



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Former Ickes resident overcomes obstacles, heads to Ivy League school
Urban Prep standout primed for Cornell; will be one of 90 college-bound CHA residents to attend school outside of Chicago and saluted today by CHA

WHAT: “Take Flight” CHA college send-off
WHERE: CHA offices, 60 E. Van Buren, 12th floor.
WHEN: 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2011

CHICAGO – As a child, Julius Claybron and his grandmother used to look out of his window at the now-demolished Ickes Homes and see nothing but despair. They both knew little Julius was destined for greater things.

“She would say, ‘This is your future if you choose for it to be that way,’” Claybron said. “It wasn’t exactly a land of dreams. It made me want to make her proud. I wanted to go farther than the average kid. I wanted to be different.”

Claybron got his wish. The 18-year-old from Legends South, who recently graduated from Urban Prep Academy in Englewood, will leave Friday for prestigious Ivy League school Cornell University in New York – the culmination of a lifetime of hard work, sacrifice and dedication.

The Chicago Housing Authority will bid a fond farewell to Claybron and 89 of his fellow college-bound CHA residents at a send-off reception at **11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2011 at CHA offices, 60 E. Van Buren.**

In all, some 90 CHA teenagers will attend college outside of Chicago. Among the institutions represented are Michigan State, Memphis, Missouri and Wisconsin.

Students will get advice on scholarships and networking, and will receive a few send-off gifts, such as book vouchers and other raffle prizes.

Claybron’s only regret is that his grandmother didn’t live long enough to see this day. She recently passed away.

“She instilled a lot in me,” he said. “She taught me how to navigate through Ickes, and how to get an education.”

Claybron will double major in psychology and English at Cornell. Eventually, he wants to go to law school so that one day he can help disadvantaged people who need a lawyer.

Claybron still can't believe he's about to head to Cornell.

"When I received the email, I read it over and over," he said. "I even called my little sister over and asked her, 'What do you think this means?' I've never felt a shock like that before."

He'll finish out his summer job – an internship at Chicago Public Schools, where he is helping to coordinate a school parade – before heading out on Friday.

Claybron says he's nervous. But his trip to New York recently calmed his nerves.

"The type of school it is intimidated me at first," he said. "But now, I'm eager to jump right in."

Please join CHA as it bids its own goodbye and good luck as they pursue their undergraduate careers.

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