



3rd Annual Walter Cronkite Awards Ceremony
Shavanae Anderson's Acceptance Speech

Walter Cronkite was the best journalist and the most trusted man in America. The precision and forcefulness of his words was built upon a previous research before he ever opened his mouth. He wanted to give everyone the facts concrete nothing speculative or abstract.

In the news and in life this is something that really makes a difference. If we don't take time to plan ahead before we go into anything, we are relaying our future to the uncertainty.

Inspired by this and with the hand of the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative, I have decided to make a plan for my life, my island and my world.

Most of the time, except in fortuitous events, the best warranty to succeed is by designing a realistic life plan, strong enough to keep us in the right track in the hard moments, but flexible to adapt our constantly changing interests and needs.

As Walter Cronkite did, we need to project firmness and commitment to every single action we do every day. This is the only way we can inspire everybody around to see us as a role model. This is the way I got involved with the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative. I was extremely impressed with the changes I saw in my sister and her friend's lives. They were clear and strong about their dreams and the path to make them come true. I wanted to feel the same.

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One of the most remarkable events I saw, was to see how kids that had never before talk to each other in school, were sharing -- no matter their color or nationality. The way we all relate to each other in school will never be the same; we are building a more diverse and integrated Martha's Vineyard.

So, all this synergy took me into this organization, and trust me, this is one of the best things that could ever happened to my life. Today I see my sister attending to her pre-med degree at Suffolk University and getting ready to take the next level in her life.

There's no obstacle that can stop us, there's no dream that can't become true, there's a world ready for those that persevere from adversity.

Today, more than ever, I've learned that I'm the most important piece in the changes that take place in my life and that young peoples' voices are vital to today's community and world decisions because they are the roots for our world tomorrow.

So, what are my dreams and goals? What is it for me being the Walter Cronkite Award winner?

To be honest, since I was little, I always wanted to be a pediatrician. I always felt for those little ones less fortunate. But it's one thing to have a far distant dream and another is to turn it into a real and viable goal. Today I can say that my dream has turned into a real goal, I'm working really hard for the next year start my pre-med degree into a major university. I have no doubt that this will happen no matter any obstacle.

But being a pediatrician isn't my only goal. Through the Martha's Vineyard Leadership Initiative's experiences I discovered another of my passions, producing videos and movies. The great and interesting thing is that I had the honor of interviewing people like Rose Styron and Harry Belafonte.

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When I interviewed Mr. Belafonte I didn't know who he was. I didn't know of his significant contributions to the empowerment of the African American people in the United States and to the less fortunate people around the world, but the most powerful reason I got inspired was discovering that he comes from Jamaica like me, that we have something in common that moves through our veins.

I can't describe how I felt when I told my relatives and friends that I met and interviewed Mr. Belafonte. They couldn't believe it! Sharing this event has been a wonderful reason to many good conversations.

Also I get motivated every time I hear my neighbors and family saying that they feel proud of me. It's very refreshing feeling that you're being respected by other. The most unbelievable is to discover that you're being a role model for others young and adult people here on the Vineyard.

It's very important to not only make changes in your lives and inspire others, it's important to concretely share what you've received. That's why I'm teaching children how make movies at the Featherstone Center for Arts. We have to take our words into actions to make possible and guarantee the next generation of leaders for Martha's Vineyard, America and the World.

I want more leaders like the best journalist and most trusted man of America, Walter Cronkite, to keep inspiring us to make another world possible. I want to hear news saying that the humanity has explored new spaces in the universe, that conflicts around the world have decreased, that our schools systems are well funded and efficient, that our nation is totally fossil fuel independent, that all developed countries have created a coalition to address issues like hunger, child abuse and stop the global warming.

Yes, this is the world that I want. This is the world that we can all have. This is the world that my generation is working to build. This is the world that each one of us is required to take it from a mere dream into a concrete reality.

That's the way it could be, that's the way it will be, **That's the way it is....**