



www.charlestownpreservation.org

How Charlestown Has Influenced My Life

scholarship essays 2007-2008

CPS Scholarship Winner

Sheldon Allen

Charlestown High School

I grew up in Jamaica, and life was difficult. I am the second oldest of five children, and my brother, sister and I are only two years apart, so we all went to school together.

My education did not mean much then because I did not understand the value of learning. I only knew my mother had to work hard for us to attend school because a school year in Jamaica costs approximately \$20,000. She had three jobs in order to pay our way through school: she wanted us to succeed in life.

I left Jamaica when I was eleven to come to America because the stress was too hard on my mother, and the violence in Jamaica was increasing year after year. When I came to the US I moved in with my aunt. It was she who helped me improve my ways, but I never forgot that my mother was the one who pushed me to succeed and encouraged me to finish school.

My life truly changed on September 9, 2004 when I took my first step into Charlestown High School. I knew that Charlestown was the school that would help me accomplish what my mother was trying to bestow upon me.

Charlestown has had a big impact on my life. Both teachers and students have been so good to me, and I know that my teachers want to see me succeed in life. With the help of Charlestown, I can honestly say that I have grown as a student and a person. I joined both the track and football teams. Being active in sports helped me build my positive attitude toward my schoolwork and my determination to succeed.

Track is one of the main reasons I feel so privileged to attend Charlestown High School. The track team has been like a second home to me, and it has molded me into the man I am today. When I first joined the team, there were lots of members from different backgrounds, and I wasn't used to seeing so many different people from all those different places. I was afraid to talk to anyone new who was not from where I was. Then I was put on the four by one relay team, where I learned to work with others and talk with others even if they were not from the same country that I'm from.

The town itself is extremely important to me because it supported the track team as we ran around town and were presented with medals by the mayor. As I have walked around the area, wonderful families have approached me and asked about the team and our successes. I feel that everyone in Charlestown is extremely kind. I feel that I can be myself here. I have grown so much from ninth to twelfth grade, and as I take my next journey to Wheaton College, I hope the experience I receive is as great as the one I had here in Charlestown.



www.charlestownpreservation.org

How Charlestown Has Influenced My Life

scholarship essays 2007-2008

Charlestown has not just been a place for me to live. As the oldest city in Boston, there is a sense of pride that is associated with living in proximity to some of America's most historical landmarks. Not every student has the opportunity to call his backyard the heart of American history.

CPS Scholarship Winner

Kevin Hoang

Boston Latin School

In my ten years here in Charlestown, I have been fortunate enough to walk up the Bunker Hill Monument multiple times, to see the fireworks every New Year beside the USS Constitution, and to live next to some of America's most famous landmarks.

Charlestown has given me a place to exercise and make new friends. Of all the neighborhoods I have been to, Charlestown has the greatest recreational facilities of all. With basketball courts, tennis courts and track fields galore, Charlestown has given me the opportunity to take advantage of public facilities available to all Charlestown residents.

I have made many friends just by playing basketball up Bunker Hill or tennis at the Navy Yard. To know that there are always other proactive kids out there ready to play ball with me in a happy, carefree manner is an ineffable and satisfying feeling. These recreational facilities have shaped me into living the healthy and active lifestyle I do now.

Educationally Charlestown has influenced me much through its public library. As an elementary school student back at Harvard Kent, I would go to the library to use the computers or borrow books daily. The librarians and young adults there were always kind, welcoming and ready to help. They supported me with homework help and lent me a hand whenever I needed one. I can recall how I idolized my librarians as people I could go to for help and the library as an infinite source of knowledge – perceptions that hold true now.

Today, as a tutor back at the same branch, I am tutoring kids who stand in the very same shoes that I once stood in. It is a very great feeling to know that I can help them become better citizens in the community through the same homework assistance that was given me. Hearing shouts from the kids that I teach as I walk through the neighborhood, I know now that Charlestown is definitely *the* place to be.

Charlestown, a city on a hill, has made a profound impact on my life and will continue to do so. As I go on to college – coincidentally to another hill, this time to Tufts University in Medford – I can only hope that college, as they say the best four years of your life, will live up to the expectations set by my first hill: the city of Charlestown.