**AWARDS SPEECH**

**FOR**

**TASHA HOLLAND-KORNEGAY**

Hello everyone from the UNC Charlotte Black Alumni Chapter....and thank you so much for bestowing on me this incredible recognition... the 2017 Excellence in Leadership Award in the category of Healthcare.... I am humbled, I am honored, and I suppose you can imagine that, given my passions for HIV awareness and my diligence to share that mission, one word comes to mind that expresses my project, my appreciation for those people around me who provide unconditional support, and my gratitude for this acknowledgement.... **SWEET**! (**Wait for the laugh**). (**Is there anyone in particular from the organization that you want to thank? You can do that here**). Although I am so thankful to **all** of you for this esteemed award, I would like to mention some people in particular.... To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, thank you for the light that amplified the message that I believe is so crucial to be shared. The HIV crisis has been around for too long and although strides have been made and testing positive does not have to be the death sentence it once was, it is only through enlightenment and awareness that people will learn....they will learn the signs and symptoms and they will learn about compassion and tolerance.... and thanks to you and this generous honor, more people will see that light.

As with any idea, it begins with a spark, and depends on exploration, ingenuity, determination, and response, that idea either blossoms or goes..... **PPPFFFFFFFFFTTTTTT**.... and while I reluctantly learned to embrace rejection, knowing the importance of bringing awareness of the HIV crisis to our communities, I refused to give up. As is usually the case, revelations and solutions can be found right in front of us. And while most mothers may warn their children to “keep off the hard stuff...” namely sweets, it was the simple yet brilliant idea of my son, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that showed me the way. (**Name your son**). To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ thank you for not listening to me! Sweets **ARE** good for you!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Thank you for bringing your youthful spirit to fuel this awareness. I hope you realize the impact of your inspiration! Your idea was simple and it served to allow this mission to go **VIRAL**.... in the best way possible! (**Do you want to thank your husband as well?**) I would also like to acknowledge my husband, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for all of the moral support and partnership you unfailingly provide. Your contribution to this cause is immeasurable.

I’d like to share a quote that I once read... “She turned her ‘**CAN’TS**’ into ‘**CANS**’ and her dreams into plans....” Someone else said that “dreams taste like cotton candy....” Believe me, **I REALLY GET THAT NOW**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for keeping my dream and this mission alive. I am eternally grateful! (**Is it possible for you to have the cotton candy machine present to give out little samples? If so, you can come up with a flavor named for the organization and share it with them**).... and I invite all of you to try our newest flavor, named in honor of this award.... **CELEBRATION**!!!! Thank you all!!