



Change Agents of Circumstances

Montgomery, AL- May 19, 2015: It is with great pride that Brantwood Children's Home congratulates and acknowledges Breon, Chelsea, Jessica, Shantel and Terrell for their graduation and place in the Class of 2015. Our staff and teachers are especially proud to have this group of young men and women graduate from Brantwood's Onsite Educational Program (BOSEP), a program that has been serving our youth since the mid-1990s.

The third annual commencement ceremony was held on May 19th at the Southside Church of Christ. Rev. Tim Anderson, Jr. provided the Invocation for the graduates and guests, followed by words of welcome from BOSEP administrative teacher Mrs. Gwen Townsend. The Carver High School Choir serenaded the Brantwood Board of Directors, staff, students and a crowd of family and guests in an inspiring performance.

Special guest Judge Calvin Williams riveted the audience with his commencement speech in which he praised our students for being "change agents of your circumstances." Judge Williams, a Montgomery native, can relate to the tribulations of our Brantwood youth. He was raised the youngest of eight children by a single mother who was widowed when he was only six years of age. He was the only one of his siblings to finish high school and continue his educational journey. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Auburn University Montgomery and his Juris Doctor from Jones School of Law at Faulkner University. Judge Williams did not allow his childhood circumstances to determine his future, but rather motivate his drive for success.

Judge Williams commended Brantwood graduates for their courage and determination to achieve success despite the disparity they have already faced in their young lives. He said "It only takes one person to break the cycle and others in your situation will look to you as a catalyst for change. Your high school diploma is a key to open many doors. How many doors will you unlock? Do not lose your motivation; build upon the success of this day... Cultivate yes I can into yes *I am*." He further spoke of the success and esteem former foster children have carved out in the world by calling to mind the brilliant innovator Steve Jobs and pillar of strength and grace First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Judge Williams closed in saying "You are special. You are unique. There is no one that can be a better you than *you*."

We know our graduates will keep these words close to their hearts as they grow into the adults they are destined to be. As each graduate moved their tassel from right to left, signifying the end of high school, we were thrilled to celebrate their new beginnings. Brantwood thanks our network of support for allowing our graduates to unlock the doors of their success and we especially thank you for unlocking your hearts for their advancement.