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## Student Spotlight

August 2018

**Jaylen Hardy and Savon Graham**  
**Lake Mead Christian Academy**  
**Clarke County, NV**



Ahsaki Hardy sits amongst many other enthusiastic parents as she watches her children, Jaylen and Savon, receive honor roll once again. She knows this wouldn't have been possible without the financial stability provided by a scholarship from the AAA Scholarship Foundation which allowed Ahsaki to send her children to a school tailored to their learning needs.

Knowing that they'd face countless obstacles, Ahsaki made the courageous decision to move her family from Massachusetts to Nevada, not really knowing what to expect. She was in desperate need of a climate change but she also wanted to move to a place that her family could eventually call home. Ahsaki worked as a family support specialist, which was the family's only source of income. Her children's father was unable to work due to an injury, which would later result in surgery and the family losing their secondary source of income.

Ahsaki was focused on work, making sure there was food on the table and caring for her children's father so she hadn't really noticed how reserved Jaylen, her oldest son, was acting when he would arrive home from attending third grade at his zoned public school each day. She asked him the normal questions such as how was school, did he need any help with his homework, and so on, but he didn't allude to anything being wrong. It wasn't until report cards were sent home that Ahsaki learned that Jaylen's grades were starting to drop, which was out of the ordinary for her intelligent young son.

Ahsaki made it her mission to find out what, if anything, was going on at school that was causing Jaylen's grades to suffer? After some gentle prodding, Jaylen finally broke down and confessed that an upperclassman had been picking on him. Alarmed, Ahsaki asked question after question, and learned that it had started on the school bus where Jaylen was being teased and called names, and continued into the classroom, as well as into after school care. "I don't like this school anymore," said Jaylen. Ahsaki was heartbroken and wanted to put a stop to the bullying immediately; however, because of their financial situation, she felt like her options were limited. That night, as she lay in bed absorbing all the information she had learned earlier that day, she knew she needed to make a change. If she didn't pull her son out of this school now and put a stop to the harassment, who knew where it would lead? To make matters worse, her youngest son, Savon, was getting ready to start school for the very first time, and the last thing Ahsaki wanted was for him to enter that type of hostile environment.

Ahsaki had heard of a few private schools in her district and decided to visit Lake Mead Christian Academy. Right away she noticed that the classroom sizes were much smaller than at Jaylen's previous school, where he was one of 35 students in a classroom with one teacher. This school also had a tracking system, which notifies the teachers if any students are falling behind in a subject or aren't quite grasping the concept as quickly as their peers. The teachers can then intervene early and provide those struggling students with enhanced guidance. Ahsaki admired this about the school as it showed her that the administration truly wanted their students to succeed.

Ahsaki desperately wanted Jaylen to attend Lake Mead Christian Academy, as well as enroll Savon there so that he would not only be with his brother, but would also be protected from the bullying that Jaylen has experienced. As they approached the end of their tour, Ahsaki informed the administrator of their current financial situation and told her that she would do anything to send her children there. The administrator told her that they had a few students already benefitting from the AAA Scholarship Foundation and encouraged her to apply for a scholarship to see if her family qualified. To her relief, they did!

Now in the seventh grade, Jaylen genuinely loves going to school and expanding his academic horizons. He takes advantage of every activity the school has to offer, including basketball, choir and even Speech Meet, which is a spelling bee-type competition with a twist – students can pick a speech, poem or passage from a book to deliver. Students do not compete against each other, rather, they are judged on how well they deliver their selection. This practice helps students develop techniques to speak audibly, confidently and expressively – crucial skills they will need for their day-to-day lives. As for Savon, he is now in the third grade and is passionate about reading and participating in the school's theatre program, where he landed the lead role in *The Little Engine That Could*.

Jaylen and Savon are aware of the sacrifices their mother makes every day to allow them to attend this school, and they couldn't be more grateful. As for Ahsaki, seeing her children happy makes it all worth it. "This scholarship has helped my family so much," says Ahsaki. "It has taken an emotional and financial strain off my shoulders knowing I have help to pay for my children's education from the AAA Scholarship Foundation. I tell everyone I meet that is in my same financial situation to apply for an AAA scholarship. Thank you so very much!"

### **About AAA Scholarship Foundation**

The AAA Scholarship Foundation awards scholarships solely to qualifying low-income, disabled and/or displaced students. The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. More than 85 percent of AAA scholarships are distributed to children at or below 185 percent of poverty. 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 are concerned about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their child and will reverse inadequate learning, 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 Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Nevada by corporations that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. The AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit scholarship organizations exclusively serving qualifying low-income, disabled and/or displaced students through these tax credit scholarship programs in multiple states. 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](http://www.AAAScholarships.org), or contact Kerri Vaughan at [kerri@aaascholarships.org](mailto:kerri@aaascholarships.org) or 888 707-2465 ext. 730.