



I vividly remember the day I was called to the principal's office at my Union, NJ middle school. Anxiously sitting across from my principal, I listened as he enthusiastically encouraged me to apply to SEEDS – which changes the lives of motivated, high-achieving students from low-income families by transforming their educational opportunities. After much deliberation, my mother propelled me to seize the opportunity, and my life was forever changed.

To my astonishment, I was accepted into SEEDS and my first summer at The Pingry School left an indelible impression on me. I was struck by Pingry's welcoming atmosphere and found solace in forming lasting friendships with fellow SEEDS scholars who shared my passion for academic excellence. We are still friends to this day.

My SEEDS journey then led to my acceptance into Kent Place School in Summit – an achievement that seemed unimaginable at the time. I was a young kid, shy and introverted. The rigorous academic preparation and supportive community fostered by SEEDS proved invaluable.

With the support of SEEDS, I went on to the George Washington University, where I majored in *Communications* with minors in *Art History* and *Film Studies* with great fervor. SEEDS not only instilled in me a strong work ethic but also the confidence I needed to be successful.



After college, I embarked on a career in media and advertising sales, eventually joining Fox Broadcasting Company where I spent twelve fulfilling years. I currently serve as Senior Manager of Pricing & Planning at the Walt Disney Company. 25 years after



graduating from SEEDS, I have noticed the pivotal role this program has had on my professional endeavors.

Reflecting on my SEEDS journey, beginning at 13 years old in my middle school principal's office to my current work at Disney, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities it has afforded me and the vital support system it has provided. I have decided to give back to SEEDS as it not only prepared me academically but also instilled in me a sense of community and resilience that has guided me through life's challenges.

A lesson I learned thanks to SEEDS is to embrace the community it offers and to never hesitate to ask for support when needed. SEEDS taught me the importance of advocating for oneself and taking opportunities, even in the face of uncertainty. The alumni community, in all stages of my career, has been a source of strength, guidance, and friendship.

Will you join me and my fellow alumni in giving hundreds of promising students like me the chance to change the course of their lives and the lives of their families? I encourage you to make a gift to SEEDS, knowing firsthand the life-changing impact it has on students' lives.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of access to a quality education and for being a driving force behind our collective success. Your generosity is changing the world, one SEEDS scholar at a time.

With sincere appreciation,



Aliyah Cromwell
SEEDS '99
Kent Place School '03
The George Washington University '07

