



ALUMNI PROFILE

What grades and years did you attend U Prep? What district did you attend?

I began at UPA Middle School, and then went on to graduate from UPA High School in 2009.

Why did your parents choose U Prep?

My mother chose U Prep because she was very excited about the work that Doug Ross was doing in the city of Detroit. She loved the curriculum, school environment, small class sizes, and the way that the school was structured. She felt like it was a perfect fit for how I learned, and the goals I told her I wanted to accomplish in life. It ended up being the perfect fit for me, and my siblings.

**DESIREE "ASHANTEE"
MARION**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN
ENGLISH**

What fond memories do you have of your experience at U Prep?

I have many fond memories of U Prep. One of them being the friendships that I was able to make, and still hold dear today. The Pep Rallies, being the Majorette/Dance team captain and the performances we executed, or just the simple memories being made with my classmates where unforgettable. U Prep was where I learned the importance of building strong communities. When I think of U Prep, I immediately think of my best friends, Charnesha Waters and Kiesha Moncrief as well as my classmates, and the other 2009 alumni. I immediately think, family.

What did you love best about your time at U Prep?

I loved being able to have the freedom to express my creativity. Project - Based learning allowed me to research and gain an understanding of the career field I was interested in before I went to college. It allowed me to explore my many interests with so much support behind me. I also loved that I was able to experience so many great things like college campus tours, working within the community, and field trips that enhanced the learning experience for me.

University Prep Schools provides a culturally responsive educational experience for our scholars that builds academic competence, habits of work and scholarship, and self-actualization empowering them to successfully accomplish their post-secondary plans, as well as socially and civically engaged as change agents for themselves and their community.

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How did U Prep prepare you for success in life?

U Prep helped me to find my voice, taught me how to be an advocate for myself, and showed me how to work with others. Anytime it's time for me to give a speech, organize a project, or work with a group of people, I immediately attribute my success to what I learned at U Prep.

What are you doing now?

I would definitely describe myself as a woman of many different hats. I am the co-owner of Ellington Event Center in Warren, MI where we provide an upscale boutique venue. I am also a philanthropist who gives to organizations that provide support to people who deal with domestic violence, sexual assault, and human sex trafficking. Lastly, in my spare time, I write romance, contemporary fiction novels and short stories.

What are your plans for the future?

My plans are to continue to work with the youth, open another venue, expand my personal brand, and self-publish another novel. My ultimate goal is to show my 4-year old daughter, Reign Charlotte, that anything in life is possible with hard-work and determination.

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