

(2011 Nominating Essay for Teionna White submitted by her mother, Valorie Holland)

I would like to nominate my 26 year old daughter, Teionna White, for the 2011 Dorian Award. Although, a young woman, she has positively impacted many lives varying in ages. She is a phenomenal inspiration to everyone she comes in contact with, including myself. Her compassion and dedication to be a steward of positive social change is commendable. Therefore, not only as her mother do I stand in agreement that she is deserving of the 2011 Dorian Award, but as a witness who has observed her growth into womanhood, responsibility, and accountability.

I have always instilled in Teionna the importance of education, hard work, and family; three factors that have proven to assist her in her success as she has matriculated through life. Although, pregnant by her eleventh grade year of High School, Teionna has always strived to overcome the obstacles of being a single teen parent, with a less than good relationship with her own father; with the mindset of avoiding being another statistic. With a period of out of school placement during her senior year due to her pregnancy, she managed to teach herself in order to graduate with her peers.

On January 9, 2003 my first grandchild was born, in June 2003 Teionna graduated High School with an Advanced Diploma, and in August 2003 she began her first year of college at Norfolk State University majoring in Psychology, without any need of financial assistance from me. While working, sometimes two jobs, Teionna managed to maintain her grade point average and be a wonderful mother. In 2006, Teionna graduated with a B.A. in Psychology, followed by another graduation in 2007 with a B.A. in Sociology. After a brief break in 2008 Teionna went back to school in order to forge a successful future for her son and herself.

After becoming pregnant in 2008, Teionna became more determined than ever to provide for her children, pursue her education, and advance her career. With a full plate, including a full-time job, a rocky pregnancy, and an elementary school aged child involved in activities, Teionna was persistent through it all while demonstrating perseverance. On November 21, 2009 my second grandchild was born and during the first part of December 2009 Teionna graduated with a M.Ed. in Community Counseling. In 2010, Teionna began working on her Ph.D. while maintaining her own home, two lively children, and a full-time job.

After a period of searching for opportunities of self-development, Teionna decided to fulfill her dreams and actively work for herself. Therefore, in 2011 Teionna took a break from school and took a step on faith and began her full time career working as a Life Development Specialist. Her main goal in her work is to assist those who experience trials and tribulations while displaying a message of "strengthening families by building resilient optimistic families." In efforts of being an active asset to the community overtime Teionna has acquired certifications to assist in her goals of helping others, including Notary Public, Gang Specialist, Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC), Human Services Board Certified Practitioner (HS-BCP), AI's Pals facilitator, and a certified Child and Adolescent Needs and Strength Tool (CANS) screener. Teionna has also managed to serve as the volunteer National Volunteer Coordinator for the Young and Powerful Group, serve on Suffolk's Board for the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, and Chair Suffolk's Redevelopment and Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

With the continued mindset of advancement, service, and providing for her children and herself since the start of her organization, Resilient Family Services, Inc., Teionna has also begun a commercial cleaning business and a technology based business. Although Teionna is actively involved in her

businesses and education advancement, she remains a great mother who has proven to beat the odds while remaining humble. For all of the reasons mentioned within this essay and many more, I believe my daughter, Teionna is a great candidate for the 2011 Dorian Award.