

Good evening everyone my name is Stevante Cromer. I am a 2013 graduate of Rutland High School and in the Fall I will be attending Clayton State University to major in health & fitness management. I have attended Camp Zion for the past 7 years and I can honestly say that I gained a positive experience while attending the camp.

Today, I stand before you experiencing numerous emotions, and I am certain many of you here can identify with me on that point. Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, I am filled with a great sense of happiness and accomplishment. My uncertainty on this day stems from the very fact that this ceremony is the end of one demanding journey yet, it's the beginning of a new one. While I am ready to continue my academic endeavors, knowing that Camp Zion has thoroughly prepared me for them, I am also filled with a deep sense of anxiety and sadness.

It may sound untruthful to say that I will miss each and every one of you, but all of you in some small way have shaped me into the person I am today, so I thank you all for that.

Of course, the comfort that I have attained at Camp Zion makes this departure a rather anxious one, but with anxiety comes excitement, and the end of this journey signifies the start of a brand new one. As I leave behind the warmth that I have experienced at Camp Zion to enter a very new and quite frightening environment, I am overwhelmingly positive that all my fears about what lies ahead are slightly tamed by the idea that I will at least come close to experiencing in my future what I have already experienced at Camp Zion.

However, ladies and gentlemen, more than happiness, relief, fear or sadness, I feel a very strong emotion that I cannot ignore today. More than anything else, today I feel humbled.

I am humbled by the fact that regardless of my shortcomings and my mistakes, you have continued to love me and you have continued to push and support me. You have continued to push me to grow and to not be afraid to be myself. I have learned that regardless of my friends, I should not be ashamed or afraid to stand up for who I am or what I believe in. You see, I AM a strong educated black man and I am not afraid or ashamed to say that or to be that. It is my promise to you that I will never forget that nor will I run away from it. I will embrace it and I will live up to the expectations of success that you

have instilled in me to show.

My experiences at Camp Zion have left me with one final emotion; the last sentiment I will share with you today is hope. I hope that I will use the tools that Camp Zion has given me as a means to provide opportunities to others, not out of a sense of duty, but out of a sense of expectation to give to other people what you have given to me. I will give my confidence, my strength and my swaggeriness to those that I am in the presence of.

Finally, I hope from the bottom of my heart that I may one day return to Camp Zion to help you share all the blessings that you have shared with me to someone else. I will never forget you and will always be appreciative and grateful for the many experiences that you have given me. Once again I say thank you and I will be forever thankful for your support, your guidance and above all, your love.

Thank you for listening and I hope you enjoy the rest of our ceremony.

Stevante Cromer: 2013 Camp Zion Graduate