

Dear Team Walker Organization,

I want to help give direction to the lives of youth from impoverished urban neighborhoods through the importance of education and sports, just as they have done for me. Born and raised in Jersey City, New Jersey, my city has been all that I've known and I hope to one day give back to the city that raised me by becoming an athletic director or athletic academic advisor and eventually opening a sports facility. Athletics has always been my passion, and combining this with my leadership skills, I am pursuing my Master's Degree in Sports Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University.

At the age of nine, I became a member of the Team Walker Organization, which offers youth academic and athletic programs in Jersey City to keep children off the streets and out of trouble. It was within this organization that I was instilled with the values of the 3 D's: Dedication, Determination, and Discipline.

During my time with Team Walker as part of the dance team, Jerry and his staff became my family away from home. From our tutoring/study sessions to two hour dance practices, Team Walker was determined to see us become successful both in the classroom and in our activities. Fast forward thirteen years, the 3 D's have been the reason for my success thus far. It was also with Team Walker that I learned the qualities of a leader, but also later became one. I am now ready to give back the next generation of Team Walker students.

Being accepted into VCU's Sports Leadership program will help educate not only myself in new ways, but also others. I want to give back to the community who has made me who I am. Jersey City is the village who raised me, from the schools and the programs I attended as a child and even up until now, I am who I am because of where I was raised.

I am an example of a young Latina who is a rising leader within the community and wish to continue my education in order to become the change I want to see in my city and in my respective field. Change doesn't happen overnight. It is with this understanding that I am willing to work toward this milestone for not only myself, but other people of color.

Team Walker, thank you for being the foundation to getting me where I am so far, the 3 D's will forever be embedded within me.

Sincerely,

Georgina Rayo