

## **A Road to Greatness by J.F.**

During the early periods of my life my family and I traveled a lot. We would go to many new cities and states in America. During my first and second grade education my family and I temporarily settled in a town called Huntsville which is in the state of Alabama. There, I attended the Highland Elementary school, this school in particular was located in a "ghetto" area. I was never academically inclined, in fact I was an underachiever. Due to this the administration placed me in the "special" class, this class accommodated the slow and illiterate children. My physical appearance did not do me any justice either. I was incredibly short and had humongous buck teeth. This of course made me vulnerable to bullying, but I was not a walk over. Often times I would get into fights; there was this specific time that I almost permanently damaged someone's eye; which resulted in me getting my first suspension.

After completing grade two things got financially difficult for my family, we had to move to another state called New jersey. During that summer we all resided in a small basement of a guest house. My brother and I can recall the great times we had there. However things got worse, we had no other choice but to move to New York into an apartment where my grandmother and my uncles were already residing. We all lived there in that two bedroom apartment with approximately ten of us; but sometimes late at nights we would travel to live with other family members. I spent my third and fourth grade education at the Parkside Elementary School. I enjoyed my school experience there; I met friends of various backgrounds, ethnic groups and race. My grades and academic performance had improved but unfortunately things were not getting any better for us. As a last resort my parents decided for all of us to move to Jamaica, that was the last time I saw my grandmother and uncles in person.

Moving to Jamaica was an exciting experience, somehow I knew it was the beginning of greatness. When we arrived in Jamaica we started off simple. My parents sacrificed to send my younger brother and I to a SDA school, the West Indies Preparatory school. This was where I attended to complete fifth and sixth grade. Some of my classmates may remember me as that short child with the high hair and American accent. However it was at this point where God made me realize that I only had one chance. I only had one chance to prove myself and to rise from the slums of mediocrity. During the sixth grade I encountered the best teacher I ever had, her name was Mrs. Nation. I wasn't the brightest student in my class but she saw something in me that the others could not see. On days that I did not have any lunch money to purchase food, she would purchase it on my behalf using her own money. Often times she would take the time out to talk to me and motivate me to work hard. Five months before the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) I decided to study day and night, everyday, nonstop. I asked

God to prove himself to me, to show me that he is on my side. I did not have the best shoes, the neatest uniform, I was not the smartest and I was not the wealthiest; but I had one thing, and that was true ambition.

I know what it is like to go through hard times. I'm no longer ashamed of my past, as a matter of fact I'm proud of it because it has molded me into the person I am today and I thank God for that.

When the GSAT results came out, myself and a few others passed for one of the top high schools in Manchester. I can remember walking home with tears of joy and pain, it is quite a fond memory. My journey during grade 6 changed the trajectory of my whole life.

I hope this testimony encouraged you. No matter how bad things look do not give up because God has a plan for your life. Keep pushing, better days are ahead.