

Good afternoon - my name is Lamya Wright and I am a graduate of Rock Island High School and the Black Hawk College Adult Learning Center. It's an honor to be speaking here today. I want to start by saying congratulations to all the students in the class of 2022 - I wish everyone nothing but success.

I got asked to share my experience at the Black Hawk Adult Learning center, and at first I was really hesitant about it because I am really shy sometimes. But, I ended up saying yes because my experience is different from a lot of people and I want to tell about it.

To start off, I am going to tell you a little about me. Growing up, school was my main priority. I made sure I had all my work turned in. I was on time to every class and on time to school. And, I always wanted to be part of any extra classes, clubs, groups, and volunteer opportunities - anything that got me involved. I've always been told I was an amazing, kind-hearted young lady and I've stuck with that because the more you help people, the more blessings you will receive.

Everyone said high school is hard, so I tried to prepare for it during middle school. I was told if I took freshman year seriously, it would help throughout high school. But on the first day of freshman year, I didn't feel ready for high school because I was so nervous about the challenges. Throughout freshman year, I tried to stay to myself and focus on school without letting anything distract me, but it still seemed like I had a lot on my shoulders in every class. I struggled with math really bad, to the point where I needed help but was afraid to ask for it.

So, I asked my mom to switch me to Davenport West High School and I liked it a lot - I got the help I needed and made a lot of really good friends. But for my junior year, I went back to Rocky and that's when COVID hit, which meant a switch to on-line learning. This was a challenging time for me - I started slacking, I was not motivated to work hard anymore, and I just didn't feel like I had to do my work most of the time.

Letting myself fall behind was the worst thing I could do and I struggled a lot. I tried so hard to get on track for senior year, but I was still behind on my classes. So, I had extra classes during my senior year to catch up.

All of that was my fault, so I told myself senior year that I am going to work harder than I ever did before and that's what I did. It was a rough part of my life because I just moved with my mom to Texas, so I was at a new school with new people. But even with everything going on in my life, I still tried to motivate myself over and over again. I was going through something else where most of my days was just crying, but even if I was feeling like that, I still wanted to work harder. I wanted to let my past be my past, look to the present, and focus on myself and school.

Starting off senior year in a new state was pretty weird for me but it was a good thing because I worked alone and made sure I did well in each class. Then, me and my family moved back here and that's when I found the Black Hawk College Adult Learning Center. I heard many good things about it, so I made an appointment and enrolled to finish my senior year there. That was last September and I have been here ever since and it's been the best experience ever!

I started by meeting everyone that worked at ALC and getting really good bonds with everyone. Each teacher I met at ALC made a huge impact on my life. I've met so many teachers at ALC such as Mrs. Laura, Kirk, and Mrs. Olivia which have all made my school experience amazing.

Mrs. Laura is a wonderful lady who makes sure everyone is doing great and on the right track and I want to thank her for that.

Mr. Kirk introduced me to his class called the Early School Leaver Program, which is basically a program that helps you learn everything about the working field, helps you write resumes, do pay stubs, what is required in different jobs, and just so many good

things that helped me in life. Kirk is an amazing person to talk too, I want to say thank you for that.

Mrs. Olivia I want to say thank you for everything you did for me. You impacted me in so many ways. You introduced me to TEAM which helps you with jobs, career development, and so many more. By being involved in TEAM, I've gotten so many opportunities in life such as career searching and being able to be accepted into college for my dream career. Mrs. Olivia got me the opportunity to explore my dream career, which is an EMT-Paramedic. She also helped me get enrolled into Black Hawk College for my dream career.

Now, to my teacher Mr. Sam, the teacher who pushed me to become a stronger minded person, who always told me that I can do and be whatever in life as long as I work for it and start somewhere. I remember meeting Mr. Sam on my birthday when he became our teacher. He told us about himself and wanted to hear about us too, and didn't judge us. He told us every single day that he is always there for us no matter what and he sure kept his word. Mr. Sam helped me get through the rough days. He knew what to say to all of us to keep going and I appreciate him for that. I just want to say Mr. Sam you're an amazing role model to anyone who crosses paths with you and thank you for helping me through high school when I felt like I had no purpose.

Overall, I just want to say thank you to all the ALC teachers for helping me accomplish a lot. I had an amazing experience at the ALC and I hope everyone else who gets to go to the ALC has the experience I had - it was an amazing journey.

Thank you for letting me share my story and congratulations to the class of 2022!