

SEA

seattleeducationaccess

Meet Our Students: Javoen

Javoen graduated from high school in June 2009 and then studied music in Cuba. He is currently applying to college.



As I look back at my educational background and see the broken shards of ill formed experience, a deep sadness and yet pride fill my heart. My mother raised me to be proud of my African American heritage. I was known through middle school by many names. Some called me The Bookworm, some called me The Revolutionary, and some called me The Loner. I have come to know myself as The Dreamer.

I remember entering Garfield High School my freshman year, holding my saxophone in one hand and a book in the other. I thought I had finally found a place where higher education would be cherished, where people strived to reach intellectual insights that would prove to be vital to the future of humanity. If only I had been more prepared for what I was going up against. I came into the school and was labeled yet again as being a loner and a nerd.

A deep pain began to enter my heart once again as I slowly began to withdraw from school. My only refuges were my books and my music. I would research and study in order to understand such things as, why did my mother have to struggle so hard with three children by herself? Why was I faced with so much racial and intellectual oppression both inside and outside of school? Why would nobody do anything about it even though they see this system is obsolete? These questions filled my mind and as I began to focus more on reading what I wanted to study than what was taught in the orthodox curriculum at high school.

Soon answers began to fill my mind along with the many questions. Malcolm X spoke to me through his autobiography and Frantz Fanon gave me a haunting confidence with his work "Wretched of the Earth." I spent countless

► hours reading and playing music while I was supposed to be in school. My poetry flourished; I was asked to open up a concert for Dead Prez, a pretty popular national Hip Hop group, and other venues. My mother noticed a change in me as my hate for the system that had raped and ravaged my people for hundreds of years grew with rapid ferocity. Then the calls started to come in. The school called home telling my mother about how I wasn't showing up. She yelled and forced me to go back and I did. The kids in class would make fun of me in history class for questioning and pointing out flaws in the teacher's curriculum. The teachers looked upon me with disdain as well. I would wonder why; I respected the teachers more than the other students who would yell and call the teacher names. But I realized the truth. What the other students were doing was what the system wanted them to do: act ignorant and be content. I spoke a truth that scared most people who were bound to the matrix of our society. I realized slowly but surely that the other students weren't treating me like an outsider because what I said was untrue; it was because they were jealous. This was why they asked me countless times to be the school president and speak at their assemblies. The darkness in my heart grew as I realized that the bitter price for the knowledge I had accumulated had been that I would never be able to live in society's mainstream and be happy. I was forever bound to the life of heterodoxy. I was given the blessing of knowledge for the price of painful loneliness.

Eventually my mother and I decided that I needed a change in schools. We went for an interview at the UW's middle college program Ida B. Wells School of Social Justice. I was accepted and immediately I knew this school was for me. I saw pictures of Malcolm X, Frederick Engels and many more on the walls. My teacher was strict but fair in her teaching. We learned about Marxism, the Black Panthers, and also Maxim Gorky's book "Mother." For the first time in my life I loved school and it showed in my grades as I easily made A's and B's even though the curriculum and reading was much harder than at my old school. My junior year was the best and most exciting year in my whole academic career. It also translated to my music. I focused intensely on folkloric music. My drumming and dancing became so much better. My mother and I performed at many clubs and restaurants singing to our indigenous African gods and ancestors. My name in the music community began to spread and the elders were proud of me. I even went to Guatemala with the Global Visionary program.

The next year was not so grand. My mother struggled even harder to make ends meet with me and my sisters and told me that having a summer job wasn't enough and I needed to pick up a job during the school year to help support the family. It was hard working and being a senior



seattleeducationaccess

Turning college dreams into college degrees

Seattle Education Access provides higher education advocacy and opportunity to people struggling to overcome poverty and adversity. Through our College Success Program, we help marginalized young people complete college degrees and succeed in meaningful careers.

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Seattle Education Access (SEA) is a 501(c)(3) charity incorporated in the State of Washington. Our Federal Tax ID number is 04-3602577.

SEA is a Member Agency of the University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA), a coalition of agencies working together to create a comprehensive continuum of services for homeless and street-involved youth and young adults. The purpose of the UDSPA is to help member nonprofits share resources and work together efficiently as we pursue the shared mission of offering a full spectrum of compassionate, quality care to Seattle's homeless and street-involved youth and young adults. For more information, visit www.udsp.org.

The SEA newsletter is mailed quarterly. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know. All requests will be honored immediately.

UDSPA Holiday Party Needs:

As we do each year, SEA and the various member agencies of the University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA) are coming together again for the Annual UDSPA Holiday Party. Last year, the UDSPA hosted over 150 homeless and at-risk young people. There is music, decorations, food and a gift for each and every person that shows up. We need the support of committed indi-

Gift cards – (Fred Meyer, Target, Safeway, movie theaters,

Best Buy, Good Will) – (**max value of \$40**)

Sleeping bags

Backpacks

Hooded sweatshirts – L to XXXL, dark colors

New socks

Gloves, hats, scarves

Batteries – AA, AAA

Battery operated travel alarm clocks

Travel-sized sewing kits

Journals and notebooks

viduals and groups to make this happen. Listed below are some of the commonly requested items that young people want and need. All gifts should be new and \$40 or less.

We ask that all gifts be unwrapped and dropped off by December 9th at the SEA office. If you have additional questions, please contact Allison Lord at 206.523.6200.

Disposable hand warmers

New underwear and boxers (men's & women's)

Flashlights

Work boots

Packets of bus tokens

Discmen / headphones

African American hair products

Travel-sized toiletries

Combs and brushes

First aid supplies

Dried dog and cat food

Give to SEA Just by Searching the Internet:

What if Seattle Education Access earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now we can! GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations for SEA add up!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which do-

nates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting SEA. And if you download the GoodSearch – Seattle Education Access toolbar, we'll earn money every time you shop and search online - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first!

Add the Seattle Education Access toolbar at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar>

Recent Student Quotes:

"Hey SEA! School is going very well; my classes are very informative yet easy...I honestly thought UW Bothell was going to be more difficult but it's actually far easier than Seattle Central. I'm doing well too. Thank you for being my co-signer on my new apartment, you're a lifesaver! It is so easy to commute to school from downtown, which gives me more time to study. I have also been working less to give me more time to study and maybe do an internship. I am going to set an appointment with the career counselor to look for a paid internship that I can do instead of working at my job. I got my two year degree in the mail and I was really happy to get it!" -- J.

"Thank you, SEA, for giving me hope, after feeling that I could no longer continue fulfilling my dream of being someone successful in life. Ever since I was brought to the United States I have always felt like I was on my own; my family never understood how important education is here in the U.S. and how important it should be everywhere else. I just grew up believing in education. I feel proud to say that I was the first one in my family to graduate from high school, but now that I'm also the first one to attend a four year university (UW) I have felt like I could no longer do everything on my own. Working a full time shift, living at a hotel with a family of six in such poor conditions, and attending a prestigious university like the UW truly made it hard for me. Fortunately, SEA has financially helped me in achieving my dream of being an essential contribution to society in the near future. SEA's contributions have certainly helped me stay in college, an opportunity that will not go to waste. Once again, thank you SEA for helping me through this when I was going through some tough financial moments, to the point that I felt that I finally need help -- something that I could not get from my family. Special thanks to the donors that make SEA possible." -- M.

"I am scheduled to finish my associate's degree in spring of 2010. I am on the Dean's List for Summer Quarter. I applied for five scholarships and was accepted by four of them. My goal is to get on the Presidents List by the end of Winter Quarter, and I expect to be entering the Bachelors of Applied Behavioral Science Program at Seattle Central Fall of 2010. I am still working at SEA as Advocacy and Outreach Specialist and plan to stay on for the long term." -- Brittney

Seattle Education Access is a community committed to these shared values:

- We believe that every person deserves a good education.
- We believe that education is a life-long process of self discovery and world discovery.
- We believe that education is its own reward and enriches life.
- We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of each human being.
- We believe that each person is responsible for his or her own life.
- We believe that by helping others, and by accepting help from others, we add meaning and beauty to life.
- We believe that every person has unique gifts and that when those gifts are nourished and given a chance to flourish, both the individual and the community benefits.
- We welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community members, and celebrate their right to self-determination.
- We welcome people from all ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds.
- We welcome people from all religious faiths and philosophical worldviews who share our values and promote our mission.
- We are committed to using our financial resources in the most efficient and responsible way possible to further our mission.
- We measure the success of our organization by the success and wellbeing of our students.

Letter from a SEA Scholarship Recipient:

Dear SEA Community:

I want to thank all of SEA's donors for the scholarship I received fall quarter. I am a low-income single mom, and also a pre-nursing student at Shoreline Community College (SCC). I'm writing today to thank you for helping me, and also to urge you to contribute financially to SEA's College Success Program so that SEA can continue to help students like myself in 2010.

When I found out I was pregnant, my initial feeling of shock quickly turned into an overwhelming state of fear. I knew my path ahead wasn't going to be easy. I was only 16-years-old, with no money, and on top of that, I was a high school drop out. With that said, my physician tried to hear a heart beat. "It's beating strong" she said, and handed me the instrument to listen. Hearing the little thumping of her heart was the most changing moment of my life, more powerful than I could ever imagine. This little life inside of me sparked a deep love and special place within my soul.

I decided that instead of letting my situation bring me down, I was going to turn my life into something positive. I made the commitment to create a wonderful life for my daughter. My first step was finding as many resources as I could to assist me. I was determined to prove to my family and myself that I am intelligent and capable. I signed up with Career Education Options, a program at Shoreline Community College, which allowed me to take college classes that went toward my high school diploma. Since then I have successfully completed over 70 credits at SCC, obtaining a 4.0 GPA in most of my classes. I have also helped teach a teen parenting group to inspire younger teen parents that we can ensure a better life for our children by setting goals for ourselves, creating a five year plan, and attending college. This provides a path for our children to respect and one day follow. I continue to balance my busy life, but always keep my daughter as my top priority. We have built a wonderful relationship.

Every morning I look at my daughter and see incredible potential in her eyes. Her caring, wonderful personality along with her unbelievable intelligence strikes my curiosity for her future. Will she live her life helping others? Teaching others? Inspiring the world? Whatever path my daughter chooses in life, I know it will be a positive one. I am making sure of that each and everyday. With my own hard work and education, I am creating a doorway that one day she will be able to walk through. I keep a positive attitude through it all, but it definitely gets hard at times. Each day there is a new challenge to continue and balance school, work, and parenthood.

It has been a dream of mine to become a nurse and have a life-long career of helping others. I have one more quarter of my pre-requisites for the nursing program and will soon be applying to nursing school. My SEA scholarship has made it possible for me to cut back my hours at work, so that I can make time for a rewarding and career building volunteer position at Children's Hospital. I feel grateful to have finally found such an amazing organization. I know that SEA's staff and board truly believe in my ability to excel, and are committed to seeing that happen.

With your help, SEA will be able to continue to help low income college students move forward to successful careers. Please make a contribution today!

Thank You!

Bryce, SEA Student & Scholarship Recipient



SEA Student: Bryce

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(continued from page 2)

in high school, but I made it my first quarter making a 4.0 GPA. Then everything changed. It seemed like racism started to hit harder. I was constantly asked by bus drivers if I had paid the correct fair, even though I did. People let things slip out of their mouths that they shouldn't have because they felt comfortable around me and my newly adopted light-heartedness. Finally I wrote a letter to the school saying that "Every time I come to school I feel like I am entering an intellectual warzone filled with so-called liberal thinkers." The school didn't take it well and I was asked to finish my credits at Running Start. My mother fought against it but I told her to stop after hearing one of the teachers saying they didn't want me there. A week after I graduated I left for Cuba with only enough money for the plane ride and to survive for about a week. I met up with a Cuban family who took me in and found out that I was proficient in the spiritual drumming and singing of our religion. The Cubans embraced me but because of the strict embargo separating our country's I was forced



Polly Trout and SEA Student Javoen

to leave and return to the states after about a month.

I have prepared myself academically for courses at college by empowering myself through external resources. When I felt that the schools were not preparing me holistically to become a critical thinker I searched for the books and community organizations that would. I have proved through my transcript that when enrolled in a school where I do not feel attacked, I have the ability to excel. My career goal is to become an educated Afro-folklorist who is fully equipped with a Ph.D. and also well traveled. I hope to enroll in a college that will expand my train of thought and help me to reach my goals and beyond.

Seattle Education Access has strongly supported me in my educational aspirations economically, as well as emotionally. They have helped to give me material resources to channel my ambitions. I truly do not know if my vision for my future would be as strong without SEA's support. Seattle Education Access is a great program filled with great people. **SEAD**



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- \$400 – books and school supplies for one student
- \$100 --- student bus pass for the quarter
- \$50 --- college application costs for one student
- \$20 – one GED study guide

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