

## Cornerstone Alumna Zakia Brewer

### Succeeding At Every Turn



Zakia Brewer is impressive for many reasons, among them is her ability to translate her life experiences into lessons-learned with articulation and wisdom beyond her years. Zakia started at Cornerstone Schools when she was in 2nd grade and is currently in her senior year at Grand Valley State University.

Zakia is a Multi-Media Journalism major with a minor in Advertising and Public Relations. She plans to go to grad school for her master's in Business. After three years of college life, she acknowledges that her high school experience with Cornerstone helped her adjust more quickly because of her exposure to various professional environments. "Cornerstone definitely prepared me for college," she says. "Now that I am among my college peers, I see that I had this head start. At Cornerstone, I learned a lot about how to present myself and how to go out and find the resources I need to succeed in life."

And she is indeed succeeding at every turn. Not only is Zakia captain of her dance team, she is also on the Dean's List, Vice President of the National Pan-Hellenic Council for African-American fraternities and sororities (NPHC), and the President of her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha. "It is a lot to handle sometimes, but it also helps me to learn determination, organization, and focus. Being a leader requires all of those things, and that is helping me step up."

"Cornerstone gave me so many opportunities. When you're younger, you don't realize the benefit of your experiences or the people you meet and then you get older and realize, 'Oh! I've done this before!' and you see how it has helped you to prepare for your life." Through Cornerstone connections Zakia gained through the Partner Program, she was able to secure an internship at WGVU Public Media in Grand Rapids. "All my friends were impressed that I landed this internship in my junior year, but I had experience because I had high school internships through Cornerstone Career Pathways."

Zakia maintains an endearing connection to the school that watched her grow since 2nd grade. After starting college, she initiated an alumni event during winter break at which the alumni meet with the high school seniors to address college life. "I keep strong relationships with people who are important to me and we are happy to return and inspire and encourage other young people because it wasn't that long ago that we were those people."

This multi-talented lady has professional plans in tv and radio and also wants to open a non-profit for young women. "I want to build a community center, mainly for young girls, where they can feel safe and find encouragement and a positive place to build each other up."

"If anyone is considering a Cornerstone School, I would encourage them to look at how much they offer their students. Cornerstone helped me develop into who I am in so many ways that I am still realizing. It is still shaping who I want to become. To me, Cornerstone is a family and I can go back there anytime. They will always have their hand out to help, and that's something that everybody deserves."