

My name is La Naeja Johnson and I am 21 years old. My family is originally from Hopkins Park, Illinois. My grandmother had 9 children, so I come from a big family. My parents are Lashonda and Victor Rogers, and together they have 6 children. I have an older sister Anyia who's 22 years old, 2 younger sisters Laniya who is 19 and Alayah who is 6 years old. I also have a set of 17 year old twin brothers Alan and Victor. We originally lived in Hopkins Park then years later moved to Bourbonnais.

As a nursing student there is little free time to enjoy things outside of school. However, I try to make time for things that I am passionate about. I am a part of the Student Nurses Association through my college and we give back to the community through volunteer work. On Wednesdays I volunteer at the public library, where we host activities for children in the community and certain elementaries in Kankakee. We also are involved in the food drives at Saint Mary's hospital. I am not affiliated with a church, however my mentor Kim Penndleton keeps me connected to GOD through her lessons. I am also a member in the sister-to-sister ministry group where women of the church give daily lessons to the group.

I currently attend Kankakee Community College pursuing an applied science degree in registered nursing. My planned graduation date will be May 2024. After I graduate from KCC, I will attend Capella University to receive my bachelors degree within 12 weeks. As of right now, I am still in search of the right organization to pursue my masters degree. I would like to be a pediatric nurse but more importantly a labor and delivery nurse. The death rate of black women who die giving birth and post-childbirth is 2.6 times the rate of any other race. My goal is to be that nurse who helps lower that rate and influence other health care professionals to do the same. Some years later I would also like to become a nursing professor. As I complete nursing school I see that many of the professors make it difficult to be successful in nursing school, especially to

those who are people of color. I would like to give our future nurses the tools and support to explore their passion within nursing.

As I complete graduation, my mission is to give back to the same organization that has supported me through my educational journey, the Craft Organization. I find it inspiring that this organization continues to support young black women and men through their educational journey for many years and I would like to help in any way I can to support those in the future. I also would like to become a mentor now and in the future for those who aren't sure what they want to do or those who are pursuing a nursing degree as I am. I would also like to influence more black men and women to become health care professionals, business owners and educators. There is a lack of representation of black men and women in these professions. I believe it's important for the young men to see they don't have to rely on sports as the only opportunity to succeed and for the young women to see that they can be their own boss. In the end, my goal is to continue to support future students in their journey the way the Craft Organization has been doing and continues to do.