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10th Grade

What My Charter School Means to Me

I always valued education, and what it could do for those seeking it, in order to gain knowledge, and guarantee a bright future for those who desired one. I sought it. And this is the story of what I, Jasmine Teutsch, found.

Before I was just a normal home-schooled kid. I was smart too. I was good at math, and English, and I took a lot of notes to remember what I learned, and did well on tests and quizzes. I was very smart. But I wasn't as smart as I could be. I knew I wasn't as wise as I could be either. I also knew that I wouldn't be the smartest or wisest I could be with how things were going for me at this point in time as things were how they were. I was home schooled, better than most kids my age, but I knew I could do better if I wasn't home schooled at all.

I wasn't learning anything about art outside from the books my dad would occasionally buy me about art and drawing techniques, and even less about history, or science. I was a curious kid though. I wanted to learn, and know the truth about the world around me, and seek knowledge. Knowledge was power to me. I wanted to be taught by a teacher too, a real teacher, one with more knowledge than I could grasp, but somehow obtain it all. A person with real knowledge, that cared about me enough to share it with me.

I would just look on the internet for knowledge, and sought the truth through the means of other people who actually wound up knowing less than me about things I barely even heard of. I didn't know that there were things online that were false. At least then. Now I know that if you want the truth, you need to get it from people who know the truth, not idiots blogging from their mothers' basement, only looking to spread opinions, not facts. I did read books though, and many of them. I love to read. But books can only do so much sometimes. Books wither away, and we eventually forget the stories in them if we aren't lucky enough to remember. But no one forgets a person. Especially if they had impacted you in a more than overwhelmingly amazing way. A way that benefits you in a way no one else could've.

I wanted a teacher very badly. I wanted someone there with me, teaching me about what I didn't know. Of course I had my loving mother. She would teach me math and English, and do a very good job of it, making sure I understood what I didn't, and remembered what I did. She was a very amazing teacher. But she didn't know everything she needed to know to teach me all I needed to know. I wanted someone who had read all of the books, (and didn't forget what was inside them), studied all of the material, and had a degree to hang on their wall, showing what they earned for their knowledge, and something to prove they had knowledge. And I finally got that when I had enrolled in the Insight School of Michigan. I finally got what I never really had, and something I always wanted. An education. A real education, with a real teacher to educate me. A chance to finally learn everything I ever wanted to learn, and even more.

I had once gone to your average brick and mortar school, a long time ago. But my mother had pulled me out, for good reasons too. My home Detroit isn't known for having the best schools. It's actually quite the opposite. But I finally had a chance to get a real education, and not the exact opposite, which is what many teens in this city get. Anything BUT knowledge. I hadn't been in school for about

nine years, and I was home-schooled for eight of those years. I was excited to finally go back to school. The best part was that I wouldn't even have to go somewhere I wasn't used to, be around a bunch of teens with bad habits I shouldn't get into or pick up...it was all online. Of course, the fact I had never been to an online school made me very anxious. But I had a chance to actually learn, and not wind up some homeless bum not even with a high school degree on the street doing nothing good for my life, or anyone else's. At least that's what I thought would happen to me. Or I would become the lesser version of what I wanted to become. A dead beat artist. I love art, and wanted to express myself through it. But like many other things, I wasn't taught all of the ways of how to yet.

I was nervous. Very nervous indeed. I was afraid of what it would be like. I never went to an online school before, like I said, or even knew how it would work. How could a teacher teach me from miles away? How? That question was soon answered, and showed me no matter how far away someone was, they could still touch my life. And that's just what my teachers did.

I was finally learning from someone that had knowledge in mere months after being made known I was accepted into the school. I finally knew that the father of the constitution was James Madison. I finally knew what the Civil Rights movement, and its most famous leader Martin Luther King, and the Harlem Renaissance, and all of the great people that expanded the culture and art of the African American population after they had migrated northward. I finally knew who George Washington really was, and what he really did. I finally knew what the 13th amendment did, and the great man that got killed for it, and who killed him, and why. I finally knew about important people, and what they did, and the events that happened that wound up giving me the freedoms and liberties I loved so much because of what they did. And one day, I want to be like these wonderful people I learned about, and change society for the better like they did. Like those in the Harlem Renaissance like, make an artistic and cultural impact on society through my creativity. But I couldn't do that without my teachers. Especially one.

Even better than just having teachers, I had teachers that really cared. The ones that do make an impact on lives. They worked hard to get me the good grades I earned, and it wasn't easy at first. All of the A's I got in American History B (because I didn't do so well in American History A), wouldn't have been possible without the help of Mrs. Worm. She made sure I turned those D's and C's into A's and B's. All of the A's and B's, I got in Algebra 1A wouldn't have been possible without Mrs. Williams there in her special help sessions to help me understand what I didn't. All of the A's and B's I got in English wouldn't have happened without Mrs. Baca there to explain everything, and Mrs. Gibbons there for extra help if I needed it. All of these teachers helped me get the good grades I earned, and of course made me try harder when I got the bad grades. I did get many C's, D's at first, and sadly the occasional F. But that didn't stop me. If anything, it made me want to try harder to get an amazing grade next time around. And I did eventually get those A's to make up for those C's and D's. And I couldn't have done it without my teachers there to help me.

There was one teacher though, who put in a lot of extra time and effort to help me. Mrs. Kolka, my glorious art teacher. I always try to follow along with her instructions in class, but I struggled. But, she was always there at 1 O' clock to make sure that any struggling student could succeed. And, it just so happened to always be me. She went through whatever we were working on, step by step, with anything I didn't understand, and by the end of the Help Session, I understood completely. Anything I didn't know before, I knew after. Of course, for some reason I always wound up back there. And she was always there too. To help me. I received straight A's in both of my art classes because of her. Not a

single D, or C, or B, or even an A-. All A's. Thanks to her. And I can't thank her enough. She's the teacher that impacted my life, in a very unique way.

My charter school means to me a place where I can finally learn what I need to actually succeed. Even if I don't go to an actual public, brick and mortar school, an actual physical place, I still feel in a sense being in a very different place. Not just with school, but with life, in a strange, yet pleasant way. A lot has changed, and to my gratefulness, for the better. I am glad I can finally say in the future I went to high school, and got that diploma. I'm not that far yet, but as my C's turn into B's, and my B's turn into A's, I'll be there very soon. I'm in the 10th grade now, but before I know it I'll already be graduating college.

My charter school means opportunity, hope, and change. For me, and my future. And I thank my art teacher Mrs. Kolka for that the most. Who knows, one day she might see a painting of mine, hanging in a gallery, and think of how she helped me, and know she's a big part of the reason why that painting is there. We'll just have to wait and see.