

Good evening,

It is a great honor and privilege to be with you this evening as a student of the College of Saint Elizabeth and a Presidential Scholarship recipient. I hope in the next few minutes to share a bit of my journey and also express my personal gratitude to each of you.

Just about four years ago I was a senior in high school considering which college to attend. As I considered various schools, my guidance counselor suggested I apply to one more school. At the time of her recommendation I thought “Wow is she serious? I’m already struggling with my decision; why add one more?”

While I wasn’t thrilled with her advice, I decided to listen and apply to the College of Saint Elizabeth.

My personal essay was entitled “Making Dreams into a Reality.” That essay expressed my dream to provide education to those less fortunate- to open math and science based charter schools in the urban areas of New Jersey. Having come to America as an immigrant from Haiti, I learned the value of education at an early age and considered it a blessing in my own life. Little did I know that the College of Saint Elizabeth would play a vital role in making that dream come to life.

After completion of the admissions process, I looked forward to a response from the college; what I would not have ever anticipated was that I was about to experience drastic changes in my life. My mother was involved in a serious car accident and almost lost her life. Following the accident, she was unable to work and had to be placed on disability. I then became one of the main providers of my household. Needless to say, college was no longer a priority. I had to consider how I was going to stay strong for my family as a caretaker who would be responsible for providing for my siblings and still have to complete high school. As I struggled with my responsibilities, I started to lose sight of my dreams.

During this period of my life, I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders and colleges were awaiting my response. As I became less interested in college because of the new demands, the College of Saint Elizabeth remained a constant presence in my life. Every day Ann Madison would call and remind me that CSE was interested in helping me make my dream into a reality.

After accepting the invitation to be a part of the college community, funding became my next major challenge. Because of **your** generosity, I received the Presidential Scholarship to cover my tuition. Because of you, **I and many** other students at CSE have been given the opportunity to take the first steps in making our dreams come true—dreams we hope will transform the world. Through my classroom studies in biology and math, and my participation in various leadership

roles during my college career; I have grown in so many ways and feel blessed to have been given this gift.

Your investment has not been in vain. I am already on track to achieving my dream. While I am not an education major—I am using my mathematics degree to work with students at Ivy Hill School in Newark, NJ; this is a school that is ranked among the lowest performing in the United States. Due to “Citizen Schools”—a national organization dedicated to the academic success of middle school students in low income areas, I am able participate in the educational development of the youth. Every week for the past two academic semesters, I have used creative techniques to bring math alive for 5th and 6th graders, many of whom are identified as underachievers. At the end of the program there is a final presentation, where students present to the audience what they have learned. They demonstrated solid understanding of their subject matter and answered every audience question with a confidence that spoke volumes about their future. Through this program, as well as through another project with the New York Academy of Science, I am gaining the knowledge and experience needed in order to build math and science based charter schools for children who are most in need in our country. My work with Citizen Schools has led to an even greater opportunity to be connected to the New York Academy of Science as an undergrad participating in a graduate fellowship

assistance program. Once again, evidence of YOUR investment working at the College of Saint Elizabeth.

Upon graduation in May 2012, I hope to teach in either a Catholic primary or secondary school, with hopes of passing on what I have received from CSE. While working for the Catholic community I look forward to continuing my education and seek a degree in Educational Leadership, Management and Policies focusing on Charter schools.

I would like to again offer my thanks to you who support all the students at the College of Saint Elizabeth. Through your generosity and stewardship, not only is my dream being fulfilled, but so are the dreams of thousands of other students. Your gift keeps giving beyond that which you will ever see. For this, we are grateful. God bless you.