

Tierra: The best piece of advice someone gave me was to go away to college and get as much of the college experience as I can. This has been helpful in my personal growth. Being even a few hours away has caused me to have to make adult decisions on my own when adult situations are presented.

What would you have done differently your senior year of high school?

Raymond: I was a very good student in high school, and as such I never really went out a lot. The best thing that anyone can do is to find a happy medium between academics and a social life. College is really about both, and you can't have as good an experience if you can't socialize with people. Academics come first, but socializing is important too.

Olivia: If my circumstances were different my senior year, I would have invested my time investigating all possible options, scholarships, loans, schools, etc., instead of taking care of my father who was plagued with cancer. Because of my situation, I nearly dropped out of school. But then I realized that I would've then accomplished nothing and let down my No. 1 fan, my daddy.

Tierra: I would have taken advantage of every opportunity high school had to offer: more collegiate information, different classes – such as those teaching how to balance a check book and to independently care for oneself – and other college prep classes that teach classroom skills such as note-taking, proper writing, and computer skills.

What advice would you give to high school students who are thinking about college?

Raymond: Take classes in as many different areas of interest as possible. College is full of diverse people with diverse interests, and the best thing you can do is try to get a complete picture of the entire experience. I would also advise that students live on campus for at least one semester. Living on campus will enable you to meet a lot more friends and become much more involved on campus.

Olivia: I would encourage students to invest their time now in their studies because it will pay off in the end. So many doors will open, when at one point they may have been shut due to inexperience. College is a building block to furthering not only your education, but your life.

Tierra: Go for it! College is a once-in-a-life-

More tips from those who've been there...

- Be sure to budget, and don't use a credit card unless you have a constant source of income to make your payments.
- Join extra-curricular activities. It helps you make new friends, do something you enjoy and find a niche at your school.
- It's okay to ask people their name again. Everyone is meeting new people, so they understand it may take a few tries for you to remember their name.

– Jamie Gentner

time experience, and you don't want to pass it up. The adult life in the work field will be waiting for you afterwards, so don't rush straight into it. College has so much to offer, and not just scholastically. Talk to as many people as you can at different colleges to see how college life is. And save your money! Even if you are fortunate enough to have your schooling paid for, there are so many expenses outside of that financial bill for school. ■

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The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me.
(PSALM 138:8)