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As a first generation African-American college student, the words of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have A Dream' speech hit a cord in my soul of a long term need in the Black community to be successful and positively prosperous. That it is every man's right to attain a good education in hopes of maintaining a lucrative career to provide for himself and his household, to break the chain of illiteracy, unemployment and lack of education from past generations, and to lead by example to show future generations that anything is possible no matter where you have come from or where you have been told you will end up. "With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood." To me, the "jangling discords of our nation" refers to the ignorance and intolerance we have for one another as human beings because of topical and insignificant differences. I am currently in the process of assisting in creating a "symphony of brotherhood" throughout my community and this begins with my peers and the youth. In the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." If we can transform the jangling discords of our youth and wean them towards a beautiful symphony of brotherhood we would not only be "giving a fish," but "teaching one how to," which has greater long term affects.

Dr. King's dream and vision of our country living in equality and positive productivity has become my dream and mission as well. In this, apart from leading by example being a full-time college student and working part-time, I also find time to volunteer and give back to the community. As a Big Brother with the Big Brother Big Sisters (BBBS) of Snohomish County, I can see that the need for brotherhood and positive role models starts at a young age. Countless times I have heard from different organizations staff that there is a lack of male role models volunteering in the community, not to mention an extremely large lack of Black male role models. I have decided to dedicate my free time in

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showing the youth that there are positive Black men in the world with whom they can relate to and learn from. In an attempt to show all youth and people in general that we can be more than just the “thugs” and rappers portrayed on television and by the media.

Volunteering with the youth through the BBBS, Junior Achievement Program and the Boys and Girls Club of Snohomish County, it is evident that the need for validation and acceptance is high within the young community and that the positive validation and acceptance received from any walk of life is the determining factor of which road these youth will take. If approval and acceptance is not found through the right channels then it will be found elsewhere through means that may not be as positive, such as gangs and criminal activities. As an at risk- youth myself and “reformed” citizen I see the importance of setting a positive example and how this in effect can assist in creating a ‘symphony of brotherhood’. So in relation to Dr. King, I too have a dream and understand that in fulfilling that dream of brotherhood among all individuals, it is important to lead by example and uplift the community by displaying a positive image and giving back to the community.