

## Thank You

Ever since I was younger college has been the main destination for all of my academic endeavors. My elementary school, La Cima had a redundant motto that it was our duty to “get the knowledge to go to college”. When making that commitment every single morning, I never realized how close 2021 was. Tio Cho and Ms.Dai took pride in my academic success and were positive that I would be successful; me being stubborn, I always knew I wanted to become a lawyer. After elementary school, I was nervous to embark on a new adventure to middle school. It was far enough from my mother (who worked in my downstairs middle school) for me to bawl my eyes out without her nearby. During middle school, I walked in timid and shy, afraid to initiate conversation (even though I always had something on my mind). Ms.P, Mr. Young, and Mr. Brunson made me grow not only as an athlete, but as a stronger more confident young woman. Thanks to Girls Talk, the girls basketball team, and the advisory program I am the person I am today. While completing middle school, I also took on the challenge of Prep 9, a specialized program. There I met my main crew of friends; it had Reina’s style, Justin’s sly comments, and Kimberly’s wit. I even met my Prep sister Praise Johnson who keeps me going and motivated till this day. Although it was a shaky and doubtful ride, with my parent’s patience, sister’s humor, my aunts’ long thoughtful conversations, and my friend group I commenced. I still remember the letter ceremony and seeing Middlesex written on my paper. It would be far away from home, but with the tools instilled in me I was confident that I would be “okay” in Concord. Throughout my years of highschool, I was slowly approaching the realization that I would have to leave all the friends and connections I made but with Abisola’s constant facetime calls, I know that the connections I made at MX are going to last even after graduation. Zeke, Amanda, Andrew and Brian, helped me continue my spiritual, religious journey and my relationship with God through our bible group FOCUS. My commitment to God helps me control my stress levels knowing there is a plan out there. My freshman year I met my best friend, Claire Ngugi. Claire has been there for the whole ride with me, and has been my rock at MX. We’re just similar enough to be good friends, but our differences are what make our relationship truly flourish. My sophomore year, I met a lot of new people, all of which taught me lessons. The most important person for me that year was Gabby Dixon. Gabby, your maturity yet childish energy makes your presence rejuvenating. Junior year was cut short by the pandemic, but I met Doyin Leo and Emilee, who can always match my energy. I met many interesting different people (too many to name sorry you know who you are). After all these tribulations and trials, God has finally guided me to my dream college. Now there were a lot of schools that I thought I would be able to fit in too, but this college in particular caught my attention. Without all the people I have previously mentioned, my successes (along with the failures that I learned from) would not have happened. I am grateful for each and every person I have encountered before this moment. A lot of people do not have the privileges of good family and friends, so I truly appreciate it.

Sincerely with love and gratitude, Kayla (KJ) Johnson