**INFORMATIVE SPEECH**

**FOR**

**TASHA HOLLAND-KORNEGAY**

Hello everyone! It’s great to be here, back in Durham, and although to you it may seem like, “just home,” to me it’s the place where I grew up, made friends, and most importantly, it’s where I learned what it meant to **dream**. It’s the place where I started to dream about what I wanted to be and do when I grew up. What I learned when I was a kid is that while I was dreaming, I was also planning. In my head, I imagined a world I wanted to live in. I thought, what would be in that world? What would I need to keep me going? What would make me want to dream more, and what could I possibly do to make my dreams come true? Did you ever think about stuff like that? When you dream, what do **YOU** imagine? (**You can take a few responses if you feel it works)**

When I was growing up here, many…. Well… not **THAT** many years ago….. I’m not **THAT** **OLD**!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… we didn’t have much… in fact we didn’t have **A LOT**, but there’s one thing my friends and I had was each other. And we had **IDEAS**…. We had ideas of the games we wanted to play- we could have fun playing just the simplest games…. The truth is, all you need is a friend and an idea…. Those two things are priceless and anyone can have them…. All it takes is imagination and someone else to bounce an idea back and forth…. Like a ball… on a step… or in a lot… or in a field. Sometimes the ball lands where you want it to, and sometimes it makes you go an chase it…. Kind of like dreams….

Some of my most favorite memories growing up took place right on the front porch. Like I said, my friends and I didn’t have much but we had each other, and between us we had a porch or two…. Or a bench, or a tree under which we would sit together and we would…. **GUESS** **WHAT**? Yup… we would dream…we would get together often… on different porches… back when we were young, the meeting times weren’t organized, but all of us kids in the community were there for each other…. We would come up with ideas and “business plans” that would help us get out and beat poverty and we’d bounce those ideas off each other. Think about what you did yesterday. Who wants to tell us if and how you spent some time imagining the world “out there” and what you wanted to do and be as you got older (**Let a few kids respond**)…. Can you imagine that some day you’ll look back on yesterday… or today… or this moment, and remember what you did and what you learned? I promise you, you will remember some of these times and if you’re smart, you will use them as a starting point for **YOUR** dreams.

Some things I learned when I got older that I want to share with you **NOW**… when you’re all young enough to start practicing good habits early, are pretty simple…. They may not seem “cool” and they may not seem like “fun” right now, but believe me, anyone can do these, no matter what, and I promise you, keeping these things in your life will make a big difference as you grow up:

* **Education is key-** stay in school. Pay attention. Be respectful and polite. Listen to what others…. And the teacher… have to say. Remember you can learn something new **ANYWHERE**. Find a book. Read it. Find a newspaper. Read it. If you have questions, **ASK THEM.** That’s how we learn. Read about things that interest you. Read about things that **DON’T** interest you so you learn the difference!!! (**Wait for the** **laugh**).
* **Stay motivated –** Sometimes this isn’t so easy, especially when you have to do things you think you don’t want to do…. But by staying motivated, once again, you learn what makes you **YOU**. Find your interests and use that to set your goals…. To see what it is you want to dream about.
* **Good behavior-** we all want respect, but we have to know how to give it in order to get it. There’s an expression that goes, “You can get more flies with honey.” Did you ever sit around on a step or a porch in the middle of a hot summer day and accidentally drip or drop something sweet? I bet you didn’t know that was a science experiment!!! (**Wait for the laugh).** Yes… we can learn from everything… even being messy. Well, when that sweet drip landed, did you notice the flies started gathering around it? What this saying means is that if you’re nice and polite…. You don’t even have to be too sweet, people will pay attention. They would rather listen to someone that shows respect than to someone who acts like they don’t care. Any questions? (**The kids can discuss this if you feel it works**)
* **DON’T GIVE UP-** the most important bit of advice I can share with you is this. **BELIEVE** in yourself. Be a good person. Pay attention. Have a plan to learn…. Learn about the world beyond your neighborhood. Learn about the jobs you can do and what you need to know in order to make a difference in this world. Learn to see which dreams are the important ones.

I hope our time together has inspired you. Growing up is all about opening your eyes and discovering what **MIGHT** be…. And sometimes…. Most of the time… it’s tough to imagine that when life seems too hard, but believe me, the future is **YOURS**…. But you must be strong and focused and determined. I **KNOW** you have it in you. How do I know? Because I started in the same spot as you. Believe in making those dreams come true and be willing to work, and you’ll see what happens!!! I wish all of you the best!! Thank you!!