



SOPHOMORE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

“ *It was as if the chaos volcano had erupted and the lava was nothing but misfortune.* ”

This was a sentence in the essay written by Miranda Hardy as part of her application to Minds Matter of Portland in June 2006. She was describing the emotional impact of her parents' recent divorce and awareness that, as she further stated, “I felt part of a statistic that points out that a majority of African-Americans don't know or live with their fathers.”

Miranda, now a junior at Lincoln High School, is in her second year with Minds Matter after spending her summer pre-college experience in the Women in Engineering Program at Smith College. Upon reading Miranda's summer program application essay, the Admissions Office at Smith College praised Miranda's authentic “voice” – direct, but warm and thoughtful, while full of spirit.

As part of the Minds Matter of Portland program last year, the students attended a Portland Arts and Lecture series. The lecturer Miranda heard was renowned author Susan Lori-Park. Ms. Lori-Park so impressed Miranda that she took the initiative to write to the Director of the series expressing her appreciation and thanks. At the next lecture in the series, the Director read the letter to an audience of thousands, thanking both Miranda and Minds Matter of Portland.

A week after arriving at Smith College, Miranda wrote to her mentors, “I have learned a lot that I don't actually have to learn. He just puts knowledge out there for me to grab, and I'm grabbing away!”