

**DC Opportunity Scholarship Graduation for 8th Grade and High School Students
June 3, 2009 • Archbishop Carroll High School**

Remarks by Opportunity Scholarship Recipient Shirley-Ann

Good evening friends, family, and notable guests. My name is Shirley T___ and I am a graduating 8th grader at Sacred Heart School. I have been able to attend Sacred Heart since 5th grade along with my two other siblings, Pius and Larisa, thanks to the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program. Next year, I have been accepted to Georgetown Visitation.

We chose Sacred Heart School for many reasons, but the biggest reason is because it is a bilingual school. I've taken Spanish for the past four years and I think I've become fairly good at it. My mom and Dad are from Cameroon and fluent in French. One day, I would like to be fluent in multiple languages like my parents. I plan to take French at Georgetown Visitation next year to improve my speaking skills. And maybe when I get to college I will pick up another language!

I also like Sacred Heart because the teachers really care about each student and give you individual attention. It provides a safe environment for learning with structure. Before Sacred Heart, I went to a DC Public School for four years. Some public schools, including the one I went to, are not as strict and focused. It makes it hard to concentrate on learning. But at Sacred Heart the academics are taken seriously. This focus is something that has helped me succeed.

Sacred Heart also gave me the opportunity to pursue new activities in addition to my school work - like music, writing, and sports. In my free time, I like to write poetry. I also play basketball for the Sacred Heart Scorpions and hope to play basketball at Georgetown Visitation next year. While this already sounds like a lot, I also find time to play violin with the DC Youth Orchestra Program. We practice every Saturday and hold monthly concerts for the family and friends. I really enjoy it and plan on continuing to play violin for the DC Youth Orchestra through my high school graduation.

I am so lucky that I will be able to use the DC OSP to attend another great school. My principal Ms. Rojas recommended Georgetown Visitation to me and I will be the first Sacred Heart Graduate to be accepted to Georgetown Visitation in the past 8 years. I was drawn to Georgetown Visitation when I spent my seventh grade year in their Saturday School Program. I was paired with a mentor; my mentor's name was Anne, and she is a student at Visitation. We spent every Saturday doing different activities from playing sports, engaging in group activities, or learning life skills. One memorable activity was a mock job application. While I don't remember what mock job I applied for that day, what I do know is what job I want to have one day in the future. I want to be a surgeon!

I'm not sure where I want to go to college yet – but I know I will definitely go. I want to expand my horizons and attend a college in another state. This will help me continue to get new and different experiences.

Sacred Heart, my Principal, my family, my hard work, and the Opportunity Scholarship all made going to Georgetown Visitation possible. The DC OSP is important to me because without it I wouldn't be able to receive the best education possible. It should continue so that my sister, brother and other students get the same chance. Every child should get the chance to go to a good school.

Thank you and again: Congratulations to all of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Graduates!