

# THOUGHTS OF A QUEEN

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**Lkecia Walker** | A woman defined by her faith, femininity, allure, and style, Lakecia is passionate about all matters of empowerment.



My name is Lakecia Walker and I am a proud Board Member of It's A Girl Thing!

I've had the opportunity to work with the organization for the last 4 years and it's been nothing short of Amazing. I can recall my first encounter with the founder, Crystal D. Life, it was an immediate connection as she shared her vision for the organization. My heart lit up with joy. Her mission and dreams for the organization was in line with a personal passion of mine.

With a heart for young people and community, I've had the opportunity to expand my message of empowerment by mentoring and inspiring the Queens to be strong, smart and bold through fashion and entrepreneurial initiatives. To witness the transformation has been a blessing. The Queens continue to level up!

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# BEGINNING HIGH SCHOOL DURING A PANDEMIC

By Khennedi Mitchell

After years of watching shows and movies like Netflix's "On My Block" and Disney channel's "Zombies", I thought I'd be a little more prepared for high school but the first few weeks haven't been any "High School Musical." I've been filled with excitement and fear at the same time.

I imagined my 9th grade year at Frank H. Peterson differently than what it has been. For example, I thought I'd physically be going to school but due to the Coronavirus outbreak, I'm enrolled in online classes. I'd hope for in person learning, especially since I am a culinary art student, and was looking forward to training in person with my culinary teacher who is a professional chef.

Although I hope that this way of learning for me will change soon, it has been hard to enjoy high school. Balancing all my classes and homework assignments, trying to communicate with teachers, and learning the homeschooling system. Although I am doing well, it has been challenging. I've been upset because I can't see my friends or make any new ones. When I was little, my big sister used to talk about all the memories that she had with her friends in high school, but I don't have the chance to do the same right now. It's weird not being able to see my friends and it makes me appreciate going to a school building and seeing the faces. My fingers are crossed that'll change soon.

Now that I've mentioned some of the cons, here are some pros to attending virtual school. It is not all bad! I am happy that there is another option to learn during this pandemic. It has made me more disciplined. For example, I have no excuses when it comes to being late to school. I can't blame my mom for not having me there on time. I must be at my desk and signed into class by 8:25am. I can wear what I want but my parents enforce that I dress appropriately, at least from the waist up. Plus, I can work at my own pace with less interruptions from students in the classroom. This experience has pushed me to be a better student. I am more determined to do well because of the many challenges. I am choosing to be positive and hopeful. I am determined to do my best with all the assignments that come my way.



In conclusion, my goal is to finish my 9th grade year with an A/B honor roll. With the focus that I have now, I know that I can do it. Although it's a different way of learning, I can learn as much as I did on campus. I currently have A's in most classes right now, my favorite class is Math. It typically comes easy to me. There are pros and cons to everything but all in all, I know that I will get through this and make this sometimes stressful situation a positive one.

# HIGH SCHOOL THOUGHTS DURING A PANDEMIC

By **Eden Phillips**



Hello, I'm Eden and I'm here to talk about starting high school. Starting high school was pretty cool, except for the fact that I have to do home schooling. I really wanted to go back to school so I could meet new friends, but corona got in the way of that. My mother said I could go to normal school next quarter so I'm really happy about that. I really miss all my friends from middle school, but most of them are going to the same high school as me so I will see them soon.

When I am learning online it is really hard for me to understand what they are teaching but eventually I get it. Last year when we had to do home schooling my grades dropped a lot, but I did well on the last quarter. I intend to do better while I am in home schooling. The only thing I don't like about high school is the fact we have to wake up so early. Waking up that early is really annoying to me because I go to sleep very late so I'm always tired when school starts.

The only good thing I get out of waking up early is that school ends earlier. Overall, High school isn't that bad and I'm kind of enjoying it.

# WHAT IAGT MEANS TO ME

By **Ranazha Black**



I feel like IAGT has made me stronger as a person. It has given me a little more confidence in myself. It's easier for me to admit that I'm good at something and I am slightly better at taking compliments. IAGT has taught me that if I want something, I should just go for it. It shouldn't matter if no one else believes in you as long as you believe in yourself. I have a better outlook on life as well. There was a big part of me that didn't think I would be successful, but the encouragement that this organization gave me helped push me to think otherwise. Now because of them, I've started taking commissions and selling my art! Everything they've taught me will stick with me for the rest of my life.



# A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Tanika Jones

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My name is Tanika and I have two daughters, Niara and Eden. Back in 2015, Niara came to me at church and asked if she could join a group that some of the young ladies were joining. At first, I was very skeptical because I didn't know Crystal so my first response was "No". One thing about Niara is that she doesn't give up so she asked two more times before I finally said "Yes" and I'm glad I did. Crystal has imparted so much wisdom and knowledge into my daughters. She makes sure they are heard and builds them up when they feel like they don't have anything to offer. She has surrounded them with inspirational and successful men and women that pour into them unwatered down facts, knowledge and wisdom. Crystal wears her heart on her shoulder for these queens and they know it and rest in it. I had been trying to get Niara to understand that she is too strong to be a follower and how to stand apart. I really believe that involvement with, It's A Girl Thing, helped her gain revelation about that subject. Eden has always loved to help others and be a part of something that matters and now Eden is an IAGT Ambassador. I believe that my daughters are growing into better young ladies every day from their involvement with IAGT and think it is an outstanding program.

**Tanika Nance, Parent**

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# SENIOR QUEEN THOUGHTS BY YANELIE LOTT

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My high school experience was actually pretty good. I got to do what I like drawing and painting and many of my friends from middle school came to same high school. But there are some things I wished I used earlier. Especially junior year sense I was bombarded with many advanced classes. A good way to keep track of work was planning out dates and making checklists. As a procrastinator this really helped me. Also, I steadily became more open and starting conversations became more easier and for new people I met. There were some shortcomings with a 'friend' of mine although she was one of my closest friends, she was very toxic. So, by standing my ground and cutting ties with her it was such a relief. The art I've made shows me exploring myself and experimenting with different materials. I know I grew from my freshman year as I grew out of my shell and am looking forward to getting through this senior year.



# WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

By Kayla Walker

Do you know what it means to be a leader? A leader is a person who leads by example. A leader is not a follower. A leader is not dubious which means they are not doubtful or questionable. Great leaders don't set out to be leaders, they set out to make a difference in the world and put an impact on people's lives. A person always doing his or her best becomes a natural leader by example. There is a difference between a leader and a boss. A boss demands blind obedience. A leader earns their authority through trust and understanding. A true leader has the confidence to stand alone. The courage to make tough decisions and compassion to listen to others needs. They don't set out to be a leader, they set out to be a person who makes a difference in this world. The challenge of being a leader, it's be strong, not weak, be kind, not rude, be bold, not a bully, be thoughtful, not lazy, be humble, not timid, and be proud not arrogant.



The most powerful leadership tool is to have your own personal example. Being a leader is not about being the boss and demanding obedience. Leadership is about influencing people to be their own leader and putting an impact on people's lives. Leadership is the ability to get some extraordinary achievements from ordinary people. Leaders are role models who show other people how to be a leader and what is right. A leader has the ability to guide others without forcing them into the right direction so they can show other followers how to be leaders. As a leader, you must envision the future possibility, believe that you can make a difference in this world and inspire people to grow. Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Westine Lodge has been a volunteer with IAGT for a little over a year and she has been a welcomed addition to the Queendom. She brings years of experience with youth and her energy is unmatched. She has been a part of the school system for 16 years and is a Transition teacher with Ed White High School. Students in this program have graduated from high school and they are able to attend our Transition Program where they are learning Daily Living Skills. The students have an Intellectual Disability that means they have a delayed processing. She has volunteered with youth at various churches for over 30 years.

Westine has been married for 32 years and has two children, Jerica and Andrew both HBCU graduates. She herself is a proud alumni of Bethune Cookman.

We are happy to have Westine as part of the IAGT family and are excited about the impact she will leave on the lives of these Queen



For more information on Volunteering, please visit our website at [www.agirlthing.org](http://www.agirlthing.org) or reach out to our Volunteer Director, Khalisha Mitchell



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