

HC ROOTS: LA'RON DONALD

La'Ron Donald became involved with Hillside Connection in third grade, after his mother brought La'Ron to a practice upon learning the programming was open to anyone. Nine years after his first practice at Hillside, La'Ron is headed to Coe College with multiple scholarships and set to run track there this fall.

Growing up with a working single mom, Hillside Connection provided a safe place for La'Ron to play and grow while his mother was at work. "I worked and went to school," says Samantha, La'Ron's mom. "Hillside was a safe, structured place where he could go and be with his friends, as well as have positive male role models."

The unwavering support of his coaches served as a stable force in La'Ron's life at a time where other facets lacked certainty. Their presence allowed La'Ron to imagine a future where he embodied their values of integrity, hard work, and kindness.



La'Ron's innate desire to learn coupled with his natural athleticism made him an asset to the Hillside community from a young age. He absorbed lessons imparted to him through sport: hard work and dedication are key to working through life's toughest moments, and discipline will help you achieve your goals.

In high school, La'Ron channeled his ambition into setting himself up for long term success. He was a dedicated student and athlete, excelling in track and football while earning a weighted 4.4 GPA. La'Ron also found a passion for business, participating in this year's Future Business Leaders of America's competition in securities and investments, where he placed eighth in the state of Colorado.

Reflecting on his experience at Hillside Connection, La'Ron is grateful for the community he cultivated, as well as its existence as an outlet for his energy and ambition from a young age.

"Hillside Connection really is open to everyone," says Samantha. "Its openness and accessibility can change lives."

