

Jonathan Jackson

City and state: Lakewood, WA

High school attended: Clover Park High School

Graduation year: 2008

College attended/degree earned:

Bachelor of Arts in sociology/Hispanic studies from Pacific Lutheran University.



Current Career:

Program Director at Palmer Scholars

Describe the path you took from high school graduation to where you are today:

After graduating from Clover Park High School in 2008, I enrolled at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) as a part of the Act Six Leadership and Scholarship Initiative. Throughout my four years at PLU, I worked with the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound. After graduating with my B.A. in sociology and Hispanic studies, I went to work as a program assistant through the Northwest Leadership Foundation's AmeriCorps initiative, Urban Leaders in Training. During this time, I also worked at the Tacoma Center YMCA as a membership and fitness coordinator. Currently, I am the program director for Palmer Scholars, a non-profit organization providing college scholarships, mentoring and college-readiness training to low-income students of color from Pierce County.

How did your experiences in Clover Park School District help prepare you for this path?

My experience as a student in the Clover Park School District provided me with the academic and social foundations to achieve at the college level.

Who was the most influential teacher or administrator to you as a student in the district? Why?

The most influential teacher I had was my advance placement (AP) U.S. history teacher, Ron Olson. Mr. Olson saw my potential when I was enrolled in a standard humanities course and encouraged me to

transfer into his AP course. Mr. Olson was someone who challenged me to succeed and provided me with the tools to do so.

With regards to the most influential administrator I encountered, I would say (then) vice principal at Clover Park High School, Edward Judie. Mr. Judie stepped in at a time in my life where I had come to a crossroads and encouraged and empowered me to choose the correct path. It was very apparent that he was passionate about my success not only as one of his students, but also as a young African American man with the potential to be influential in the African American community.

Do you have any favorite memories from when you attended school in Clover Park School District?

One of my favorite memories was the first basketball game in which I scored over 20 points (24 to be exact, and I pulled in 16 rebounds) against Tye.

What opportunities exist in your career sector for new graduates? Is post-secondary education required for this field?

I am in the business of creating hope and opportunity through education. In the non-profit sector, there are a plethora of organizations that are working toward the same goals as we at Palmer Scholars are, and the vast array of positions that exist (volunteer and paid) encompass all education levels. As with most fields, a post-secondary education will be given preference in consideration for higher level positions, but the most important thing for an applicant to have in his/her toolbox is passion.