

Remarks by Xavier Ruffin '10 (Communication Design major; Business minor)
Creative Fusion – Feel the Energy; May 8, 2010

You may have noticed that map of my life in the hallway called Neighborhood Memories. There's a lot of sorrow, and a lot of joy in that map.

Like the first time my family became homeless, my first Christmas without my Mom and the first time I got shot at.

But there's also a lot of joy. Like my first kiss and the first photograph I ever sold, and my gallery showing.



Despite my hardships, I have been blessed with a family who have always recognized my talents and supported me in attending MIAD's Pre-College program, another positive memory.

But the inconvenient truth is that Milwaukee is considered the most segregated city in the United States. This means that a kid like me, from the other side of the tracks, might not even get the chance to know a place like this exists. But luckily, or by fate, I got that chance through Pre-College.

Art opened my eyes to a whole new world of possibilities, and MIAD gave me the courage to seek those possibilities out and understand their power.

My life map shows that I prayed for a scholarship and grants to cover my tuition at MIAD. What it doesn't show is the tears of overwhelming joy and thankfulness that ran down my face when I received that scholarship.

Donors like you are the only reason I could afford to attend a great college like MIAD.

You and MIAD let me dream; you made seeing the world a possibility that could be obtained. You brought a "good job" that could support a family within my grasp. You made it possible for me to get something in order to give back to where I came from. My life would have been very different without those dreams and the help I got to realize them.

Today, I am a creative professional. Because of people like you, I, a kid from the most segregated area in the country, have had the chance to fly to other countries, like Mexico, on a class assignment, to develop an awareness campaign to save a small community's water supply. The power of design is helping others, because of you.

Today, I am a board member at Onramp, a non-profit that introduces the design profession to inner-city high school students. And I continue to recruit people who come from any and all sides of the tracks to get a higher education here at MIAD.

Because of people like you and your generosity I can stand here today and tell you that I will be receiving my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in a week, then flying to Japan to work on shooting a short webseries with two musicians from Milwaukee and L.A. And after that I will be starting my full-time job on the Digital Innovations team at Kohl's Corporate Office, where I've been an intern for two years.

I'll be earning more than anyone else in my immediate family. Some of them have been working for over 40 years. And it's all thanks to the donations people like you have made.

On behalf of all the students whose lives will be changed by your donations, I say thank you. Your generosity is more than appreciated. It makes dreams come true.