

Omar Boyd

Cool breezes, rustling trees, and glistening puddles of water from the afternoon April showers. Children playing in their new outfits of bright greens, pinks, blues, and whites. The aroma of freshly grown plants wafts through the air. One would think of this day as a beautiful, tranquil and peaceful day outside. What if all that came to an abrupt stop? Now the children have scattered like ants, dropping their baskets full of imitation grass and sweet delicious treats. Now, instead of children, the men in blue with their loud sirens and flashing blue and red lights arrived on the scene. That fast, not only did the mood and feeling of the environment change, but a life was lost and that life has changed and influenced me from that day forward.

The person lost was 18-year-old Jarell Seay. He was a son, a younger brother, and my friend. He was killed on Easter day. He was not my best friend, nor was he my closest friend, but we knew where we stood and there was no doubt he was my friend. Jarell's death made me think of a lot of things and changed how I live every day now. We all wake up every morning not knowing if this will be our last day or gateway to many more and before this I had never thought about it. Before Jarell's death, I took waking up every day and living the perfect life I live for granted, acting with no purpose, just going about my life with no true understanding of what I have. Now everything I do is with purpose. I do not just get up and go to school and count down the days until I am done. I value the time I spend in high school, completing every assignment with accuracy. I enjoy the time I spend with my peers and family and doing my best in all activities I participate in everyday. I appreciate my time each day and I sweat the little things because I know within two seconds all the little things taken for granted could be gone.

The year Jarell was killed; he was on his way to graduating high school and going to college. He was approaching the start of a new chapter in his life. Jarell's opportunities to go away to college and to start that new chapter of his life were taken away from him so abruptly that the little things he put to the side, he never got the chance to come back to. Granted, today is my turn to graduate, to attend your college, and I refuse to let anything stand in my way or put anything to the side, and to do all things necessary to succeed. Everything in life counts and opportunities should be taken when they are presented. I have encountered many obstacles in the start of this school year alone, from suffering an athletic injury that caused me to miss 82 classes to the typical problems of a high school senior, but I will succeed. Jarell has shown me in life there is no time to take anything for granted so I value the life I have and let nothing stop me from succeeding.

I have been influenced, by such sorrow and struggle his death has brought to not only his family but his peers, not only to live life, but to live life with a purpose and not just go about life blind of all the opportunity and potential we have just by being alive. There is not anything in this world more valuable than your life and when it is gone there is no getting it back or wishing you did things differently. The day Jarell was taken from the world he opened my eyes in a way I would have not seen without him. He showed that you can be in the process of doing great things and on a positive road, but it can still be taken without any warning, So, from the day he died on, I have lived in a way I know he would have continued himself, and I know he would be proud of me.

