

November 23, 2009

Dear Sir or Madam,

When I think of CHANGE the first person that comes to mind is not President Barack Obama, instead I think of my neighborhood barber, Angelo Townsend.

My name is Justin Allen. I am a 17 year old Chicago Public School Nursing Student. Angelo has known me almost all of my life.

Angelo has always stressed school-- going to school, doing well in school, staying out of trouble, period. When I began high school, I wanted to fit in and started hanging with the wrong crowd. Angelo heard about this, he began to mentor me and some of my friends to help us get back on the right path.

His makeshift intervention helped a majority of us to start taking school more seriously. Furthering our education beyond high school is a very important thing he stresses. When I had the opportunity to travel overseas for a study abroad program, Angelo, without hesitation, donated a generous amount of money toward my trip.

In our community, Angelo is well respected by the oldest person as well as youngest. He has always been a one man neighborhood watch. If anyone is in need and Angelo has it, they will receive it, especially the younger kids.

To provide a safe haven, Angelo allows us to hang out in the barbershop. We enjoy going there because you never know what story or joke you're going to hear. Angelo has millions upon millions of funny stories and corny amateur comedy. When you first walk into the shop, the first thing you see is the infamous "Wall of Fame". This is where Angelo displays our graduation pictures for all to see.

When we enter the shop, Angelo greets us with his familiar, "Sit yo' butt down before I skin ya!" This brings laughter throughout the whole shop everybody knows it's a big joke.

Angelo always watches out for us, the younger kids, to keep us from going down the wrong path. No drugs, no gangs, and good grades are what he tries to instill in us. Even the ones that went astray, Angelo continues to try and get them straight. No kid is a lost cause to him.

I don't know who will receive this letter, but that person needs to recognize this wonderful soul. I'm not the only one that feels this way, ask anyone in the community, they will agree.

Sincerely,

Justin K. Allen

Harlan Community Academy High School

Senior