12436 – Michael Jules – graduation

**"Furthering our Education to Empower our Communities**"

Our quest for knowledge is something we should never complete. It is a desire that we should never resist. Education should empower us to answer such questions as who, what, when, where and why, ask more questions, and then start over again. With an advanced education you have more choices in your life and more chances to make a difference for your community. Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

I didn’t grow up with the advantages of wealth; my family was not highly educated. But I had educated people in my community who encouraged and empowered me to dream of a better life and then helped me develop of plan for attaining that better life. That plan included earning a higher education. Barack Obama once said, "Where you are right now doesn't have to determine where you'll end up". Just because a person is born into poverty doesn’t mean they have to stay in poverty. But, it helps if those who have gone before them and achieved a higher education will reach back and help others to strive for a higher education.

Higher education pays you back in many ways. Graduates of higher education programs earn more, have more leisure time, and live happier and healthier lives. First of all, education can help a person lead a successful life. Success is defined as the achievement of something desired or attempted. By means of an education, a person learns many things which he or she uses later on in life particularly in a career. The more education a person has, the greater the chances that person will have a higher paying job. With that, their family will be well supported and hopefully be happier.

Secondly, an education can help society develop into a better place. There are a many people who are illiterate or have low literacy skills. This accounts for a majority of the impoverished and undeveloped people. With an education, these people could get a job and earn a living. The money earned could help pay for food or a place to live. As a result, there would be fewer malnourished people and fewer people living on the street. In short, cracking down on poverty would benefit in upholding our nation. The late President Jack Kennedy said, “Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.”

Furthermore, with an education a person can satisfy his or her dreams. An education provides people with information and knowledge for getting a job and pursuing their dreams. With an education, decisions can be made for what the future holds. There are many careers and job opportunities that can help satisfy what a person wants out of life. Many people want to have a job that pays them enough money to pay their bills without struggling. They might be happy with the job they have, but to climb up the career-ladder, and work in a position where they would earn more money, they need education. Most people I know would like to work in a job that pays a higher salary than the job they have right now. To achieve that goal is the reason they continue their education.

Walt Disney said, “All our dreams can come true… if we have the courage to pursue them.” We all have dreams whether we sit down and plan them out or if we just hide them in our hearts because we are afraid they’ll never come true. Those of us who reach our dreams have a responsibility to reach out and help those less fortunate than ourselves to reach theirs. I wouldn’t be standing here today if someone who had already reached their dreams had not reached out to me to help me to reach mine.

If each one of us uses the education we have earned and the successes we will achieve and reaches only one person then we will have doubled our efforts. When we work hard and achieve our dreams we do an important thing for ourselves. But, when we take the extra step and help someone else to reach their dream then we can make a mark on our community. We can help raise our community to a higher level and give everyone more hope than they had the day before.

I look forward to the day when I can use my education and my advances to help someone else reach their dreams now that I have reached mine.

How about you?