



Rickey Waddell: 2014 Agape Scholarship Acceptance Speech

Agape Spring Benefit at The Estate

April 16, 2014

The word Agape means "unconditional love" and I can truly say that is what the Agape Community Center has shown me!

My name is Rickey Waddell and I am a part of the 2014 graduating class of North Atlanta High school and I have been a part of the Agape Community Center since I was in the 4th grade.

My family and I both are so grateful for Agape. I asked my mom what Agape meant to her and she said "that Agape is a gift from God. The community center is her rock and she has always been able to depend on them to get our family through some really tough times.



My mother found out about Agape when we were having a hard time when we first moved to Hollywood Road. We didn't know what to do, so my mom's friend recommended we contact Agape. She told my mom how helpful and how determined Agape was to provide guidance in the community. I then enrolled in the Agape Community Center

and I can truly say my life changed for the better.

When I first joined the center I was a child that was struggling and I could not get my act together. I didn't have a lot of positive role models in my community or

family, but throughout the years, Agape has taught me to be more responsible, respectful, and how to become a leader.

Those skills were developed through their summer Fit Camp program. The coaches taught me how to play and how to improve my basketball game, and I actually became a part of the basketball in 2011. And last summer, I had the opportunity to be a counselor at Fit Camp, to be able to give back and work at the program that began my journey was priceless.

I value my time at Agape, especially with the staff, because my father has not been a part of my life, I was never taught the essentials of being a well groomed gentleman, until I met Mr. Lydell . He stepped up and has been a great role model and father figure in my life! He has given me great advice and wisdom about growing up as a young man. He has even been there to help me with getting haircuts and even taking me shopping to purchase socks and ties for some of the most memorable events of my life!

This leads me to this moment of why I am here today. This year was going to either make or break the outcome of my life! I never knew that college was even an option for me until Ms. Jessica told me that I did not have an option, and that I was going to college no matter what!

At the beginning of the year, Agape nominated me for the Posse Scholarship. Posse identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential. The application process started out with 1,200 applicants, and I was so unsure about being selected and competing with the other students, but with the daily guidance of Ms. Jessica, I made it through the rigorous, competitive Posse Process and I stand today as a Posse Scholar! I was awarded a \$200,000 Scholarship to Bard College in New York.

Agape has changed the course of my entire life, and I'm so grateful to everyone that has ever donated, volunteered or worked at Agape.

I don't know where I would be today without your support! I now feel invincible with Agape right by my side! Thank you for showing me that there are people in the world that are not blood related, that you can call family!

Thank you for pulling me out the negativity within my community and showing me a better way of life! Thank you for being that guiding parent that nagged me every 5 seconds. Thank you for being that supportive role model, and thank you

for grooming me into the young man that I am today - ready and equipped to take on this new season of my life as I start my journey as a college student at Bard College!

I know for a fact, this never would have been possible without the Agape Community Center!