

## **2012 Graduation Speech**

### **Class Speaker: JMSF Resident**

Good morning, I would like to open by thanking the Education and Administration Departments at the Training School and Johnstone Campus, as well as everyone else that made it possible for us to be here today enjoying one of the greatest moments of our lives. I also want to thank the families for coming and supporting us in spite of the situation and environment surrounding us. We should consider this to be one of our greatest accomplishments. I hope from here we move on and be successful and positive in whatever we do in our lives.

For us, this is a time of new beginning and change. We are at the center of transforming our generation. We will accomplish what people have said we are not capable of. We must make the impossible possible! It is time for us to make a change for the better. Some of us need help in making this change. Instead of giving up on us, help us; show us the way, so we can help ourselves. We are told the JJC is all about “Realizing Potential and Changing Futures.” We can make that a reality; don’t let it become a lie! Realize the potential, that some of us are afraid to show or acknowledge that we possess. Help us change our future.

I must say that it does bother me that we, as young adults have what it takes in life to make it, but still we ended up where we are. It is not impossible for us to be school and street smart; that is something that we must acknowledge. One of our major downfalls is that we focus too much on where we come from and what we did in that environment. It’s not about where we are from; it’s about where we want to go in the future. It’s about what we are currently doing to improve our lives. That is most important.

One thing we must have in life is the knowledge of ourselves, which comes with a collection of wisdom. Too many of us try to be infamous and maintain an aggressive reputation. What we need is to maintain a reputation that carries the wisdom and knowledge of life!

We stand here today upon the mountain of the future. It is not a dream or a hope or a distant reality anymore. The road to our future starts here. It starts now. We should consider this as a learning experience. The things we learn here, we can learn nowhere else. One of the most important things I have learned with the JJC is solving a problem doesn’t mean ignoring the cause of it. By this I mean we cannot be angry because we are here. We need to open ourselves to resolving the issues that will prevent us from going back to our communities and doing the same things that brought us here. The first step is to acknowledge that we have problems that need to be addressed. Our problems are not original. So many in our generation and in the past have made the same mistakes and lived the same lives.

I believe that, in the right hands, we can be some of the greatest people to ever walk this earth and some day change the world. We need to remember that we cannot change the world until we change ourselves. So, listen when I say, “This is the beginning of our change and we, as graduates, need to wake up and acknowledge the fact we need to change in our everyday lifestyle if not for ourselves, then for our families, community and our generation.” We can defeat the odds, regardless of the negative and discouraging things that are said about us. You can do anything you set your mind to, and our minds need to stay focused on success.

Some people change the world, while some people add to its destruction. There is no doubt that we will come out on top if we stay on the right track. We are the future and today I tell you, “ Our generation is ready for the challenge”

Thank you to all and congratulations to the Class of 2012