

Carver Grant Story

Jim Schaffer

6/23/12

The Carver Foundation of Norwalk is grateful to the New Canaan Community Foundation for its generous support of our free afterschool Youth Development Program (YDP) led by certified teachers and qualified volunteers based within Carver's Community Center and in Norwalk's four middle schools and two high schools.

YDP helps young people build networks of support, develop important social skills, and expand their horizons. Carver surrounds students with interconnecting rings of learning and support. Carver's purpose and accomplishments can be summed-up in one of many, many relationships: Jasmine Brown.

Jasmine found Carver through another agency that recommended her to us. Our annual spring College Tour first caught her interest, but that was merely the beginning of Jasmine's years-long relationship with the Carver community. She commuted via public transportation from Stamford each day to fully embrace all the afterschool opportunities she found at the Carver Community Center. On a spring College Tour, Jasmine and Virginia State University (VSU) found each other. She was determined to make this her college.

One of the points of these annual far-flung journeys to colleges and universities across the country is to awaken the hopes of youth whose circumstances would otherwise deflate aspirations for higher education. Jasmine had her own life challenges to overcome, and she did. Carver afterschool programs gave Jasmine the confidence and skills through the years to graduate from high school on-time and college-ready.

VSU accepted her. They gave her scholarships and other grant support, but she remained \$12,000 short. At the time, Carver did not have the funds to make-up that shortfall so we encouraged her to begin her college career at Norwalk Community College where she earned her spot on the Dean's List and into the hearts of her professors and peers there. With a generous scholarship from Carver, Jasmine is now attending VSU.

This past April, on Carver's 42nd Annual Spring College Tour, when the bus of Carver students and staff arrived at VSU, Jasmine Brown was there to greet the current YDP students and to conduct a tour of the campus. Jasmine on that day became a stunning role model for Carver YDP youth. Representing years of what Carver support, and that of the New Canaan Community Foundation, can do to prepare the most unlikely youth for a college career, most often the first generation to attend college, Jasmine was beaming with pride of accomplishment and for her beloved college.

Jasmine attended Carver's annual Child of America gala on June 15th to relate her story to our guests. On June 22nd Jasmine accepted the Carver College Student of the Year Award at our Annual Testimonial Dinner.

Your support of Carver's vision and collaborative leadership structure sets the stage for individuals and organizations alike to share the work, responsibility, and benefits of improved results for children, families, and schools. When families, schools, and community partners such as you join together in common purpose and collective trust, we can prepare youth such as Jasmine Brown for college careers that make both our community and the youth themselves beam with pride of accomplishment and purpose.