

MARCH 21, 2019

Chloressa Wren Named JMG Alumnus Of The Year

Chloressa Wren was selected by the Youth Solutions Board of Directors – Advancement Committee as one of the two Alumnus of the Year!

Ms. Chloressa Wren, alumnus of Mary Ann Kost's Northwestern High School 2017-2018 JMG Program in Flint, Michigan is well on her way to success. However, success was not always the direction Ms. Wren was headed for.

When Ms. Wren entered Ms. Kost's JMG class in the Fall of 2014, she had many barriers. She had no direction as to what path she was going to take after high school. She did not live with her parents. She needed transportation to take part in activities that would help her gain job skills and eventually a job. She did not know her career options or how to attain a career. She came from a small neighborhood, in the small city of Flint, Michigan, she had small dreams, and limited opportunities.

However, as a high school freshman, Ms. Wren said she made a decision to "get exposed to as many things as she possibly could" and "get out of her comfort zone." She consequently jumped into all the opportunities JMG provided her. In fact, as a first year JMG student, Ms. Wren participated in over 20 activities – talent tours, college tours, cultural field trips and community service projects.Ms. Wren made the decision to take advantage of all that JMG had to offer. During the first year alone, Ms. Wren went on the Central Michigan University, Michigan State University, Ferris State University, and Wayne State University college tours. She was able to "learn about new cultures" by attending the Arab American Museum and Motown Museum field trips. She chose to push herself to "get out of her comfort zone" by attending the 2014 JMG Leadership Conference, competing in the 2015 JMG CDC, participating in the Northwestern High School Mock Interview Program, contributing to the JMG facilitated Reality Fair, and spreading the word about JMG to patrons of the local Barnes & Noble. She investigated medical careers by attending the Hurley Health Medical Center Career Day. She considered the financial career path by taking a tour and talking to a representative of the downtown Detroit world headquarters of Quicken Loans. She investigated the zoology career field by attending a trip to the Detroit Zoo. JMG allowed Chloressa to be the navigator of her destiny.

Chloressa did not just learn about different college options and investigate different careers. Learning job skills and giving back to the community was another one of Chloressa's priorities. She met with several non-profit organizations in the Flint area at the Mott Community College Volunteer Symposium to identify organizations that would be a good fit for her and her classmates. She helped children make crafts at the Flint Cultural Center Holiday Walk. She assisted little children with science experiments when Cranbrook Science Institute held an after-school program at Eisenhower Elementary in Flint, Michigan. She planted flowers and seeds at Max Brandon City Park, so that the public could rea

By the time Chloressa graduated in June of 2018, she had accumulated 206 hours of JMG facilitated community service, alone. She had participated in 40+ JMG activities over a period of four years that included talent tours, college tours, JMG State events, community service trips and museum field trips. These numbers do not include all the activities she participated in outside of the JMG organization, nor does it include every Blueberry Moment she did for two years, the weekly visits to the local elementary school to read to the little children, the weekly volunteer work she performed at Hurley Medical Center, the week-long volunteer work done during the summer in Northwest Detroit, or the ongoing recycling and trash picking up she did at our own Northwestern High School.

By participating in all these activities, she began to see her future begin to focus. At first, Ms. Wren thought a mechanical engineer career would be interesting. Then, because she found success at connecting teachers' printers up to wifi, she considered becoming a computer engineer. In her work at Hurley Medical Center as a weekly volunteer, she was also exposed to the healthcare field. By participating in hands-on projects and being a participant at the Skilled Trades Job Fair, she also had exposure to the construction industry. Currently, as a scholarship-awarded student at the University of Michigan – Flint, living in the school's apartments, working on campus, and majoring in Environmental Science, she has found her home. She hopes to one day be an Environmental Scientist, a Park Ranger, or a Safari Ranger.

Chloressa epitomizes a stellar JMG student. She chose to take advantage of so many JMG opportunities that have helped her overcome barriers. She looked out not only for herself, but for her fellow JMG students and the greater Flint community by participating in community service activities and being a role model. What makes Ms. Chloressa Wren worthy of the JMG Alumnus of the Year title is because of her participation in the vast number of activities JMG had to offer, which turned her sense of no direction into making a successful future for herself.