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Student Spotlight February 2015

Quinton Johnson

The Dinoff School for the Gifted
Griffin, GA



Many of our donors and families remember Quinton Johnson. He was a spotlight student in April 2013. Quinton is a preeminent example of what can happen in a child's life if they are given the opportunity to choose the school that best meets their unique learning needs. As a child, he experienced the "harshest of circumstances.". Then it was determined that he should be in the care of his grandmother, Verdelle Johnson, who saw such potential in Quinton that she searched out help to get him into a school that would share her vision for his future.

At just 14 years old, he said "My grandma showed me that I could do better things with my life, she taught me to try my best in everything I do." The theme that comes to mind for those that know him is "character." Quinton strives to show through his actions how you can influence your future with a little help from others.

Today, at 16 years old, he says, "I hope that I can also give back to my community when I become a success."



Quinton was diagnosed by his public school as having ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and was going to be sent to an alternative school. The schools were consistently determined by the State of Georgia to be "under-performing public schools." The government housing he lives in rings with the sound of gunshots and crying babies, making it difficult for him to study at home effectively. Though his grandmother does her best, there are times that even the basics like food are hard to come by. Today, because he is not gang affiliated, he can't go outside and play or hangout.

When the Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship Program was passed, his life changed as it gave Verdelle the chance to choose the school most capable of meeting Quinton's needs, without being limited by her address. She found that vision and opportunity at The Dinoff School for the Gifted in Griffin, Ga. Through his hard work and determination, including staying after school to study, this child who was once years behind in public school scored an 1800 on his SATs. He is already looking forward to a future that a few years ago was not something he would have dreamed of: choosing a college. He decided he wants to go to a college out of state and will be applying to several Ivy League schools, including Princeton. "His entire life changed because of this scholarship," said school headmaster Lesley Dinoff, her voice ringing with pride. "I've never met someone with so much character. He is so grateful that he received an AAA scholarship."

The Dinoff School for the Gifted, the only school of its kind in Georgia, focuses on providing individualized and challenging instruction to highly intellectual, creative and artistic students, like Quinton. The AAA Scholarship program provides students who otherwise would not be able to attend the school the opportunity to do so. Unfortunately, due

AAA Scholarship – February 2015 Student Spotlight: Quinton Johnson

to the 2014 cap being reached in just 21 days, AAA was unable to renew his scholarship. Luckily, Dinoff persuaded a local community member to sponsor Quinton’s tuition for this year, so he would not be forced to return to public school. “I have seen the difference the scholarships can make in the lives of the students that need a different learning opportunity than the public schools can provide,” she says.

In 2013, she said “I believe that the IQ level has no socioeconomic bounds,” a sentiment she continues to feel strongly about today. “Quinton is a shining example of what can happen through the vision of the legislature to pass this scholarship program allowing families to determine what is best for their student.”

About The Dinoff School for the Gifted

Located in Griffin, Ga., The Dinoff School for the Gifted provides individualized and challenging educational programs for gifted and talented students in grades K-12. The school currently is the only school in Georgia that is accredited as a School with a Special Purpose: Gifted Education, and serves 38 students – four of whom are on the AAA Scholarship program. The annual tuition is \$10,000. The Dinoff School uses the ITBS, KTEA, and CogAT to assess student achievement and motivation. While acceleration is one of the cornerstones of exemplary gifted education practices, with more research supporting this intervention than any other in the literature on gifted individuals, gifted learners must also be given stimulating educational experiences appropriate to their level of ability if they are to realize their full potential.

About AAA Scholarship Foundation

The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. The average household income of families accepted to receive scholarships is \$23,559 for a family of four. Many children are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and care about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their child to reverse inadequate learning and/or social patterns and the potential lifelong negative impact. They wish to change their child's learning environment, acquaintances, and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure.

AAA Scholarships are funded in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Pennsylvania by corporations that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a tax credit (dollar for dollar in Alabama, Arizona, Florida and Georgia and up to 90 percent in Pennsylvania). The AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only approved Scholarship 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations exclusively serving qualifying low-income, disabled and/or displaced students through these Scholarship Tax Credit programs. AAA Scholarship Foundation provides your company with the convenience and efficiency of a single-solution for participating in multiple state tax credit scholarship programs. For more information or to learn how your corporation can participate in the program, visit www.AAAScholarships.org, or contact Kerri Vaughan at kerri@aaascholarships.org or 888 707-2465 ext. 730.



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