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# WestView News

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## [My Life So Far](#)

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### HARD WORK AND DEDICATION PAYS

OFF: Ralph Godfrey (above) now studies hard and plays hard for Léman's Varsity Basketball team. Photo by Alli Chana.

I'm 15 years old, and I live a reality very few kids will experience. Every day feels undetermined and a constant battle. It's my family against the world.

I was born in St. Vincent's Hospital, which was converted to upper class real estate. I was raised in a restaurant that my mother manages to keep running by herself.

In her restaurant, I get an incredible education on life by speaking to many different people from all backgrounds, economic classes and skills. I have spoken to lawyers, doctors, judges, actors, failed business owners, and ex-convicts. This education experience, however, may be taken from me at some point as my mother's landlord—Steven Croman—constantly tries to evict her from her restaurant—Lima's Taste on Christopher Street—because of greed.

However, despite this endless harassment, my parents motivated me to apply to one of the greatest learning environments someone in my situation would be able to experience. I dedicated myself and worked hard enough at the end of my 9th grade year to take the SSAT and achieve a substantial score. As a result, I was accepted to Léman Manhattan Preparatory School last summer around mid-June. My family and I were thrilled with joy and excitement, and ready for the new and positive chapter in our lives.

That summer, I had a lot of time to think to myself, dreaming what the first day would be like. I envisioned what the classrooms looked like, what the teachers were like, and even what the food tasted like. When I walked in the building for the first time as a Léman student, I noticed how nice everyone was and how happy they were to start another great and successful year. The teachers were very passionate and determined to give us everything they have. I finally felt at home for once. I wasn't able to get this similar feeling at my old school where it was hostile and uncomfortable. There were metal detectors every morning and anger-driven security guards.

It is such a relief, given the chaotic situation of my mother's challenges with her restaurant, to be in a learning environment where it doesn't feel like a chess match for survival; no hostility, no fear, a widespread hunger for learning, and no physical threats. I can't thank Léman enough for letting me be a part of their community, as my family goes through a rough period in time.

—Ralph Godfrey