

Team Walker Organization,

Jerry Walker and Team Walker has always been apart of me. Since a toddler, I pretty much knew that Team Walker would be apart of who I am. My sister (Nyeisha Thompson) was apart of Team Walker and of course I wanted to be like my sister, so at the age of 5 I started dancing with Team Walker. It was the best experience of my life. Not only was I a dancer, I attended the Summer Camps as well as took advantage of the academic support they had set in place for us.

By the time I was ten years old I would say I invited most of my *friends* to join Team Walker because it was something to do when there was nothing to do for children between the ages of 5-18. Team Walker served as a “safe space” for many students in the community. Team Walker advocate for youth athletic and academic programs to insure that the children in the neighborhood are safe and staying out of trouble.

Team Walker has helped shape me into the woman I am today. I do believe that all of the things I have learned throughout my years of being apart of Team Walker have allowed me to have an impact on those around me. Growing up I always wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher that would help my students achieve their academic and personal goals. I think it is important to have a positive role model in your life that will remind you to keep pushing no matter what comes in your way. Throughout my time at Team Walker, I learned to embody the 3D’s: Dedication, Determination, and Discipline.

The 3D’s have allowed me to impact those around me through different leadership roles. I am a proud alumna of Saint Anthony High School where I was very active in extracurricular activities that allowed me to serve has a student-leader. I am a recent graduate of Montclair State University (MSU) where I received my Bachelor of Science in Physical Education. During my time at MSU, I was apart of many organizations where I held leadership positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Public Relation Chair). These positions allowed me to become the leader I am today and to get a better insight into Higher Education. I also served as a Peer Leader for the Educational Opportunity Fund Program (EOF) at MSU for two years. I worked closely with incoming-student who sometimes came from the same background as me. So I felt the need to be there for each and every scholar that I could be there for. The leadership skills I have embodied has allowed me to further my education. I am currently pursuing my Master’s Degree in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education.

Team Walker encourages those apart of their program to be leaders in all aspects of their lives whether that be in the classroom or during extra-curricular activities. Having this mindset has allowed me to grow as a leader which is helping me be able to give back by sharing some of the things I have learned throughout my high school and undergraduate years. I am open to sharing my experience with the next generation of Team Walker scholars.

Now that I am studying Higher Education, I will develop more leadership skills that will allow me to give back in a more efficient way. I want to share my experience with others and give back to my community in the best way possible. The schools that I have attended and the many programs I was apart of growing up has allowed me to grow into the woman/ leader I am today and I am very grateful for it all!

I am a proud first-generation college student who loves to share my experiences as well as challenges that came my way. I think it is important for students to hear from those who may look like them or have similar backgrounds. I am not only doing this for myself or my mom, but for those who will come after me.

Thank you, Team Walker, for helping me create the foundation of leadership that I have today and for constantly reminding that as long as I stay Dedicated, Determined and Disciplined, I will be successful and achieve all of my goals.

Best,

Diamond Thompson