

# A Beacon of Hope to a Single Father



*“Stepstone Academy is the perfect place for children to learn and grow.”*

Since he was a very young child, Reggie Swan grew up living on the streets of Philadelphia, without a family of his own. He was bounced around between an orphanage and foster care homes until he was adopted at the age of 13. Deeply hurt from his past and distrusting of authority figures, Reggie also had difficulty in school. “You had to fend for yourself in the Philadelphia Public School System,” says Reggie. “My teachers didn’t make an effort to help those of us who were struggling inside and outside of the classroom. They just didn’t seem to care.” Because of his negative experience in school, Reggie had no desire to pursue a college education.

Years later, Reggie, now a single father to young son Ausar and daughter Aquilat, was looking for a new start. He decided to move to Cleveland’s Central Neighborhood in June 2012 to live near his adoptive father’s family. New to the city of Cleveland, he wanted to find a high quality school for his children. “I was scared for my kids,” says Reggie. “I didn’t want them to go through the same negative experiences I went through in school. I was looking for a school that they could call their home; one where they would find great success and be motivated for their future.”

Over the summer, Reggie saw a sign for Stepstone Academy on a small building

being renovated on E. 32nd Street near his Central residence. “I heard great things about Stepstone, but I am the type of person who likes to experience things first hand, especially when it comes to my children” says Reggie. “So I decided to visit the school, and from the moment I stepped in, I was hooked. From the school leadership down to the janitor, everyone was extremely warm and customer service oriented.” Although Reggie was also interested in another local charter school, it was the people who worked at Stepstone Academy that ultimately led Reggie to enroll his children there.

Today, Ausar is in Kindergarten and Aquilat is in the first grade and both students are thriving at Stepstone. “They are excited to come to school every day,” says Reggie. “They truly love their teachers, and I am very impressed with how much they are learning.” Reggie sees a very bright future for his children as Stepstone Academy lays the groundwork for their future success. He believes that the solid education they are receiving from Stepstone will help them to graduate from college and ultimately become entrepreneurs. “This school is a beacon of hope for me,” says Reggie. “I tell other parents to not waste their time looking anywhere else because Stepstone Academy is the perfect place for children to learn and grow.”



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