

TESTIMONY OF
JOHAN LAHORE
TO THE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY FORUM
AT
WATKINS MILL HIGH SCHOOL

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Johan Lahore
Senior, Watkins Mill High School

Good evening Board members:

My name is Johan Lahore and I am a senior at Watkins Mill High School. In 2005-2006, I enrolled in the Identity after-school program. What is Identity?

Identity, Is not only a after school program that helps our youth Latino people, or help them by having activities, that most of the immigrants parents can't pay for it due to the economic problems that they go through when they get to this country.

But it is a time to learn on how to be a good person, to look ahead. To seek more than a high school diploma, it is a time to see our inner strength that we have within us, it is a time to enrich our knowledge on how to be a leader and lead out people through a good path, and not fall in the way...not fall into gang violence, or fall into drug problems, or simply by not making the wrong choices...how do I know this?...well let me tell you that the was me a few years ago, I was a new immigrant kid that did not know nothing about this country, I lost...but once I met the Identity program my life turn around; they teach me how to be a leader, they teach me to be a good person, to seek more than a high school diploma.

Now this year is ma last year in high school, and I am a proud wolverine of the class of '09 and I am happily to say that identity help me alot during this last 4 years, they help me in my everyday life and in school, they always told me that I can do everything if I want to, that everything is up to me, that all my dreams can become true if I want work hard for it, that nothing comes easy in this life.

That's why to me identity is more than a after school program, to me is my second school that teaches me that basics of life, and teaches me how to help my community and my peers, to help myself when I'm in moments of crisis, and helps me to overcome my problems and my fears by pushing me to the limit, to never give up, to keep going no matter what happens, no matter how many problems I go through, they always told me to never look back, but instead to rich as high as the sky, that there is no limit on what I can do and what we all can do.

That's why I think that programs like identity should get the full support of the Montgomery county public school system. The after school program here at Watkins Mill High worked well for me, but other programs like those offered at the Thomas Edison high school of technology may work better for others. Because it helps people like, it helps us to grow in a positive way that later on the future will benefit our community.

Finally I want to give tanks to all the identity stuff members that were always there for me, that they always offered me their support and encourage me to be more successful in life, to be more than a simple high school student, to be like my family, thank you guys for been there for me.