

Ciara Ward

In thinking about what the president's statement means to you, how will your education help you leave a positive and lasting impact on your community?

For seventeen years my parents, teachers, and family members have all drilled the importance of an education into my head: "go to school," "get good grades," "it's the only way you're going to get a good job," "you better go to college!" They have ultimately encouraged me to be successful in school and inspired me to pursue higher education. However they failed to emphasize the fact that having an education won't make me successful, it's what I will do with my knowledge that matters. My ultimate goal after college is to take my business degree and start a non-profit organization that will foster creativity and self-esteem to insecure teenagers.

In my community the desire to be liked and accepted erodes one's sense of uniqueness. Teenagers assume the behaviors of their peers because they are too insecure and scared to differentiate themselves. I personally have gone through this but over time I have developed into a unique, confident individual. Attending a performing arts school for acting changed my insecure demeanor to a positive and fearless one. And in turn I would like to provide that for many other timid adolescents. The organization I will create will have a variety of creative activities that will promote individuality and high self-esteem. There will be classes in acting, music, dance, film-making, and more. The classes will be for everyone and not just for those with talent.

The organization would provide an outlet for inspiration, encouragement, and self-confidence. In addition to fostering confidence and individuality, I will teach them the importance of education and the importance of sharing that education with their community. It's not enough to just pursue higher learning; it is imperative to share that knowledge with those who are lacking in that area. Ultimately I hope to better my community by influencing the youth in such ways that would motivate them and help lead them to a successful life.