

Hello!

Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to what the SNEAKERS program has meant to me. My name is Shanon Quiroz, and I'm a proud alumna of Gaithersburg High School. I was fortunate enough to be part of the SNEAKERS program for seven years, and I can honestly say it has shaped me into the woman I am today.

Before SNEAKERS, I was quiet, unsure of myself, and hesitant to speak up. I often felt like I was navigating middle and high school alone. But SNEAKERS changed all of that. For the first time, I found a space where I felt seen, heard, and understood. Being surrounded by other girls who were facing similar challenges made me feel less isolated. Every week, we got to come together and have real conversations about school, about our lives, about the things that were weighing us down or lifting us up. We became each other's support system, cheering each other on, holding each other accountable, and growing together.

Under the thoughtful guidance of our mentors, we didn't just talk about our feelings; we also took practical steps toward success. We talked openly about our grades and gave each other weekly updates, offering encouragement and advice. We learned how to organize our lives, how to advocate for ourselves, and how to keep pushing forward even when things felt hard. These weren't just school skills, they were life skills.

SNEAKERS gave me the confidence to open up, to speak my truth, and to connect with others. I became someone who could walk into a room and feel like I belonged there. I learned how to network, how to adapt to new environments, and how to carry myself with confidence. We even learned things like couponing, interview skills, etiquette, and how to present ourselves in professional settings — all things that helped me feel prepared for the real world beyond school.

The impact SNEAKERS had on me goes beyond words. It gave me a sisterhood. It gave me guidance. It gave me tools that I still carry with me today. Without this program, I truly don't know where I'd be. That's why I believe so deeply in the importance of programs like SNEAKERS and the incredible work being done by Crittenton.

With more funding and support, I know this program could open its doors to even more young women – girls who, like me, just need someone to believe in them, to guide them, and to walk alongside them. I've seen the growth that happens in SNEAKERS; not just in myself, but in the girls I grew alongside. The confidence, the strength, the self-worth. It's real, and it's life-changing.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to share my story. I hope more young girls get to feel the same love, support, and empowerment that I did through SNEAKERS.

With gratitude,
Shanon Quiroz