



ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

A Presidential Point of Light

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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Dear friends,

Quanise first started coming to Aslan when she was 13 years old. It's unusual for us to invite a child to join us that late. We normally start kids at age 5, because we know we have a twelve-year window to win them or to lose them. This is, of course, painting with a broad brush; but it's pretty close to how it works.

Aslan doesn't leave anything to chance. From the start, we pick up each and every child at his home for every activity: Right Choices classes, tutoring, cooking classes, biking, martial arts, dance . . . whatever! Leaving things to chance doesn't work. Letting kids come to you doesn't work. They drop in. They drop out! And going by for them in the BBB (Big Blue Bus) or our vans doesn't mean just pulling up to the door, honking a couple of times and driving away if they don't come out. Lots of times we're late for class – for good reason. For about a third or more of our students, we have to walk up to their house or apartment every week and knock, knock, knock to remind them we're there to pick them up. **There are no such things as clients with Aslan!** These children are family members to us, and when one of them moves away (or, God forbid, drops out) we cry real tears.

We fall in love with each child – some more than others. It was easy to fall in love with Quanise. What a sweet young lady. She soaked up love like a sponge, and she came to Aslan every day our doors were open. All through middle school and high school, she was there – every Bible class, cooking class, summer camp, biking program – you name it, Quanise was there with a smile on her face! And then she started giving back by volunteering her time. Because Aslan staffer Queenie Ferguson spent so many hours mentoring her and teaching her, Quanise wanted to start teaching some of our 5-year-olds in Red Bank. She did such a good job that she graduated to doing the same for a class in Long Branch! And then she started riding the train to Asbury Park on Thursdays to teach a group of our kids there! I would often bring her home after Thursday evening classes, and I was always amazed at the growing maturity in this fine young woman.

But we were all concerned for Quanise's future. As a high school senior, her tutoring test scores showed she was several grade levels behind in both reading and mathematics. She wanted so badly to go to college, and we encouraged her – like we do all our Aslan youth – to reach for greatness. But privately we worried she would not do well in college. When she graduated from high school, we still encouraged her to try attending Brookdale Community College

(Over)



High School
Graduation

S. Craig Bogard
Chief Executive Officer
Aslan Youth Ministries
Red Bank, NJ



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Changing the world . . . one child at a time!

(BCC). BCC has one of the best remedial tutoring programs in the country, and we knew if anyone could help Quanise succeed, Brookdale would be the place. Unfortunately, after one semester, Quanise dropped out with failing grades.

But as the great radio commentator Paul Harvey used to say, “Now, for the rest of the story!” Quanise came into the Aslan office dejected, discouraged, defeated and depressed. She thought that her dreams were gone, but we knew better. Queenie looked at her and said, “Girl, you have to find something you love to do – something you can master with no struggle! What is it?” Quanise thought for a moment and said, “Remember when I was in Aslan cooking classes with Miss Tracy? I love to cook!” Queenie said, “Well there it is. Get online over there on that computer until you find a culinary school close by.”

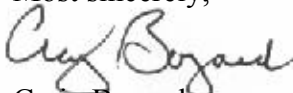
Quanise went to work, and an hour or so later she called Queenie over. She’d found a school in Philadelphia, and they were off and running. Within a couple of weeks, Quanise was accepted to the school on full scholarship, including campus housing! The hard work, however, was still to come. This was the fall of 2012, so two years of continuous study and catching up awaited this ambitious young woman. Was she up for the task? Had Aslan, in 5 short years, been able to inculcate in Quanise the values of hard work, discipline, determination and, ultimately, trust in God that would see her through to complete the dream of her education?

There are some who look at Aslan Youth Ministries and measure our success from year to year. If donations drop one year, then we’re failures. If they’re up another year, then we’re successful. But if this were true, then Jesus and His disciples were abject failures. When Jesus and Peter were asked to pay taxes in Capernaum, Jesus told Peter to go down to the lake and go fishing. The first fish that jumped on the hook would have a coin in its mouth, and Peter could pay their taxes with the coin. I guess donations were a little down that year! After the Resurrection, Peter and John were walking close to the Temple near a place called the “Beautiful Gate.” A man who had never walked in his life begged them for money. Their response was, “We have no money, but in Jesus name stand up and walk!” What happened next was a bottom line worth a lot more than silver or gold!

On December 21, 2014, 21-year-old Quanise Pack graduated from the Art Institute of Philadelphia and has two excellent jobs – one as the main chef at a restaurant. She continues to take additional courses at the Institute to further her education. She has her own apartment and her own car! Oh, and at one point during her two years at school she was a chef at one of the restaurants at Lincoln Financial Field Stadium where the Philadelphia Eagles play!

May God bless all of you who see the second-by-second, day-by-day, year-by-year and eternal value of Aslan Youth Ministries.

Most sincerely,


Craig Bogard

