

IMPACT

REAL STORIES FROM THE
DOWNTOWN SEATTLE YMCA

Partners With Youth • Summer 2007

“I’m helping to make the foster care system a better place.”

Jamica - improving the lives of youth

JAMICA’S STORY



If you pick up a copy of The Mockingbird Times, you are likely to see Jamica’s face and by-line. As a Senior Youth Representative at The Mockingbird Society, she is actively involved in improving the lives of youth experiencing foster care or homelessness. Her work has earned praise from the community, and she was YMCA Employee of the Month in October, 2006.

She has been involved with The Mockingbird Society as a junior in high school. Jamica educates lawmakers about the benefits of supportive legislation such as House Bill 2002, which provides housing for youth past their 21st birthday who attend college or trade school.

Jamica entered foster care at age 14, where she was grateful to stay in one stable home with her sister. “It was a good experience

for me,” she says. “It kept my focus on school. Those high school years are important years.”

When Jamica entered care, her two younger brothers were placed in a different home. Multiple placements followed, and Jamica saw them struggle without stability. “If I had been in 50 different places I don’t know where I’d be,” she says. “It would be harder.” She stayed in touch with both of her brothers, and made a commitment to help. “I always told them when I left care we would be together,” she says. When her brothers received a new case worker at DSHS who asked where the boys would be happiest, they said “with Jamica.” Since then, Jamica has been working through the process of becoming a licensed caregiver.

***“HANG IN THERE” IS JAMICA’S
ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.
“YOUR TIME TO STRIVE IS
COMING.”***

Jamica now lives independently in her own apartment, and appreciates the help of both the YMCA Transitions program and the YMCA Independent Living Program for their support and financial assistance. “The rent and resources have helped me so much,” she says.

Jamica is working on prerequisites to enter the nursing field, and preparing to care for her brothers. In the meantime, she is grateful for the opportunities she has to help others. “I’m changing laws,” she says. “I’m helping to make the foster care system a better place.”

***JAMICA IS A PARTICIPANT
IN THE YMCA INDEPENDENT
LIVING PROGRAM.***



**YMCA
Partners
With Youth
Campaign**

The Downtown Seattle YMCA annually serves over 19,000 children, young adults, adults and families throughout King County. Jamica’s story was reprinted from Stepping Stones, a newsletter for participants and friends of the YMCA Independent Living Program. If you would like to learn more about this particular program or other Downtown programs, please call Kyle Cronk at 206-382-5061.