

March 17, 2014

HUFF POST TEEN

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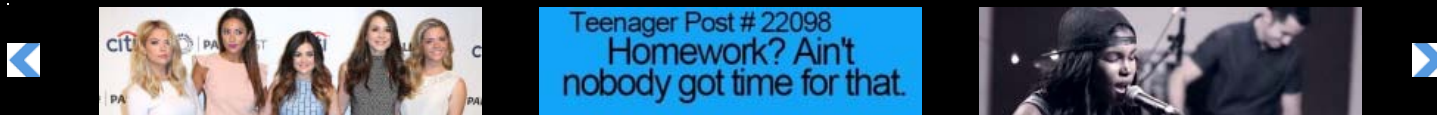


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Chelesa Fearce, Homeless Teen, Named Valedictorian At High School Graduation (VIDEO)

The Huffington Post | By Krystie Yandoli
 Posted: 05/22/2013 11:29 am EDT | Updated: 05/22/2013 11:34 am EDT



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When high schooler Chelesa Fearce had to study for exams at night, she would read her books using the light from her cell phone because it was dark in her homeless shelter.

According to [WBSTV.com](#), Chelesa was homeless for most of her high school career -- and sometimes her family even slept in her mother's car. But that didn't stop her from graduating at the very top of her high school class. After achieving a final grade point average of 4.466, Chelesa was just named valedictorian at Charles Drew High School in Riverdale, Ga.

Watch Chelesa talk about her incredible story in the video above.

"I just told myself to keep working, because the future will not be like this anymore," Chelesa [told WBSTV.com](#). "You're worried about your home life and then worried at school. Worry about being a little hungry sometimes, go hungry sometimes. You just have to deal with it."

On top of her outstanding GPA, Chelesa will be ahead of the curve when she enters Spelman College in the fall because for the last two years of high school, Chelesa tested high enough to take all college courses. Because of her hard work, she will be enrolled as a college junior.

And Chelesa isn't the only one making her family proud this graduation season: Her sister, Chelsea, is graduating as the salutatorian of her class at George Washington Carver High School in Atlanta.

"I'm very proud," their mother said. "I read to them a lot, took them to the library. Everything around was a learning experience."

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Another teen who achieved an incredible accomplishment this year despite challenging circumstances is [18-year-old Lane Gunderman](#). Like Chelesa, Lane didn't have a stable home, but he focused on his schoolwork and made it to the final round of the Intel Science Talent

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Search, [according to the Chicago Tribune](#). It was reported in March that he will receive a full scholarship to Stanford University.

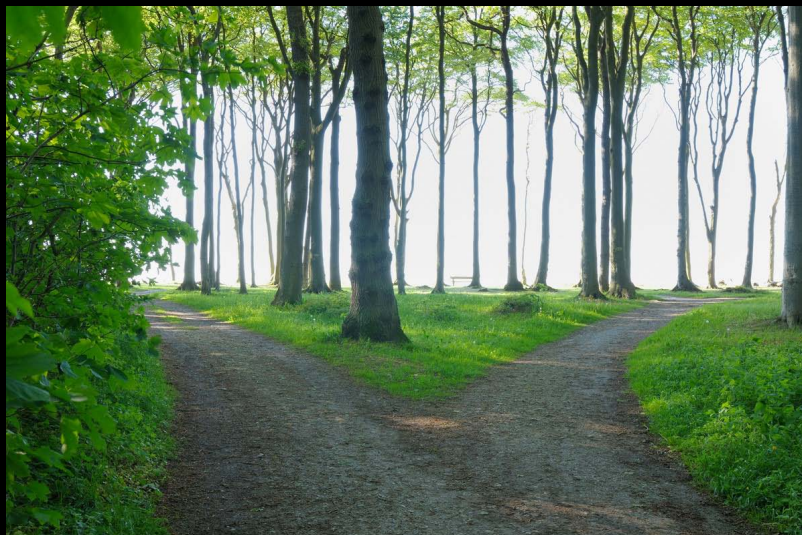
"I always knew I was going to go to a college," Lane [told the Chicago Tribune](#). "But I didn't know if it would be a very good one."

And then there is last year's standout student, [Samantha Garvey](#), who received national recognition for her achievements in the Intel science competition while living in a homeless shelter. She received a [scholarship](#) for \$50,000, courtesy of AT&T, so she could attend the college of her choice.

"My family's setbacks are a source of motivation. I want to get my family ahead, which is why I do well in school," Samantha [told Newsday](#).

Are you inspired by these teens? Sound off in the comments or tweet at [@HuffPostTeen](#).

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Kyle Anderson (Kyle_Anderson35)

12 Fans

★ 5

People are quick to thank God. NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO. She did it. Not God. She worked hard. Her inner strength. Her perseverance. Her will. Dont you dare take that away from her.

23 MAY 2013 8:48 PM

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berrygal66

390 Fans · Recovering Liberal, Proud Independent!

★ 1

Of course this lovely girl did it on her own. However, God was certainly an inspiration to her. Now what is so wrong with THAT?

25 MAY 2013 5:25 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



5 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

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vieragam

104 Fans

★ 2

These two amazing sisters had an amazing mom to be able to reach the heights they have. They have a bright and unlimited future and wealth! This family will never be homeless again. As a mom, I am busting with pride for this family!

25 MAY 2013 3:25 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Carmar_Walker

0 Fans

★ 3

I agree. What a great example of perseverance!

25 MAY 2013 5:44 PM

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2 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

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thebluetornado

SUPER USER · 32 Fans · Trying hard to live by the golden rule.

★ 4

"Those kids today..." Great job, Chelsea! You've inspired many!

22 MAY 2013 3:50 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Bertha M. (bmitche)

SUPER USER · 782 Fans

★ 4

"Where there is life, there is hope."

22 MAY 2013 2:04 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Notme_Again

0 Fans

★ 2

GREAT job Cheseal & also to your sister :-)) ~ @ Mom you are doing an AWESOME job with ALL of your KIDS ~ High Five to you Mom . May your Gurdian Angels be watching over ALL of you . You are ALL most definitely one BIG HAPPY FAMILY . No matter what gets in your way YOU fine away out . GOD BLESS YOU ALL

23 MAY 2013 8:30 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



jabrown45

3 Fans

★ 2

I hope she can get a strong scholarship, she earned it to finish her education. Being homeless, let alone making ends meet when you do have a home is hard enough to stay on track in school.

25 MAY 2013 6:55 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Thomas U. (tcunderdahl)

SUPER USER · 120 Fans

★ 2

If anyone could have blamed their circumstances for their failure it would have been Chelsea Fearce. Instead she found ways to overcome the obstacles in her life and show everyone what can be done when a person is determined to make it. Way to go Chelsea Fearce!!!

26 MAY 2013 1:19 AM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Deanna_Toms

0 Fans

★ 1

Good Job! Just shows you what God's mercy and grace can do for anyone who puts their faith in the Almighty. Congratulations Chelsea! Also, hats off to you too Mom!

23 MAY 2013 6:41 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Nancy_Q

579 Fans

★ 1

WOW!!! A strong young woman who will go far!!! GOOD FOR HER!!!

26 MAY 2013 6:58 AM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



junelee0319

228 Fans

★ 1

Congratulations are in order for this young lady

25 MAY 2013 7:01 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



jabrown45
3 Fans

Like to correct the grammar pattern from my last post:
" I hope she can get a strong scholarship, she earned it to finish her education. Its hard enough making ends meet when you do have a home, let alone being homeless and cutting you off from your goals completely." Homelessness can further diminish almost all hope and motivation in anyone.

25 MAY 2013 7:03 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Trenchtown_Rocket
103 Fans

Charles Drew High School in Riverdale, Georgia, which is in Clayton County right next to Atlanta is one of the WORST school systems in the entire nation. The ENTIRE COUNTY'S school system just recently released from probation for goodness sakes. This is like saying this girl is the brightest one in an entire grade of chock full of complete mo*r*ons.

25 MAY 2013 7:20 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Daphine_Johnson
26 Fans

It just goes to show the world what can be accomplish by studying, fortitude, perseverance and through prayers! God has guided this teenager's path through adversity, and hardship, it is a story that must not fade away! It is an inspiration to all people!

26 MAY 2013 4:17 PM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



Henry_Dixon
16 Fans

must be a DELTA

2 JUN 2013 7:13 AM

REPLY FAVE SHARE MORE



quanxavier
9 Fans

Stories like this should be on the front page of all media outlets. Congratulations to Ms. Fearce! You will go far with that type of determination.

26 MAY 2013 9:29 PM

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