanta. I was young, but life was fairly easy. My best friend lived across the street from me so I was never bored as a child. My teachers were more like “school moms.” Everyone looked out for each other. I lived with my grandparents, two sisters, and my mother. My father was in prison, so my grandma thought it was better for us to live with her. Although I was an adolescent and didn't realize it, him being in jail really affected my mental health in the long run. I have distinct memories of my father being around that I dare not talk about. My family and I would visit him every Sunday faithfully (whenever my grandparents didn't drag us to church) just so he could still play his role as a father. This abruptly ended when my mother decided this wasn't how she wanted us to grow up. We moved 2 hours away where we would be living with my mother's mom. This changed my life forever. I was leaving behind my grandparents and my father.

We stayed with my grandmother for maybe a year until we moved again to Cleveland, Ohio to stay with my aunt and cousins. My mom wanted to help my aunt with her newborn baby since she was an expert at raising kids. I mean, she did raise 3 beautiful, intelligent black “queens” all by herself. That is how I ended up here writing this very essay. It wasn't easy getting where I am now, but I never gave up on chasing my dreams and will never forget where I came from.

I grew up in a small town outside of Atlanta. I was young, but life was fairly easy. My best friend lived across the street from me so I was never bored as a child. My teachers were more like “school moms.” Everyone looked out for each other. I lived with my grandparents, two sisters, and my mother. My father was in prison, so my grandma thought it was better for us to live with her. Although I was an adolescent and didn't realize it, him being in jail really affected my mental health in the long run. I have distinct memories of my father being around that I dare not talk about. My family and I would visit him every Sunday faithfully (whenever my grandparents didn't drag us to church) just so he could still play his role as a father. This abruptly ended when my mother decided this wasn't how she wanted us to grow up. We moved 2 hours away where we would be living with my mother's mom. This changed my life forever. I was leaving behind my grandparents and my father.

Kimari Jones

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

All About Me

**“I think people who have faults are a lot more interesting than people who are perfect.”
- Spike Lee**

When we write these essays everyone is looking for the same thing: a story about their greatest experience in life, places you've traveled, and talents. I'm going to be different and stand out. I want someone to see me for me and show you how well I can adjust to situations within my life. My favorite color is blue and my favorite shoes are Air Force Ones because I like the way they look on my feet. I play softball and have a huge interest in basketball, but I'm better at softball. My dream has always been to play softball for UCLA. I know that I may not get into every college that I apply to, but I have confidence that this essay will take me places.

My dream job is to be a police officer or detective, but my mom and aunt keep trying to convince me to go to the Navy instead, yet I want to do something on my own for once without being guided in another direction just because they're scared of me. 2 out of 3 of the most important people in my life died which were my grandma when I was 7 and I held her hand as she was passing away and my Uncle Bread passed from cancer; he was the uncle with all of the money aside from my uncle Tony who almost made it to the NFL if he didn't tear his ACL. My grandpa is the last one standing out of the 3 people but he doesn't have much time left. My grandfather has cancer, diabetes, and had 4 strokes and his last one paralyzed his whole right side of his body (sounds bad doesn't it?) I've been through hell and back throughout my life. I've

lived in a house with no lights and gas, gone days without food because my mom had no way to feed me and my 2 other brothers at the time until 2 weeks after we moved into our home. I spent 2 nights in the Salvation Army and 3 months in a shelter that was like an apartment called Family Promise on 3470 E 152nd St. It was hard because late at night, I could hear my mother cry because she was so furious with herself and made herself feel as if she couldn't provide for us. And when I say these things I don't look for sympathy, I just never get to let things go and since you want to know, these are my biggest struggles.

I love myself and my family no matter how dysfunctional they might be, they are my blood. After my grandmother died, I lost my dad as well and no he isn't dead, he just gave up on me. It may sound selfish but my dad has 4 kids. Me and my brother Khalil have the same mother and father then I have 2 other siblings, a sister named Love and I don't know my little brother but that's just how life works for me. Kevin left me and it breaks my heart because I was his first born and the only one of his kids that he had a tight bond with, so it seems so unreal that he could just walk away with no questions asked. His sister Abreanna, my aunt, never sees how it hurts me. She doesn't think that him walking away is abandonment but she went through the same thing that I did. My point in telling you this is that I never looked for pity because I worked through everything I ever went through with my mom, Cleveland Central Catholic introduced me to Kairos and Kairos is a Catholic retreat that I took my junior year and will be attending again my senior year, but basically I can talk about times in my life I get some of the things said in this essay to a bunch of strangers that I go to school with. It's just surprising to me how I could even do something like this, but then again, I'm very big on talking, adjusting, and getting to know people. I hope somewhere in this essay, you realize that I've basically broken my back to get where I am and will fight hard to succeed.

Yaritza Laureano

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2021

My Abuela.

Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle.

- Napoleon Hill

All of my life, I have dealt with hardship by taking each bad situation and finding the good in it. Normally, I try not to go around complaining about the things that happen in my life. My mom always told me that everything happens for a reason and now I live by that. So, instead of wearing my feelings on my sleeve, I try to spend a minute to take in whatever happened and move on. A set back in my eyes is something that gets in my way and makes it harder for me to accomplish my goals. I try not to sweat the small stuff, so in my eyes, hardships are more of the bigger things. One of the biggest setbacks I've faced was when my grandma passed away. It set me back a lot (the most anything has ever set me back before). She was the matriarch of the family. She had 3 kids. My mom and my two uncles, one of which lives out of state, the other is very close. My uncle who lives here, in Ohio, has 7 kids and started young. Needless to say, my grandma raised the first few of her grandchildren with the help of my mom. When my mom had me and my sister, she was old enough to take care of us, but she had a full time job and so did

my dad. They both worked everyday 7am - 5pm. Because of this, my sister and I pretty much lived at my grandparent's house. Almost all of my memories take place at my grandparent's house. Even though I would go to sleep in my bed at home and wake up there, I'd still consider my grandparents' house my home. I don't remember my dad being around much when I was young, he's barely there now. My grandparents both raised me in my eyes. My cousins and I all grew up in my grandma's house. She held our family together like glue. So, you could imagine how things were when she passed. Everything changed. I'm the type of person that can take a bad situation and pick out the good. I love that about myself too because it allows me to move on with my life. Throughout the years, I've taken every hardship that has been thrown at me and used it to make me stronger. Even at the hardest loss I've taken, it helps me grow. My grandma is my motivation and my strength. Because of her, I want to be the best version I can be. I know that one day I will make her proud. As I mentioned earlier, everything happens for a reason.

Luis Madera

Mr. Rock

College Essay

9 September 2021

Strength To Overcome

The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Reflecting on what I've overcome is sometimes beneficial but harmful. On one hand, I understand how I've ended up becoming the person I am today. On the other hand, I have a lot of regrets and wish I would've done countless things differently, specifically my freshman year at

Saint Edward High School. I ended that year with a GPA of 2.1 and my self-esteem gutted. I could blame my peers or my teachers or even the environment. But I believe I failed to take advantage of what was in front of me. I let the bullying and loneliness reflect on my school work. If I was to have focused on what truly matters instead of pondering on those who I thought were cool, maybe a lot more would have been different. But at the same time, I'm grateful for everything I've been through. The bullying motivated me to lose weight. I switched my environment and started to thrive at my new found home of Cleveland Central Catholic. I made many new friends and tapped into a more accepting community. But the credit cannot be given just to CCC. At the time of my attendance at Saint Edward's my mother was in her last year of school where she would finally get her Masters Degree. After seeing my mom graduate with all of the obstacles she overcame to get there, it motivated me to do better. That summer, I hit the books hard and went from a 2.1 student to a 3.7 with the help of my new school. Building my confidence by not only getting good grades but losing weight helped me look at life through a very different lens. After my mom got her Masters Degree, my lifestyle changed pretty dramatically and I will be forever grateful to my mom for working as hard as she did. She inspires me to do everything I can with the foundation she laid for me. She showed me anything is possible, you just have to want it bad enough. Knowing where she raised me and what she has gone through to give me the life I have now is all I need to know to believe my dreams are achievable. I will work hard to further my education and strive in achieving all my future goals in becoming a physician assistant.

Lesly Martinez

Cleveland Foundation

Scholarship Essay

17 March 2022

Life's Headaches and Massages

“Are you going to let the obstacles in your life be stumbling blocks or stepping stones? Choose the positive. You are the master of your attitude.”

- Bruce Lee

When a problem comes up, I think about it by asking myself, “Is there something I can do about it?” If the answer is yes, then the response is, “Don’t worry about it then” and if the response is “no” then it’s also, “Don’t worry about it.” That doesn't mean I’ll ignore it, try not to fix the issue or not take it seriously, but despite the situation, I can move past it. I assure myself that it’s not the end of the world because if I let it get to me, then I will for sure not be able to do anything and it’ll be over. Things that I qualify as a setback or have setbacks are my mom and dad’s divorce, my health, and my dog’s death. I view challenges a little differently because they aren’t exactly negative, I sometimes enjoy challenges because they test you out rather than just give you a tough time. For example, reading in front of many people in spite of my reserved attitude or seeing if I can complete all of my work even with a close deadline. I definitely try to learn something out of the situation because it can be useful for me in the future. To avoid a negative situation or to go through positive ones. Like being kind to people can get me far and also is simply the right thing to do or keeping calm and being rational is healthy for you in times of trouble. Most of my challenges have had me contemplate on something I should already have

been doing but didn't. My dog's death taught me to appreciate and really show gratitude for the things and people in my life and not take them for granted because it'll hurt when they're gone. My sickness pulled me aside for a moment to think about my health and find motivation to be active and care more. One of my biggest issues is that I believe I second guess myself too much. I'm sure that because of this, I've lost many opportunities that could have led me closer to success. I can't help but worry, "what if it ends up being a bad decision?" I noticed it to a point where sometimes I've had to just impulsively give a choice which is not a good thing either. Part of this just comes from my personality. I'm very quiet, timid and introverted and I don't think it's necessarily bad, but part of me does want to change at least a little bit because I think it will do me good. Socializing is an important thing after all. Having many connections can bring you many chances. I'm pretty sure I have an anxiety disorder too but it's not that severe. That's why peace is super important to me, I want to feel fulfilled, satisfied and happy the most I can. I also enjoy reading and learning new idioms, sayings and proverbs because of the wisdom you can get from them to use in everyday life. Thanks to my mom's culture, I've learned sayings from Spanish too that can come in handy if I can remember them. I'd like for people to see me as a strong, successful, yet humble person. I want to be a good person who is admired, respected, and also able to connect with any type of people. I consider myself to be very understanding, open-minded and have high patience and adaptability. I'm glad that I have these qualities because they are very useful and have helped me to get where I am right now.

Cristopher Torres

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

I will admit it

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

A time when I faced a challenge, setback or failure was when I was in quarantine, trying to balance stress from my home, school, and personal life. In March 2020, when they announced quarantine, I was excited when they said we were going to study from home because that meant spending more time with the family and doing the things that I loved. At first it was great, I worked out, had fun being with my family, and even started to treat myself better. I was doing well in school and my grades were outstanding. In the summertime, I worked as an irrigation foreman to get money to help my parents pay for things around the house. Life was going great! That’s until I entered the 2020-2021 school year.

When the year started, I was doing great, being able to concentrate on my work for the most part. I first started slipping because the thoughts of experiencing my Junior year as much as I would have liked to, just, vanished. Not being able to see my teachers, my friends, not hearing them talk about sports, music, and funny things made me miss the traditional school year. Next, I started to get sidetracked by social media because I wanted to distance myself from reality. It distracted me from what was happening and it sometimes made me realize how the world really was with the coronavirus and the unfair justice system. As soon as I realized I was getting sidetracked, I deleted all social media accounts and their apps for the rest of the quarantine.

Then, I was looking for a job during this time because I needed more money and I was also studying for my driver's license. Lastly, we were fixing our house from side-to-side and I was needed more than ever in the house, alongside with the fact my sister wanted to be with me all the time after my lunch break. She would happily draw and play with me but it would prove to be difficult to say no to her because she would instantly cry.

Everything was crashing down upon me early in the beginning of quarantine, but I said to myself, "As long as I have good grades, try to find a job, and get my license everything will be okay." That same school year, I got myself in a relationship with someone and it was one of many reasons why I tried my hardest to achieve everything as fast as I could. It was until March 2021 came along, I broke up with my partner and that took me to rock bottom, alongside with sleep deprivation and not being able to breathe properly. I started to reach out to friends for help and explained to my parents that I didn't have time to help around the house all the time. It took lots of sleepless nights, time away from my family, but I knew at the end it was all going to be worth it. I quickly not only rose back to the top, but also got higher than where I was before my mental crash and heartbreak. It got me to 3rd place in my class and got back with my partner, who helped me a lot too, and once again life was getting better.

2021-2022 school year has come, and I knew exactly what I wanted to do in my future because I was able to think a lot about myself over quarantine. I came to the conclusion that I wanted to become a fashion designer and I should sometimes put myself first when it comes to my own life, not only for myself but for my parents, and my sister. I will admit it, although I said I passed with ease, I only truly knew what I was going through, and nobody and nothing will be able to tear me down again.

Aamiya Webb

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Finishing Out Strong

“No matter how hard the past is, you can always start all over with a better journey. If you’re going through hell, KEEP GOING success will be around the corner!”

Buddha & Winston Churchill

Have you ever been put through so much pain that you feel like you can’t go any further? Well, losing my great-grandmother who’d meant the world to me really was a downfall. My grandmother and I were the best of friends. Having someone so real, well spoken and fun to be around in my life was a gift from God, but when she got sick, all “hell” came down on my family. Me being an upcoming senior, who’s supposed to graduate next year really had me off task. All I thought about was her, but I had to keep my focus. As days passed without me doing any work, I got a call from my guidance counselor. She was calling to check up on me, and gave me great advice. She wanted me to keep going for my grandmother. I then realized that I had to achieve my dreams, not just only for my grandmother, but for myself also because that's what she would have wanted me to do.

India Williams

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Mental Health

“Pain is just a place to get bars from, anxiety’s a drug that I use to get the job done, delusionals a space I like to think that I’m far from.”

-Drake

Mental health is a person’s condition with regard to their emotional well-being. Mental health has been negatively impacted during the pandemic. Going on to the new school year has been really stressful for me and others as well. Covid has a huge impact on this stress. If I am being completely honest, I really did not learn anything in online school. The work was very overwhelming. I could not learn over the computer. So, having to come to school in person with these new steps were very big steps for me. For me, staying in this house for a year and a half definitely played a huge role in my anxiety. I was so worried that I did not know how to talk to people again. But seeing my friends again makes me feel at home. The teachers are very understanding with work and I think I can do the best I have ever done this school year. Overall, our mental health has been negatively impacted during this year. I can say my anxiety from school is far away, being in school following CDC guidelines has helped so much because my education is important for me and my future.

Karmela Wynruit

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

One Step Back, TWO Steps UP.

Sometimes you have to take 2 steps back to take 10 forward.

-anonymous

Sometimes in life, you get pushed back a few steps. When this happens, you shouldn't give up or feel distraught. You should always try your best to put yourself back on your feet. If you are a good person, God will make sure you are okay. Something I went through that put me back 2 steps was Covid- 19. Covid put me out of my comfort zone and out of school. When Covid put me out of school, I lost myself and my good grades. My job shut down and nobody got paid due to the pandemic. I had to find a new job and a new way to provide for myself and my family.

My mom had caught Covid and got really, really sick. After she got sick a few months later, her cancer came back, and I also had to find a new way to "hustle" to make money and I started a business to make extra money. I did everything I could to make sure my family was taken care of. A few months went by again and my mother and I got into a disagreement and I got kicked out and was left on my own. I spent all of those months making sure everything was okay for my family just to be left on my own. I had to go live with someone for months, trying to get my stuff together. Now, I'm back in school, trying my hardest to get my grades back to straight A's. I have

my own place now and a job. I wouldn't say a better job, but I can say that God is trying his hardest to get me back on track. Life is hard, but for me, there is a no excuse policy.

Jordy Ynojosa

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Correcting Past Mistakes

“You have to be able to accept failure to get better.”

- LeBron James

Back in New York, my last two years of middle school were probably the worst I ever did when it came to academics in my entire life. During those years, I was failing for multiple reasons; from sleeping in class or listening to music and when it came to assignments, I missed most essays or homeworks that were due and if I didn't do the homework at school and I definitely didn't do it at home. It got to a point where my parents wouldn't believe any lies I told them and pressured me into changing my attitude and improving my grades, which ended up getting me frustrated and stressed out so I promised to do what I could do and from then on, I worked on homeworks that was due that day. I dealt with hardship by doing work that I considered easy first and leaving all of the hard work for last, while listening to music to feel at

ease while doing the work. This is what worked for me best back then and still works well for me now, due to the fact I can take hours on a single assignment no matter what subject it is from.

A challenge in my life for me was to change my daily behavior and attitude to something I wasn't accustomed to and what made it harder was that I went from having mostly relaxing and fun days to days where I would have to choose between work or relaxing. Eventually, my family had to move due to my dad losing his job and decided to move to Ohio where there was a friend who had a house lined up to sell and I took this opportunity to raise my future grades and behavior and it was better overall for me because my efforts at the time would probably only raise my grades to C's in my old school. From then on, I did my best to do assignments on time and at least not be disrespectful in class and overall everything has gone well for me and has been that way to this day.

Laneka Arrington

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Autobiography of Laneka

Life is a movie, but there will never be a sequel - Nicki Minaj

One of the most difficult obstacles I've ever faced in my seventeen years of life was when my mother almost went to prison. I was in the seventh grade and my mother was everything that I knew and loved. I received the news after school by my grandmother and I'll never forget the look of worry on her face when she told me, " Laneka your mom is in jail right now," I instantly started crying because I was so scared for my mom, due to her being deaf and the fear I have of her possibly being mistreated due to her disability.

My mother is extremely strong and as a woman, I look up to her not only as a mother, but a friend and a phenomenal woman. So, the thought of her not being with me worried me. The only reason I maintain strength during my mother's court dates were my siblings and my grandmother. Due to me being the oldest, my siblings looked up to me and one weak movement would've had them worried. At the end of all the court dates, my mother received probation and I couldn't be anymore happier. That situation really made me be grateful for everything because most kids don't get the chance to get their parents back. I can truly say going through that changed me and I am going to be the change for many men and women within this world.

Taurean Baldwin

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

MY LIFE

I know I'm young but I feel it's nothing I can't handle .

Life is like a hill; it can go up and down. I grew up on the west side of Cleveland. Growing up in Cleveland isn't for the weak. You have to be careful and watch your surroundings. My mom is a single mother and she was raising 3 boys by herself and it was really hard for her but she made it work. We had a lot of ups and downs, but I couldn't complain because some people have it worse. My mom always wanted me to do well in school and that was the only thing she asked me to do for her. I had a hard time with school because of my behavior and I did some regretful things but you live to learn from your mistakes. I failed a couple classes in high school but I still fought to do my best. I almost got kicked out my freshman year because of one of my decisions and I let my mom down. I still regret it today, but no matter what happens or what I do right or wrong, my mom always stood right by my side .

It's my senior year and I'm still trying to do my best and I will work my hardest this year. I'm locked in with myself and want to prove everyone wrong who doubted me and thought I was a failure. I just want to do great and be successful, no matter what it takes. I don't really know what I want to do after high school but I'm going to make it work. I really want to go to college but I don't know if I would get accepted into any because of my grades. I will try my best to find the right college for me and that will accept me. I just want to make my mom happy and that's all that matters. I will go to college and become successful and work just as hard as she did for my brothers and myself .

Kazeem Bankole

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2022

Ms. Allen

“Never judge others based on your own perceptions and by their appearance.”

- Itachi Uchiha

One obstacle I went through in life was when I was in elementary school. It was 3rd grade and my teacher's name was Ms. Allen. I went to St. Ignatius Elementary School. I got into trouble with her almost everyday, whether I deserved it or not. I'll admit, sometimes I deserved it, but when I did something, it was because she made me upset by always picking on me when I wasn't doing anything. One day, I flipped over my desk and chair and threw a temper tantrum.

The principal had to come grab me and take me to the office. Everyday, I went to her class and there was a problem. It was impossible to go a day without getting into trouble. After having a teacher where I couldn't find any way to get on her good side, I learned how to talk to teachers and act around them to make them like me. Ever since I'll say 8th grade up to now, I usually get along very well with 99% of my teachers. That one year with that teacher taught me so much and shaped my future with teachers so well. I will always hate that teacher for that and never forgive her, because she definitely had something against me, but I am happy that how bad she treated me taught me how to get along with teachers because, If you don't get along with your teachers, who is to say you can get along with people in this world?

Kimora Cleveland

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Life Goes On

I will not lose, for even in defeat, there's a valuable lesson learned, so it evens it up for me.

-Jay Z

Life is a game that does not play fair, and time does not wait on nobody. These past 2 years have been very simple, but very hard as well. Feeling like life had paused, only to enter my senior year knowing that was not true. Break downs, sleepless nights, should've, would've, could've, made me realize I want more in life. Praying for better days, less sleepless nights, and the courage to conquer anything coming my way.

Chantel Davis

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Start of New Beginnings

“Failure is not the opposite of success, It is a part of succeeding.”

- Unknown

They say after high school, that's where the big world is. I say it's just the start of you making your own decisions for your own life. All through school, your teachers ask you, “what do you want to be when you grow up?” As a kid, you say things like a lawyer or a doctor or even a police officer. By the time you hit high school that question gets more important and the closer you get to graduation, it's time to make a choice for your destiny. Growing up, my mom always told me that I would be a great lawyer because I always can say something quick to get me out of trouble.

This was around third grade. If I was to be asked the same question now, being a senior in high school, I'm still not sure on a set career. Growing up, I was opened up to a lot of different things. I taught myself how to do hair and actually fell in love with cosmetology. When I say cosmetology, I'm not just talking about hair. I'm talking about makeup, nails, and skin care. Anything that has to do with cosmetology.

Cosmetology is not just a career, it is a lifestyle. A lifestyle that involves more than hair, nails and make-up. You need to listen to your clients, help them like a psychiatrist would a patient. It is a career that is my calling, my destiny.

Rae'kwan Easter

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Longest Yard

“Everything negative - pressure, challenges - is all an opportunity for me to rise.”

Kobe Bryant

Senior year, I never had a chance to play on a field with cheering fans, cheerleaders that cheer a team on and a winning team that has worked hard since day one. Covid ruined a lot for me last year and this year is a little bit different, yet we have more obstacles to get through as a team. We are state bound as a team, we have a brotherhood that's unbearable. The season started, we had 1 goal and 1 obstacle and then it was to make the playoffs. In order to make our RUN to the PLAYOFFS, we had to have a 8-2 record. First game was here against East Tech, everyone was excited, basically “turnt.” We are all ready to go out of the gate and get a win to start off the season. Game is on and we score first! We are up 6-0. Second quarter is here and we score again, now we're up 13-0. After halftime we scored 2 more to put us up 28-0. Last quarter we scored once more to have a final score of 36-0. That was just our first game. It goes downhill after that.

Through a positive Covid test and a week of no practice we are getting ready to face a top 10 team in the state of Ohio. After losing 2 games straight we are looking hungry to come up on a good team win today against nationally ranked, The Akron Hoban Knights. Obstacles come in many forms, one cannot think about them but face them “head on,” not be afraid of failure, but face those fears and in this case as a team, win or lose, do your best to achieve your goals.

Khyla Hemphill

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Growth

“Growth is the only evidence of life”- John Henry Newman

Growth can happen to anyone, not only can you grow, you can get knocked down. Growth in character happens everyday to me, views on certain things might change or learning something new. Growth can be very minor or very big, either way, it's growth in character. There's multiple ways to grow and have growth, my peak growth in life came from my mom. Her being very ill in the hospital for months changed the way I view family, time and appreciation.

Tomorrow is never promised, so appreciate your loved ones while they're here. The growth in me realized family time and appreciation is important. I strongly believe that growth can come in multiple ways; mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. My growth is mainly on how I think and view things, through my mentality. Sometimes, growth comes unexpectedly, you don't even want to accept it at times, but there has to be a reason that you're experiencing it, right?

Taylor Howard

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Photography

“The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.”

-unknown

So, I don't want to go to college because I just want to be done with school and live my life and let the future talk for me, but just know, I want to not let me and my family down because they believe in me and I believe in them and since I want to do photography, I think I shouldn't go to school and that I just need to save up for a good job idea and promote my business and hopefully I will get noticed. Plus, I want to start a family “youtube” channel as well as a backup career, and added to that, I will hopefully still be working at the movie theater.

If not, I will have another good-paying job but I got my life planned out with my girlfriend and we know what we want to do and I have her support to help me keep moving forward in my photography career and I could also go into technology and videos and pictures. It just gets my attention completely and it depends if its a professional photoshoot and if it comes down to me having to go to school, if so, I will go for only a year because after I graduate, 2 years later, I plan on moving my girlfriend up here so we can save up for an apartment, so while I am in that

year in school, she won't be here and she will be still in school and doesn't have to worry about me being gone for too long.

Long story short, I should be having three successful jobs and my girlfriend will also be working, which will be helping me and my family and this is the future for the Anderson Howard Family.

Diandre Hubbard

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Depression is Dangerous

“In the middle of every difficulty lies an opportunity.”- Albert Einstein

I have always been the person to bottle up their emotions because I don't like to feel weak or vulnerable. I've been through so much from losing family members, getting bullied and even losing myself from time to time. When the pandemic first started, I was extremely happy because it meant that we wouldn't be in school and I was actually doing well in school. By the time Junior year came around, I thought I was ready but I started to slack and in no time, I started to fail all my classes. I didn't feel like myself at all, I just wanted to sleep, cry, and eat. Some days, I didn't even log in for school and I didn't care, not even a little bit. School is stressful but that

wasn't the only thing that was causing my sadness. I had two jobs, and my schedule was full, I didn't have time to breathe, so I did what seemed right. I quit one of my jobs. Hoping that I would feel like myself again, I felt so much worse, I could tell whatever was going on wasn't right but I still didn't tell anyone about it because I don't want anyone worrying about me.

Still dealing with my sadness, I went to this nursing program (Aspire Nursing Program) that I signed up for. The program lasted for 12 weeks and I enjoyed myself, but I still felt empty. The program ended and so did school, so that meant summer was about to begin. I wanted to distract myself from “myself” so I planned to go somewhere every weekend. Unfortunately, I didn't go somewhere every weekend but I did go places. My depression came back (if it was ever really gone) after I came back from the movies and I got into trouble for not calling my parents to tell them where I was. I was so angry and sad, I wanted to hurt myself but I didn't and I'm so glad I didn't because I would have hurt a lot of people. This was the biggest and most important obstacle that I have ever had to overcome. I have learned that my depression doesn't go away, I just have to cope in good ways like singing or writing; things that make me happy.

Berna Johnson

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Your Success and Happiness Lie in You

Let me start by introducing myself. My name is Bernae Johnson and I'm 17 years old. I live in Cleveland, Ohio. I grew up with 4 siblings. 3 sisters and my twin brother. My mom was the only parent in the house. I go to Cleveland Central Catholic and I am now a senior. I grew up in a nice home and nice neighborhood until about 13, then my family and I got kicked out of our home and I was forced to become homeless. This is my story.

Soon after this tragedy, I started living with my dad. He was barely there. He stopped coming after a while. We had no electricity and it was winter time!! We had no food and no heat and that meant no hot water.....We were there for months until my dad finally came back to check up on us. My mom was so angry that she told him “off.” Then he had the nerve to kick us out back onto the streets in the winter time!! My mom was feeling so stressed out because at the time, me and my brother were in school. Soon after, my cousin let us stay with them. I hated it there. They never cleaned. The house was a mess and plus I hate staying with a lot of boys. We stayed there for about a year until my mom found her own apartment. I was so happy to finally be out of that “hell” hole. Throughout the year of me living with my cousins, I was being sexually assaulted by one of them. I never told anyone because I was so scared that no one would believe me and I believed my situation was not as bad as other people's situations. Hell, I was even more embarrassed that I had to tell my family and friends that my cousin forcefully took my virginity at 12 years old. After a while, I started taking an interest in social work. I wanted to help kids and teenagers like me to get out of horrible situations like the one I experienced. I know this is what I was called to do. Situations can be prosperous and even horrible, it's what is learned from

them and how one can help others after one may go through something so horrible. I will help and make sure something horrible cannot happen to another young female or male.

Christopher Marshall

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Father Figure

Through God all things are possible

- Matthew 11:26

A lot of people say that a single mother can not make it on her own, well those individuals are wrong and let me explain my theory. I guess you can say it all started when I was born, day 1 into the new world. They say that when a child is being developed or when a child is in the stomach of their mother, they can recognize their mother and father's voices. Before I was born, I really didn't understand much about anything until I got older between day 1 and 5 years old. I started recognizing my mother more in my life than my father. I used to come home and say, "mom, where's my dad? Everybody else has theirs but where's mine?" She knew the truth but she couldn't break my heart. When I needed something, my mother was always there, always in my shoes, always guiding me in the right direction and also supporting me and my opportunities.

I knew from the age of five that she proved that she needs no one or anybody's help. Every year I got older and I got smarter but I always started to understand the problems and the reasons

why my father was never there and mostly they were bad things/reasons. Around the age of seven to ten years old, I kind of understood that my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and I was five when she knew, but she wanted to wait for the right time to tell me. Yes, it did hurt but I didn't fully understand it at the time. When I was in middle school, I got bullied a lot from six to eighth grade and there were very tragic moments for me. The second week of school everybody hated me because they judged a book by its cover and they never got a chance to see or understand the real me. So, from that day forward, I got picked on because of my mother who had cancer and for my father not being in my life. Also when I got talked about, it led me to having depression, anxiety and also suicidal thoughts and I ended up in the hospital a few times.

I feel like my mom knew, but I didn't think she wanted to understand it right then and there but when she knew she had to "switch up," look at things differently and see the bigger picture, she saw what was going on. Yes I cried everyday, yes my mom cried everyday, yes I had nobody to talk to, yes I was lonely but I knew at the end of the day, I had my mother, the one who I could depend on and lean on. Yes, we had arguments but we knew we had to trust each other and believe in the man upstairs and pray to God to make sure everything was ok. When I graduated from middle school, that was the happiest day of my life because I escaped bullying. I believe in myself more with the grace of God, I had my mother on my side. I figured I would be ok but that's not all. As soon as I was out of middle school, I guess you can say the truth was finally spoken about my father. My mother sat me down and she said, "Son, it's time for the truth." I was like I knew this day was coming. She said, "before you were born, your father cheated on me with several women. "When I told him I was pregnant," he said, "what am I going to tell my other girlfriend?" That tragedy broke my heart knowing that he said and did something like that. "When you were born and when I first held you for the first time, I knew I had to step up as a

mother and also play that father figure, I had to take your places when your father said he didn't have time for you and it broke my heart when you were five years old when he left you waiting on him at your grandma's house for six hours and never came. I had to work two jobs to keep a roof over our heads, but also make sure you had the things you needed and wanted." When I heard all of that, it didn't hit me at first because it was a lot to process and understand but when it hit me, I was hurt badly wondering what I did to deserve anything like this? For years, I was left with no answers and till this day, I'm still looking for answers. But now I am a senior about to graduate from high school. I would say my mother did a "damn" great job raising her son from day 1. June 20th, 2004 all of the way to June 20th, 2022, she did an amazing job for 18 years all on her own with The Amazing Grace of God. I thank her for keeping me in church every Sunday, I thank her for keeping me off the streets from gangs, drugs and also alcohol. I couldn't ask more from her. I may not be the smartest, but I'm also not the dumbest. Jay-Z once said "Mama ain't raise no fool, put me anywhere on God's green Earth, I'll triple my worth..." People don't know how well I bowl, I've been bowling since I was 5 years old and every day and every year I try to improve my game. I put in 30+ hours of bowling a week so I can become one of the greatest, also hoping one day a school will recruit me.

Jehmarion Moore

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Never Give Up

The right time, the right job to have you turnt up.

- babyface ray

This quote pretty much means never give up and if you keep working, stay consistent and your time will come. Everyone has struggles, nobody just shoots to the top unless you were born into wealth. Every change that's a negative, one can make that change into a positive, it just takes time to happen. I just had a positive change from getting into trouble to maturing and understanding life and finding out who I really am.

I was in the juvenile detention center last year and was just making bad decisions and hanging with the crowd that was just making poor decisions. I just kept trying and praying that I can start doing good and stay a free man forever and live life free on the outside, trying to be out of the court's and the system. Even though I am going to court now for something old, I am learning from my mistakes, staying out of trouble and going to take all that I have learned to make a better life for myself. Don't do the wrong things that I have done, do the right things that I am going to do.

Jose Murillo

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Covid

“You have to be able to accept failure to get better.”

- LeBron James

Being a sophomore, half way through the year, I wasn't stressing about school or anything. Still had two whole school years to go through. One year before I started thinking about colleges, I still had time to try new things like clubs, but then the first quarantine hit in March happened, which didn't bother me till it got extended for the rest of the sophomore year. Then hoping to go back to school for my junior year, we got told that we are not having in-person classes till November. Then the quarantine became extended.

Waking up at seven in the morning to go to my living room to do school felt so strange. It felt like I was just wasting time just getting to do school classes. It felt like rainy days with nothing to do but be on your phone just making you feel distracted from the day even though you're not getting any positive learning from the school year and with my parents not wanting me to attend in-person classes it gave me a bored look of the whole year coming up. Just a lot of wasted time.

Butoto Ngungu

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Have A Little Faith In God

Believe in yourself and all that you are. know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle. - Christian D. Larson.

I question that Jesus is God. But once I talked to others, they helped me understand that Jesus is God. And my faith teaches me this. Sometimes, I can feel bored going to church, but my mom pushes me to go to church. Sometimes, I learn to be faithful from her because she is very strong in faith. That's how I keep my faith strong because I have someone to help me stay faithful. Sometimes it can be hard when you face a challenge, but you still have to have your faith. When I grow up, I want to teach my kids to be faithful and go to church because I believe Faith gives us motivation, hope, and desire to want to be a faithful person.

In this life, there are many challenges that we all have to face. For me, there are some challenges that I face when I grow up. Back in Africa, life was for me. As a little girl, I have to face some challenges, such as starting to work and helping your mother at Farm even when you are little. I had no father. My Mother was the only father and Mother that I have. I was born in the camp and I grew up there. At Camp we didn't have a life like others. We ate one or two times a day. There was no food at school. I was crying and crying when I came back home from school and I didn't see any food to eat. My mother's struggle, try to feed 8 kids by herself. As I was growing up I felt sorry to see how my mother struggled to make sure we had something to eat. But you know what keeps me strong. Hope. I had a hope that one day God would hear our prayers and he would give us a better life. It's like when you keep growing up, you keep learning and releasing many things. Some challenges give us strength and keep our eyes open. Life was hard, but the

only thing that kept me strong was having faith. My mom makes me have strong faith by telling me to not forget to pray and be thankful for what I have. The way she fights and struggles for us to have a better life, that keeps me going and has given me faith that nothing is impossible in God when you believe. That inspires me and that gives me the strength to keep up with what I want to do in life and to never give up. Sometimes it can be hard when you face many challenges, but most importantly, it is to keep believing. Faith is important to me because it is the only thing that keeps me strong and still believing that everything is possible.

?

Roza Rasable

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Covid Catastrophe

“The obstacles of life or of bad things do not make you go back or do not cause you to give up trying to fight until you reach your goals.” - Ms. Roza Rasable

When the Covid epidemic broke out, education was suspended and a number of people died and people were confused and the world felt like it was a very big blow. My advice to my brothers and sisters is to agree to the Covid vaccine, so that we can protect ourselves and others.

The effect is to wear a mask for lack of friends because everyone is protecting themselves and what I have learned in this life, is that we have to be ready for anything because we don't know what tomorrow brings. Let's take an example to Covid, we didn't know if that was going to happen to us, but it did. That should be a lesson to us, in order to stay safe we need to follow the rules, such as wearing our masks and stay 6 feet apart. Covid has given us a hard time, like going to online school. This type of academics makes people lose many things, but we need to be thankful to God for how great he is and the many blessings we have in our lives.

Jaymiere Ratliff

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Quote Goes Here

The challenge I went through in life as a kid is when my mom lived in a very domestic home; she used to get abused by her lover when she was very young and I remember that when he used to come home drunk and he would yell at my mom for something she didn't do. Also, it was that night that he came home and punched my mother's tooth out of her mouth. I was only six years

old at the time and she was really bleeding a lot and her face was swollen by the following year. She finally had left him and we went to go stay with my grandmother for awhile, then we moved into a house from my great grandmother and it was pretty trashed; it was infested with bugs and rodents, so we had to move out and we had nowhere to go so we went to the homeless shelter for almost a year and a half. We had been living there for awhile and we finally got a chance through this program. We got a house down in the projects. We were there for a while and we finally had moved into a good house and now my mom is a nurse at a hospital and she is living her dream. I don't know what I would do without my mom and I love her with all of my heart. It is because of her that I am successful and it is because of her that I will be successful, because she is and never let anyone get her down and out.

Ja Kiya Spivey

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Undecided

You're closer to where you're trying to get then where you started from. So keep going.

- Nipsey Hussle

The college essay: What am I supposed to talk about? My English teacher keeps hounding me to get this essay done. He tells me, “You’re going to college, you are going to be successful!” He states, “You need a strong essay for a scholarship.” The truth is that I have no idea what to write about or talk about. So, I am just going to be honest. You have to start somewhere, so I am going to start with me.

I’m a 17 year old girl who lives with her grandma. I’m not sure what I want to do with life right now. If you were to ask me as a kid, I’d probably say some over the top answer but now, I just want to be happy and stable.

I know that I want to go to college but I’m not sure what for. I know this is common for a lot of people but I’m just the kind of person who needs to know what my next move will be. I often catch myself trying to overplan my future but it can get stressful trying to plan the unpredictable. Some things are just inevitable.

Elijah Toe

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Hard Times Don't Last

“Remember times got so hard, I got it tattooed”

-Rod Wave

A young boy born in Akron, Ohio raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Always had his nose into plenty of things and never knew what was in store for him. Skating caught his interest for a while, then becoming a doctor, until one day, he went outside and saw his friends throwing an oval object and running. He wanted to join in on the fun, when he caught the ball, he got hit and that moment, that oval object never left his head or hands, it stuck with him for the rest of his life.

As a teenager, he got into some trouble, getting him kicked out of his first high school, not noticing how bad those little things were important for the development of his educational career. Moving on to his next high school, having to sit out the whole basketball season because of his mistakes, bad grades and poor choices then “WHAMO,” Covid 19 hits. Lost the rest of my sophomore year. He then decided that the school he was going to before wasn't a good fit for him. Waking up at 4:30 a.m. to a 2 hour bus ride everyday was not cutting it for me. He found a school closer to where he was living, with a beautiful basketball program, spoke with the coach and he helped me get into the school and we started the workout process to get us ready for the upcoming season.

Then things changed, he changed into me, me and my brother decided to move to Texas for a safer environment. So, there we are in El Paso, Texas living with our sister. Very grateful for the opportunity to make the varsity football team but then another setback. I couldn't play because I was ruled ineligible by the city because my sister didn't have custody of me. I only played on the junior varsity games and made sure my grades were in tip top shape. For the first time in my high school career, I made honor roll, but my brother on the other hand was flunking and my sister wasn't having it. He kept getting into trouble, I believe because he didn't want to be down there so we had a conversation with her about coming back to Cleveland Ohio. If he was leaving, I

was too. I got in touch with my the school that I had gotten kicked out for another chance and I told the Dean who is the head football coach that I had bettered myself and I wanted to play football for the program, but I could tell he didn't want me in that school, so I let the the coach from the school I transferred know that I was coming back and he was excited and ready for me to get back on board. We finished the process to get me back into the school and there I was at Cleveland Central Catholic. Varsity basketball, baseball, football, track and field player. Your decisions truly do make your future.... My future will continue to grow.



The Poetry

No End To Success

There is no end to success, I realized that through all my regress.

As I am going through the thick and storms of my life, in the end, all I want to be is successful.

I always sit and think about “why me?” sometimes, but then I realize that failing isn't a crime.

As I go through this journey of confusion in the end, I hope it was all a delusion.

I get sad with no one by my side to help with support, but then I look to the man above.

I just want to shine as bright as the sun and be successful and fun

As I am writing this poem, I cry and think of my miserable sad life at times,

Wishing and hoping I don't commit a crime in order to find happiness.

All I want to do is shine,

be successful with no end to success.

Jason Alexander

A Dream

I dream of having a successful life.

A dream where I can have a little peace of mind.

A dream where I can have a kid.

**A dream that I can make enough money
where they won't go through the things,**

I went through growing up.

**A dream living on top of a hill,
where I can see everything below me.**

A dream that all I do is smile.

Rubin Berry

All gas no breaks

All gas no breaks
I will keep pursuing my dream until my back aches
All gas no breaks
While you're working hard you're going to get tested by some snakes
All gas no breaks
When you keep pushing, it'll be easy as cake.
All gas no breaks
To be successful it takes a couple retakes.

A'millyan Bonds

Life is a challenge, meet it
Life is a gift, accept it
Life is a tragedy, face it
Life is a opportunity , take it
Life is a struggle , fight it
Life is a goal, achieve it
Life is a game , outsmart it
Life is great , make something good of it
life is a celebration, eat, laugh and do meditation

Nastassja Boone

I don't want to be another one in my family to not graduate
I want to be the first but not the last,
I am glad I got the motivation around me
The people to push me
And the spirit to do it
But better yet, I have me
I am going to do this
I AM GOING TO BE THE FIRST BUT NOT THE LAST.....

Danely Caraballo

You heard of the story Green Eggs and Ham?
But let me show you who I really am.
But what were you saying when you were just playing?
I love sleeping and eating.
Food always finds a way to me.

But going to see the sun rise does something to me.
Gives me butterflies and hope,
Hopefully I don't choke.

Kyia Carr

Accomplishments

Own your accomplishment
No matter how insignificant anyone else may be
May try to make it seem
Own it!
Feel it!
Indulge!
Live in your moment
We all don't grow at the same rate
Be gentle with yourself
You don't have anything to prove
Roses don't have to be fully bloomed to
Be beautiful
You are beautiful just the way you are
Exactly where you stand.

Samirra Davis

Tell me not of failure,
Tell me not of bad a dream,
Tell me something that I would like to see and hear,
Tell me of the beautiful moments we cherished in our life.
Tell me all the places you have seen with me,
This dream is all we wanted.
Only to return to this earth in the end,
A happy ending to this beautiful dream...

Zaria Goodrum

Be Somebody

I want to be somebody,
I don't want to spend the rest of my life thinking about what I could have done.
I want to accomplish everything that others think I can't
Everything I want in life I WILL achieve,
That future car, house, salon, and office I want , I'll get
I want my younger sisters and cousins to tell their friends what I accomplished,
To look at what I have done and see that they can do it too.
No matter how many times I fall, no matter what obstacles I may face,
I will be **SOMEbody**

Aiyonna Hill

Since a little boy I always wanted to be great
Never really knew what great meant til I was like 8

Boxing boxing boxing was always on my mind
People always told me I was one of a kind

Want to be successful and have a family
Father figures in and out my life no one was a man to me

Big dreams of being a Boxer
Buh one of my biggest dreams is being a father

Daylen Houze

CRACKS AND DECAY

I want to be balanced so I can stand
I want to take a shot before it ends
I want to be bright as the sun so I can be done
In my vision, I am nothing but fun

Rage has been nothing but an enemy, but I have found a friend in me.
I want to own something more valuable than pins and needles,
I want to value my emotional wealth, so that I can have a good health,
All I want is to feel complete, so that I don't end up in tragedies full of weeps.

Aaron Johnson

I want to be successful
I don't know how yet,
But something rich,
Not lying somewhere dead in a ditch.
I want to make lots of money,
And live life comfy,
I will never be broke,
And chase my dream for as long as I hope.....

Willie Mason

Work hard and your dream will come true,
Never stray and do good,
I want to leave for school,
I want to go to college,
I want to serve customers,
I want to own a restaurant,
I want to own a store.....
This is my dream.

Michael Moguel

Close to entering the field,
there is no exit,
even before the start of the game.
You hear the fans screaming,
the players then sing their song,
his football
best match
And at the whistle,
the crowd started screaming,
in 90 tense minutes
the players were able to score goals,
My goal is just beginning.

Richard Payne

I always had this dream to be a neonatal nurse
The best nurse to ever specialize with babies.
I want to go to college to study nursing.
I love babies so much I hate when people make the decision to abort a baby.
Everyone deserves to live their life to the fullest.
All the things I hear about babies being abused, kidnapped, etc.
That makes me sad. I love babies.
I know I will be a good, loving, caring nurse,
This will be a dream that never gets skipped over,
I'm going to keep going until it gets accomplished
This dream is FOREVER!

Danasia Robinson

My dream is to have kids,
Have my future wife happy,
To be able to fix my daughter's hair when it's nappy,
Make my family successful,
Not only in money,
Just pure happiness,
I have a dream that I wanna make become reality,
One day I will.

Yusif Salti

Dream to A Reality

There's love and there's fake love,
Want to see the man above.
Tired of seeing bullets, take out the guns,
A lot of people are dying and it's no fun.
Killing people is wrong,
Put pain and feelings in my songs.
Feel the emotions, now they fly away like angels,
And all of the lights are shining bright....

Intelligent Smiley

I Have Done It

My dream of being a young actor.
I graduated from college.
I make my mother proud.
I married the perfect girl for me.
I have done it.
I am becoming the person I was meant to be.
I am the future ME!
My mother is so proud!
My father is so proud.
My whole family is so proud of me.
I don't want a lot in life.
I just want to be the best version of ME!
I HAVE DONE IT!

Jer'Rontae Smith

My Dream

I am generous and empathetic
I am curious about the afterlife
I am a dog talking
I am a tree walking
I am ready to leave
I am still mourning my brother
I am loving my dog
I am hyperactive
I am successful

Yvette Mone Smith

Dreams

My dream is I'll go to school and do something with my life.
I'll chase my dreams and fight through my obstacles,
I won't give up on myself when my dreams don't come true fast enough,

I'll let God do his work.
I will believe that my dream will come true,
I've always believed I'll become the first doctor (OBGYN) in my family.
I'll make my family proud.
I'll make myself PROUD.

BryAjha Weeden

College Bound

It's hard to say, being a young man with an open road,
I don't know what I want, if I had to say so.
I am an athlete and that path I may go down,
I also want that success, to be the man about town.
I don't know what I really truly want and that is the truth,
FAILING is not an option, I pray that this life will go smoothly.
I wanna make my family proud,
One day everybody will be saying my name out loud.

Tyler Andrews

Pillow Talk

I once heard a quote that goes like this.....
"A dream means nothing if it is left on a pillow,"
I never knew how much it meant,
Yet, the meaning is far greater than the image.
My pillow is big, soft and full of "stuff."
STUFF that swirls inside my head, stuff that gets cloudy,
STUFF that dreams are truly made from.
And my Stuff is nothing but success and happiness.
Which is a dream that I plan on making my reality.

Jai'La Davis-Smith

It's My Business

I'm the girl with the big dream,
One day, I will have a palace and will be the Queen.
Looking at the future, sitting here thinking,
It seems that in this world, as leaders, we are sinking.

One day I will be that leader and be my own boss,
My life will light this world like it's 10,000 WATTS.
I will be the flavor that will be in the sauce,
And show people I am that boss.

ShyAnne Evans

Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio,
A girl that has dreams,
A girl that wants to graduate high school,
A girl that wants to go to college,
A girl that wants her PhD,
A girl that wants to become a Criminal Psychologist, A girl that wants to make her family proud,
A girl who wants to get closer to God,
A girl who wants her own family,
That girl is Me.

Danaysia Harris

Minding My Business

Owning my own business, it runs in the family,
Cooking whatever it takes, by the looks of it, everything is good, just taste and see.
Once you taste and see you'll be glad to have a smooth bite,

Once you leave the restaurant, better loosen those pants, your belt will be too tight.
The pots and pans crashing while the chefs and employees are cooking a nice big burger,
Furthermore, I met a man named Herbert and he loved sherbert (ice cream),
That made me wonder if he would be a cool fit at the shop?
But it once made me realize that I will fulfill my dream, it can never stop.

Zavien Jones

Conquering My Dreams

I have big dreams for myself.
I want to be more than I am today.
I want to Graduate High school with my class.
I want to join the AirForce.
I want to open a restaurant with my best friend.
I want to be so famous that everyone knows my name.
A youtuber by the name of Prince EA said
“that if you believe you can achieve your dreams”
I believe I will achieve my dreams!

Quentin Latimer

Ever since I was young, I wasn't really good at football.
I wasn't as fast or big as other kids until I got into high school.
But before high school, people would doubt me or even say bad things about me.
It wasn't just about football, it was about everything I wanted to do.
Even until this day, people would talk down on me or say bad things about me.
After that, I really wanted to pursue my dream of being a professional football player.
After everything I heard and things that people said to me,
It made me even more hungry to pursue that dream.
So, right now, I am doing what I can or even going beyond to do it.
I even think about “what if?” Or any of that, I think about what I am doing now.

Rayshawn Ligon

After college I want to explore
I want to see more of the world
There's nothing that can stop me
And failing is not an option
All I want is to succeed
Make money and mind my business
I can't wait to have dr. in front of my name
For that to happen I have to keep my head in the game

Geriana McMiller

My sister went to school and graduated high school,
She never went to college, yet she finished high school.
While she was pregnant she missed out on life itself, her education.
But she ended up giving up on her education,
When I came to the United States my sister told me,
To keep up with school even though she did not.
Education is important to the people we just know,
Work hard push yourself and you will see how,
School is important if you focus on it and never give up.

Bukuru Ngungu

First EVER

I am going to be the first, the first for many things,
I will be the first to get that diploma and see what that may bring,
I will be the first to graduate with a baby on my hip, I will be the first to be the one to go on
many trips,
I will succeed with my little seed, I will help many animals with any needs,
I will be the first to become rich, I will be the first to create a business,
Animals will call my name, I will be there greatest hero,
Alani will call my name while be the first to walk the stage, as her hero
I am the first to be the one to make my dreams come true, I am the first to be alanis greatest role
model yes that's true!

Leilani Rodriguez

I dream to get an great education, to graduate with a degree,

**I dream of making my “momma” proud of the way she raised me.
I dream to be successful, to make loads of cash,
I dream that I will love what I do, so everyday I can enjoy the task
I dream to find someone who loves me and truly gets me,
I dream of marrying that man and having lots of babies.
I dream to have a happy life, the life that I will build.
I dream to have no regrets because all my dreams will be fulfilled.**

Nya Bledsoe

What do you think of when you hear the word future?
Do you think of a bright sunny place where you are contemptuous?
Or do you think of a world where you feel exempt?
What do I think of?
Well for me, I see a future full of love,
Full of wealth,
And even great health.
To me my future looks bright,
Just as long as I do the present right.
So let me ask,
“What do you think of when you hear the word future?”

Sanshae Bonner

Best version by Shyann

*All my hopes and dreams have all been rearranged
I have learned since I get older
I never wanted to have fame or own fancy cars
Or set foot on the moon and study all the stars
I want to help babies or little children too
Wanted to be the best type of hero so I can take care of you
I want to be the best version of me
I don't want to wake up and have to wonder what could be
I want to be the best version of me
I want to say “I gave today all that I had within.”*

Shyann Chike

College is my first choice
Which college will I choose?
That is only my decision
In state, out of state
Wherever I go, I know I will be great
Nursing is my desired profession
It will be hard
But I know I will be able to pursue it.

Autumn Cozart

**I want to be a nurse who patients love to see
I want to be that nurse who patients feel comfortable talking to about their problems
I want to be a loving wife and a loving mother to my children someday
I want to be successful in life and very wealthy
I know I will be successful, I will not let people get me down
I will not let anyone tell me what I should be or what I should be doing
I have come a long way, it ha been some long days
I know in the end everything will pay off.**

Dashanay Debose

Across the ocean high in the sky
I want to be the girl who travels to Dubai
Maybe meet a prince who lives in a palace
Who likes to shop all over the Atlas.

We can ride “dune” buggies
or play in the sand.
And have a whirlwind of fun
All over the land.

Cieanna Dunbar

The dream to be a vet
It is going to be hard to do.

It is a dream you bet!
It might be hard for you to.
The dream to care for pets
It will be a dream come true.
It is a dream you bet!
To help them when they catch the flu.

Tyler James Epler

I aspire to be a beautiful black goddess
with great wisdom, knowledge and information
I dream to help others and teach them the value of who we are
and our history
I want to be a criminal justice/ africana advocate
I also wish to be a successful business owner, my biggest goal is to be able to give back to my
people.

Key'Asia-Dione Evans

Asking about my dreams...hmm I don't know what to say,
Even though I just thought about it the other day.
Of course I want to be rich and famous,
Come on now, you know this, don't be an ignoramus.

Don't say, "aren't you too old for dreams?"
When you're 35 sitting around and posting memes.
I want to be a very successful nurse, with a husband and a big family,
That is truly what I wish to see.

Robert Frost

My Life

Me and my dog, in a car on the road
Sightseeing, observing, trying things and more
Different cultures with foods, games, clothes to try
Taking pictures, making memories that make you hesitant when saying goodbye

Then coming home from a journey, with trinkets and souvenirs
Some recipes, books, paintings all carrying stories to share in the following years,
Crossing names off a list to where I've already been,
Looking forward to next time, my face is already wearing a grin.

E'lysha Greene

I dream to be somewhere living large,
Feet kicked up while Shannon plays basketball in the garage.
Kids at school so I have no worries,
With a great job that starts everyday at 6:30.
I dream to be a dentist, the best one there is,
With an NBA husband, good role models for our kids.
My kids will never hear the word "no,"
All the love and grace I have for them is what I intend to show.
I have high expectations for myself as you can see,
I'll never end up as a missing black girl you'll see on your TV.
I love to share these dreams to motivate others,
We can beat every statistic, all we have is each other.

Imanee Henderson

Expectations for myself so high but everyone's low
I expect myself to be so much but they expect me to not grow
Doubted the whole time they whisper i won't do it
Been doing everything recently to show that i'll prove it
Offers on offers i feel like a D1 athlete
They given the letters with all the money yeah that's me
But there is still so much work to be done
I haven't made it yet i have not won
But watch ill be done soon
Making 150 bands by 22

Luis Madera

My dreams are countless like the stars,
To travel, explore, and discover so far.
Some are simple but most are as complex as a paradox.
I hold passionate rants about them to those who listen, others only see a delusional chatterbox.
They leave me dumbfounded
By selfishness and guilt I find myself surrounded
Holding on to faith that throughout the years I shall wisen
And pushing everything back until a new horizon.

Lesly Martinez

A healer mends and repairs
A healer doesn't take but shares
 A healer restores and connects
 To be empathetic but also able to disconnect
 To be sympathetic and compassionate
 Pure of heart and majestic the perfect conglomerate
 The healer is ahead of his/her time, wise with chakras all aligned
 This is why the healer was designed
 Purity and Divinity conducts their symphony
 To be a healer and reside in the essence of oneness is what I can imagine for me.

Michaela Nobles

She's worn
what was once new now old
no longer fitting the figure
that everyone knows

She's threaded
many times being freed
constantly getting stuck
but she pushes through anything that gets thrown her way

She's layered
covering what use to be
what she takes off
feels like a weight being lifted off her shoulders
now it feels likes somethings missing

She's destroyed
with rips torn from side to side
like a open wound that won't close

She's big and loud
like a voice
that can travel for miles

She's extended
with her roles and goals
and each time she achieve a goal the potential
grows and grows

She's colored
black shows power
blue gives confidence
yellow brings joy
green displays nature
white shines bright and red meaning danger
all colors make one personality.

Shelby Sawyer

I am not who they think I am
I am someone worth more
I am someone with grit
Someone with a passion
Someone who wants better for himself
Someone who is perseverant
Who breaks all stereotypes

I am not who they think I am

Tariq Shabazz

I dream of being strong
A life where I get what I deserve after all my hard work,
Where all I have done will be recognized with great honor.
A wish where my distress and suffering is known just as the world's

I dream of being at peace
A life where I get what I want after my end,
Where all I will do be known from child to adult,
A wish where there is no pain or sower on the planet, where no one is left behind.

Christopher Torres

**I always had a dream of being great.
Graduating High School and later going to college.
Go to Alabama State University and study Accounting.
While in college, I want to start a great expanding business.
Get a beautiful home in L.A.
Go back to school for my master's degree and study choreography.
Get me a studio and become a choreographer. Like Langston Hughes said, "hold fast to
their desires and goals, because without them, life is bleak and without hope.
"I Will hold on to my dreams because later in life I will become something!"
Dreams will come true.**

Aaimiya Webb

Society says being young, black, and a female will basically get you nowhere in life.
Stay home while your man gets you right

But me, I'm too hard-headed to listen to what any man has in mind
I'm determined, I know what I want in my life
I want to be that brave black woman in a suit, defending people's lives
Defending people's justice, rights and their time
I don't want to be a sit a home bride
I want to do what is best for me and strive
They said that black young girl wasn't going to be anything in life, well they lied
I dream of becoming a lawyer, doing what's right for me and my pride.

India Williams

I want to be a great student, daughter and girlfriend in life.
I want to be the best that I can be in life.
When I go to college, I want to pass all my classes with an A+ and really hope for a great relationship with my professors.

I hope I never get tired of fighting for what I believe in.
When I get older, I hope I'm the best police officer that I can be.
I want to be able to help people and not hurt them,
I want to be the best that I can be.

Karmela Wynruit

I dream of an easy life
A life where money flows like a river
A life where my house is the shining among the rest
A life where my family is blessed with nothing but good things
A life where we have enough "fast cars" to hand down to the rest of my family
A life where at the end of the day I can look back and smile
A life most could only dream of
I dream of an easy life.

Jordy Ynojosa

Overtime things will change,
Overtime things will go my way,
Overtime people will see the real me,
Overtime, good things comes in threes,
Overtime things will change, you will see.
Overtime I will become a better human being,
Overtime, I will seek for bigger and better,
Overtime, I will become a “go-getter.”
Overtime.....

Donnicha D. Fitzgerald

Many dreams come to mind
New and old ones
Some may be easier to achieve than others
But should not give up
Dreamed to travel
See more of the world
Dreamed to be successful
And work for myself.

Khyla Hemphill

Just wait and see, on what is going to happen to me,
Just wait and see, on where life is going to take me,
Just wait and see, where me and my big family might be,
Just wait and see, my entrepreneur and photography career is going to succeed.
Just wait and see, like when I was little I told y'all to wait for me,
Just wait and see, how I'm going to take off and succeed and make y'all believe in me.
Just wait and see, how an amazing mother and wife I will be,
Just wait and see, how everyone will be screaming my name when I walk down the street.

Taylor Howard

Story I'm Writing

The beginning has to catch your attention,
So many things I have to mention,

I know I need characters and a setting,
How about old people at a wedding?
People love conflict, when everything goes wrong,
Should the story be short or really long?
When its finished, I'll have all the glory,
I can't believe I'm writing MY story.

Diandre Hubbard

Silly Dream

Blanket tight in bed
Sleeping in the moons shade
I see me living free
Looking out towards the sea
Money falling of trees
Being blown by the breeze
I see dogs swim
Where the sun light is dim
But then I hear a scream
I awoke from my dream.

Jose Murillo

Just a little girl from Tanzania.

Just a little girl from Tanzania,
Just a little girl Who always dreamed to be successful in life,
Just a little girl who wants to help people and her community.
That same little girl who want to go to college,
That little girl who dreams to Make her Mother and Family proud.
That same little girl who dreams to have her own house,
That little girl who dreams to have a wonderful husband who loves her for who she is.
And that Same little girl who dreams to Build a family together with her lover and enjoy life.

Butoto Ngungu

I dream of being a role model doctor,
and I also dream of being the greatest soccer player I have ever dedicated myself to,
but there are people I see who do not want me to succeed because they tell me that here in the
United States I can't be a great doctor because I came from Africa but I don't care about their
words, I hope I will do well and I will achieve my dreams or goals, I also have advice for
everyone or classmates, do not be easily offended, do your best to be patient and give yourself
hope that you will succeed, there is a God will answer your prayers. Do not worry about the
words of the people.

Roza Rasable

I dream of wealth and prosperity.
I hope to make it to where I wanna be.
I dream of having a family
Who loves and cares for me.
I aspire to be an understanding mother,
And an enduring lover.
I want to be able provide
Peace and tranquility.

Ja Kiya Spivey

