Life at Collins Home Brooklyn Garrett 8/31/2018

**From Collins Home to College**

The following is a statement from a previous resident, Bryan, that I had the pleasure of interviewing recently:

“I grew up with the belief that in school there are two groups of people, ‘the preps’ and ‘the mess-ups’. I’d always felt like one of those mess-ups. My family was so messed up. While I was always a big brother to my sister, there were years where I was the one to raise her while my parents dealt with their problems. I bottled up so much inside. I remember easily getting into school fights. It didn’t take much to set me off.

Maybe I would’ve hoped for something better earlier on had I known there *could* be something better. After a family incident, my sister and I were taken away. At first there wasn’t room for me at Collins Home, so my sister was placed at there while I spent a few days in another children’s home. I didn’t like being away from my sister. That was a hard few days…Finally, there was room at Collins Home for me.

My friends gave me a hard time and picked on me. *I hated that part.* They didn’t understand why I lived at Collins. I would soon grow to love my Collins home—the place that changed the direction of my life. At that time, I was 16. I finally had a support system.

If it weren’t for Collins home, I wouldn’t have gone to college. I remember one of the houseparents, who I still keep in touch with today. She encouraged me to make something out of myself. I earned my culinary arts certificate while in high school. After I graduated high school, I wanted to go to college. I had some complications with affording all the costs and expenses. Eventually, I was able to secure some funds to attend college. I’ll be the first in my family to go to college and finish. I am going to graduate with my associate’s degree in business in 2020!! Even though I had to quit my job to go to college, and my family and friends wanted me to keep working, I just want to get my degree. I want to make something out of myself.

Thanks to the safety, security, and support of my family at Collins, I am able to pursue what once seemed an unimaginable dream. With Collins home, anything is possible.”

Our 35th Annual Chicken BBQ Fundraiser is coming up Saturday, September 22nd from 4-7 PM at Northside Elementary in Seneca. The cost is **$12 per ticket.** Each plate includes: 1/2 grilled chicken, baked beans, potato chips, roll, pickles, coleslaw, tea/lemonade & cookies. Please call us at 864-882-0893 to order your tickets today!

Brooklyn Garrett is a recent Clemson University graduate who will be attending Law School in the future. She is working part-time in the Development Department to help raise awareness of Collins Children’s Home and their ministry in our community.