

Academy Prep

Center of Tampa

George W. Bush
President, United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

January 2, 2008

Dear President Bush:

Early this morning, Tameka Evans boarded a plane, leaving us in Tampa. She is bound for two months of training in preparation for her March deployment to Tikrit, Iraq, as a member of the 345th Combat Support Hospital of the United States Army. To say we'll miss her is a great understatement.

As Tameka leaves to serve our nation overseas, I'd like you to know a little about her. Since her childhood, Tameka has steadfastly praised God, and has honored the virtues of giving back, respecting others, and working hard. Despite considerable economic and social hardship, she educated herself in the type of inner-city school environment that leaves so many others with little hope for the future. In 2004 she graduated with high honors as a pre-med student at the University of Florida. Rather than pursue medical school and a life of relative comfort and wealth as a doctor, Tameka decided to join the AmeriCorps program as an inner-city educator.

It was our fortune that she chose to serve as an AmeriCorps teacher with us. For the princely sum of \$600 monthly, Tameka put in 60-hour weeks teaching physical education and math to our middle school students – all of whom come from economically disadvantaged homes; and far too many from dysfunctional families. She served 18 months as an AmeriCorps teacher, and, realizing that God had endowed her with great talent to educate and inspire inner-city youth, she asked if she could stay on with us as a full-time math teacher. Knowing her selfless dedication to her charges, I was happy to oblige. Tameka is one of the most loved and respected teachers in our close-knit school community.

But Tameka is selfless in all she does, so it is no surprise that she also joined the Army Reserves. As Tameka inspired inner-city students to open doors as she did for herself years ago, as an Army medic she will also give back to our nation by tapping her medical skills in service to our wounded soldiers.

As our commander in chief, you are burdened with the awful responsibility of deciding whether to send our men and women into combat. It is not my place to judge your decisions in this context. But if I may offer you any consolation, rest assured that we are quite fortunate to have so many outstanding Americans like Tameka Evans serving in our armed forces. We should all be proud to be their compatriots.

Tameka's contributions to our school community and to our students have been precious. In her faith and in her work, she personifies what it means to give back. May God bless Tameka Evans as she continues to give back to all of us from thousands of miles away, and may God bring her and her fellow soldiers back to us safe and sound.

Sincerely,

Lincoln J. Tamayo
Head of School
Academy Prep Center of Tampa