

"JAG, More Than Ever"

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The following essay was presented by Keyona Warren at the public speaking event at the 2011 Jobs for America's Graduates National Student Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.

J.A.G.'s vision states:

JAG strives to increase opportunity and reduce poverty and unemployment by fostering a nation without dropouts. Statistics show that every 26 seconds, a student drops out of high school headed for a world of hardships and major disappointment. **We need JAG more than ever** because it is hard enough to find a job with just a high school diploma or even a college degree.

JAG's Mission states that JAG is committed to helping resolve our countries dropouts.

Today we need JAG more than ever. Now more than ever because JAG brings hope, hope to that mother on the verge of dropping out of school because she has no means of taking care of her child, hope to that boy that feels like school in itself has nothing to offer him.

So, to JAG's 33 state organizations and the 827 program affiliates, we need you now, **more than ever!** Knowing that the unemployment rate today is the same as 1975, troubles me. It troubles me because technology has enhanced drastically, creating ample amounts of jobs, but the problem is not the availability of jobs, but the people who are not qualified to take the positions.

We need JAG **more than ever** because there are too many youth behind jail cells than in school desk, because there are too many street corners being occupied by young men than classrooms and because there are too many of our young women applying for WIC than college. This is not made to offend you but to inform you to open your eyes and help you realize to broaden your horizons. While college admissions are dropping unemployment lines are getting longer. We are labeled "generation "X". I partly agree. We are the generation that will be executed without the help of JAG, because not only does JAG give physically but also mentally and emotionally needs and with JAG we are **expected** to do great things. They also labeled us the lost generation and once again I partly agree. We are lost, stranded on an island of confusion and drowning in our own uncertainties and even though we're writing S.O.S. in the sand, no one's willing to send their rescue squad but **JAG**.

Without JAG the youth of today would have to live everyday battling the stereotypes, the statistics, and the doubts of who we are and what we will become. No matter what state we've come from, where we were born or even our background, we as youth of today all have something in common. We are **youth**; and I believe deep down within we are all seeking help, help to make us more successful. Being afforded the opportunity of JAG is one I don't take lightly, and I'm sure that the other thousands of teenagers don't either. We have too many people giving up on the youth of today, so on behalf of the future of tomorrow, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank JAG! Thank you for believing that something great will be born in this generation. Thank you for having the power to overlook statistics and stereotypes. JAG Graduates **can** and **will** change the world. **JAG is needed more than ever.**