

## **Certificate of Accomplishment**

### **Dejah Bradshaw and Jaakirah Reid – Agnes Irwin School**

Dejah Bradshaw and Jaakirah Reid are seniors in the Agnes Irwin School. In 2014, they helped found the Acceptance and Awareness of Diversity (AAD) Conference and worked for months to make it a reality. The Conference, held on October 25, 2014, was attended by sixty students and ten faculty members from six schools.

The conference was intended to combat ignorance and lack of communication on the subjects of unconscious bias, race, socioeconomic privilege and their intersectionality by giving the faculty and students the information that allows an educated and productive discussion of these constructs with the goal of creating a deeper understanding of ideas and opinions different from one's own, dispelling stereotypes, and opening doors for acceptance, interest, admiration, and empathy for others.

AAD began as a diversity conference but Dejah and Jaakirah turned AAD into a social justice and diversity organization to tackle problems in their community regarding diversity, mostly race. It has made significant progress addressing this issue within Agnes Irwin by opening up the conversation between racial groups. This resulted in white students understanding the bias that black students feel and black students understanding that white students were afraid to address some of these issues for fear that they would be viewed as racist. At Agnes Irwin these discussions involved students, faculty and staff.

A Multi-Cultural Student Board with representation from all the schools that attended the 2014 conference has been formed and has taken responsibility for planning the 2016 and subsequent conferences. It is anticipated that about 160 students, 16-20 faculty members and 30 student facilitators will participate in the 2016 conference. Jaakirah and Dejah have been devoting almost all of their time outside of school including time over summer and holiday breaks to AAD.

Mrs. Charesse Ford, their advisor and Director of Equity and Inclusion, describes Jaakirah as cooperative, innovative, trustworthy and a positive leader and Dejah as an insightful, bright, principled, innovative, and an assertive and passionate leader. Since their freshman year both Dejah and Jaakirah have assisted Mrs. Ford in facilitating diversity and inclusion initiatives for both middle and upper school students at Agnes Irwin.