

# The Trip I took to the East Coast to Speak for our People

By Karen Lynn

Three weeks ago, I took a most rewarding journey that is now changing the course of my life. It has all happened because of the tenacious action I have pursued continuously throughout my life. For the last three years, I have traveled to the east coast, on my own expense, to speak on behalf of the disabled community and discrimination, at Kean University. Previously, I had spoken in history classrooms with up and coming students. However, this time, I spoke to a larger group of important people.

Many of these students came from different academic and cultural backgrounds. They also were individuals without any visible disability what so ever. This made me want to open the minds and heart of the people before me. To me, it was all important to explain the facts of what our disabled community with learning disabilities and Cerebral Palsy go through, yet, remain able to accomplish. Not only were the young adults of today's generation there, but professional as well, who were totally unaware of what we go through on a daily basis with learning. These educators were blown away by the facts presented to them.

Moreover, they were taken back by the determination, confidence, and steadfastness I have had to demonstrate through my entire life to get to where I am today. I was able to describe in great details, the struggles and strength we as disabled people put forth. Time and time again, in my address, I stressed the importance of how disabled individuals need to work twice and three times as hard as the "normal" person to achieve their own goals and desires. Their confidence has to be stronger than the average person because no one can give it to us.

Still, they must nurture themselves because they can not receive it anywhere else. It pleased me to see not only how receptive they were, but how my words reach them at the depths of their beings. So, that they invited me back next year to a bigger audience, and to an audience with disabilities. They expressed a strong desire for me to return and speak to the entire university. You would be very pleased to hear how my lecture impacted on the two professors who were present.

Dr. Thomas Banit, who was only going to stay a minute, wound up stating throughout the entire presentation, and Dr. Argote-Freyre, was totally amazed when I described coming from the place where I could not ever write a clear constructive sentence; to being able to write and have published an autobiographical book. This gave me a sense of how far I have come, and where I am going. It amazed me, once again, just how far one can go if they are driven and want to succeed.

All and all this was a life altering experience. It has brought me one step closer to attaining my ultimate goal.