

CLIFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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NEWS RELEASE

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Clifton's Alexander Sisters Accepted to Five Ivy League Schools

Clifton High School students, and twin sisters, Jessica and Nicole Alexander sat by their computers on the morning of March 26, 2020, with bated breath. March 26, known as "Ivy Day," is the date that all Ivy League schools notify admitted students of their acceptances, and the CHS sisters applied to five Ivy League schools. At 7:00 am, Jessica and Nicole had five portals opened on their computers, and within minutes the young women had their acceptances from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, U Penn, and Dartmouth.

The sisters thought that it would be nice to attend college together but would have been ok with attending different schools. "It just so happened that we liked most of the same schools, and they seemed pretty similar," Nicole Alexander explained. Nicole applied as an "undecided" major, and Jessica has applied as a Political Science major.

Jessica and Nicole have been active in school and the community since they were young children. They are student-athletes, on student council, singers, volunteers, but none of their involvement had anything to do with "putting it on a college application."

"People do things just to put on a college application, but we really do have a passion for doing all of these things. It just happened to be helpful with the college application process."

Jessica and Nicole have narrowed down their choices to two universities and must commit by May 1, 2020 and said they'll probably make a final decision on April 30.

Jessica and Nicole are the first in their family to attend college. First and foremost, they credit their parents as their most prominent champions, always placing the responsibility of educational choices in the hands of their daughters while guiding and advocating for them on the side. They said that their parents' style of raising them pushed them to speak their minds and take responsibility for themselves. "The moment we opened the acceptance notifications with our families and seeing the joy on our parents' faces was everything."

From elementary school through high school, the sisters credit their teachers, principals, and even the new superintendent for their success.

"I couldn't believe that Dr. Robertozzi took the time to write me a letter of recommendation," said Nicole with a huge smile.

When asked about the letter of recommendation, Dr. Robertozzi said, "It was an honor to write the letter. I have seen Nicole and Jessica do such great work at CHS in the short time that I have been here. I am not surprised at all that these fine young women were accepted to such prestigious schools. They have brought a sense of camaraderie, compassion, and dedication to Clifton, and I know they'll do the same at the university that they choose."

Harkening back to their elementary school years at School 13, the twins gave credit to their principal, Dr. Torley, as one of their biggest advocates. They went on to speak fondly of their fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Sorenson. The twins explained that Mrs. Sorenson asked their parents why they had enrolled the children in Clifton's Talented and Gifted Program (TAG). Mrs. Sorenson went on to make sure that both girls attended the program.

At Woodrow Wilson Middle School, Mr. Healy and Mrs. Zagorski were their biggest supporters who always encouraged the girls to stand up for their principles. Jessica and Nicole's high school role models for important debates were Mr. Henry and Mr. Rogers. "Mr. Henry definitely helped to prepare us for the rigor of the AP exams," the girls agreed but also noted that the majority of their high school teachers had a positive impact on them. They were most appreciative of teachers who made them interested in subjects that they never thought they would like, such as Physics with Mr. Burns.

Receiving such phenomenal news amidst a global pandemic has been a strange experience for the Alexander sisters. Jessica explained, "It's definitely strange that we are attending all of the Accepted Student Days virtually." Schools are holding virtual seminars and lectures for accepted students in which professors, deans, and current students speak and answer questions via video conferencing. While Jessica feels that it's "actually kind of cool" that schools conduct virtual tours on Instagram, Zoom, and Snapchat, Nicole finds it somewhat nerve-wracking being unable to visit the colleges physically. Still, she acknowledges that everyone is doing the best that they can considering the circumstances of the times.

When asked if they had expected all five acceptances from the Ivy Leagues, Nicole said that she was surprised. Jessica, on the other hand, said that while she was cautious with her expectations, "I've often thought, well, we've put in the time, the hard work, and we have the grades. I don't see why we can't get in." And that they did.

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Photo: JessicaandNicoleAlexander.jpg: Jessica (L) and Nicole holding acceptance letters from five Ivy League Schools