

TASA Educational Award Winner

**Lakisha Coburn**

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Dear Diary:

Where do you find the blessing when you feel like giving up? Where do you find the blessing when the people closest to you can't seem to understand? Where do you find the blessing when you can barely stand to look at yourself in the mirror? Is there a blessing when you're just a baby, having a baby? Is there a blessing when everything around you screams destruction? Is there a blessing? How is one supposed to cope with life's mishaps when they're a mishap themselves? If there's a God please show yourself, come out from your hiding place. They say the best thing about being so low is that there's no where to go but up. But up seems so far from where I'm standing.

It's like I'm a little ant trying to get to the top of a tree; the wind blows, the rain falls, other insects try to eat me and I start to believe that getting to the top of that tree is impossible. How do I move forward from this place? I've gotten myself entangled in this web of sub consciousness... How do I keep this soul alive?

*The insert you have read above is taken from a page in the Life of Lakisha Coburn, and if you haven't gotten it by now, that person is me! It was a time when I felt hopeless and distraught. When my family and friends wouldn't accept me and society looked at me with a demeaning look in their eyes. But in the midst of heartache there is hope. All the feelings of hopelessness begin to fade fast when you get that phone call from a TASA caseworker to remind you that "the blessing is you and that newborn child." When thoughtful hearts, listening ears and nurturing spirits are there to encourage and comfort you, it makes a difference for teens ... It made a difference for me!*

*I am finally back in school attending my first semester at Nyack College, and although it's nerve racking Ms. Santiago reminds me that I can do it. I am determined to set an example for my son and for the little girls that still lay in bed at night and cry. I have to admit that even though I am building myself up so that I can help build others, not being able to provide puts a hold so deep in my heart that when the wind blows it hurts. This Educational Award would also be that blessing for the young girl that wrote in her diary on November 2008. It would help her to further her goals. To give that little baby a space of his own to crawl around and enjoy being a baby instead of being restricted. It would allow her to finish school instead of worrying about how those loans are going to get paid off.*

*It would raise her self esteem where she could go into a grocery store and buy a candy bar without feeling guilty. This award would also be beneficial in that it would prove that determination bridges destiny and that hard work does truly pay off. Even though every day is starting to get harder and harder for her to survive she is hoping that the TASA Program will be able to pull her up and out of the water before it's too late, just as they've done before. For there can never be sunshine without rain.*

**Lakisha Coburn**