

# High School Drop Out Now Aiming for College

Ja'Quavious McCoy faced some challenges growing up. He didn't always make the best decisions, hung with the wrong crowd and as a result found often found himself in trouble. His grades were good and his basketball playing was spectacular. But his off-court and out-of-class activities were in conflict.

His off the court antics finally got kicked off the basketball team. He was so mad about being kicked off the team that he dropped out a high school at the beginning of his senior year. Not a good idea.

While Ja'Quavious had worked part-time since he was 16-years-old, he soon found that being a high school drop-out at the age 18, he found out that he was only qualified for odd jobs at fast food restaurants and/or part-time retail jobs. Nothing that paid very well and nothing with a career track or benefits.

"I worked two or three jobs at a time," Ja'Quavious said, "but I learned quickly the value of education." He continued, "I learned that if I wanted one of those better paying jobs I needed a college degree."

Ja'Quavious lives with his mother, Rosetta McCoy, and his 13-year-old sister, Kyniya Barber, at Southside Homes (photographed on the cover of the web site). He describes his mom as his pillar of support.

His community has an on-side GED program offered by Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) in conjunction with CHA's Jobs Plus program that is open to all CHA residents. He said he saw the sign about the Adult Education program and stopped in one day to find out more.

Ja'Quavious was assigned to work with case manager Chad Martin. Mr. Martin helped him get enrolled in the GED program, which he has now completed. GED in hand, Ja'Quavious is now applying for college. He may be 23-years-old, but he is still eligible to play college basketball, and he is excited about his future.

His sister Kyniya is in the 8th grade at Sedgefield Middle School and is on the A/B Honor Roll. She is proud of her older brother.

He is eligible to apply for funding from the Charlotte Housing Authority Scholarship Fund, and is working hard to start college in January of 2017.

Ja'Quavious said fear of being accepted led him to being involved with the wrong crowd in high school. He says he has now changed his mindset and the company he keeps. He says he also learned to rely on God for support and guidance.

Ja'Quavious tells others who have dropped out of school that "there is always hope." He also advises others to always see the good in every situation. He says, "With the right amount of

dedication and hard work everything will come through for you.”

When not at work, or working on his college applications, Ja’Quavious keeps busy making music, doing stand-up comedy, acting, and modeling.

“Today,” he said, “I am very goal-oriented. I keep busy and I keep my eyes on the prize.”