



"....if I didn't turn things around...."
—Monica Rouse

SUA Student Profile: Monica Rouse

"I walk into SUA and enter a positive environment where I don't have to be consumed by the negative."

A year ago, a positive environment did not seem possible for Monica Rouse. Last March, she was expelled from Renton High School after repeatedly being drawn into fights with other students. Now, she views the expulsion as a blessing. "If they had continued to simply suspend me, I think I would have been in another fight, and another... eventually, I would have gone to jail."

Out of school, Monica weighed her academic options with skepticism. Monica's cousin and SUA graduate, Jamaal Thomas, enthusiastically promoted the school as the solution she was searching for.

It wasn't until entering SUA in September that Monica fully realized the enormity of the challenges that lay ahead. "Everything really sunk in when I looked at my transcripts with (SUA teacher) Ms. Grantier. All I saw were Ds and Fs. I realized that if I didn't turn things around, I wasn't going to graduate until 2023."

The individual attention SUA invests in students has been a critical factor in Monica's turnaround. "I remember looking at all of the students in the school my first week at SUA and thinking that I used to have more people than this in my homeroom class alone at Renton! But the smaller size makes a difference. Here, the teachers are able to provide so much individual attention and you know they genuinely care about your future."

Monica's future remains to be written, but she believes it will one day involve helping teenagers who share a similar story. She smiles when she says, "If my story can help just one person, that would be wonderful."

Stories like Monica's are made possible by the generosity of our donors. It costs \$18,500 to educate a student at SUA for a year; it costs society \$292,000 not to.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Seattle Urban Academy grapples with the realities of students' lives. Realities that make it difficult for students to persevere. SUA remains committed to students like Monica, who struggle against overwhelming odds. Not all students remain at SUA and graduate, but SUA remains there for them. Even if students leave, we are still here and ready to receive them back. The hope continues.