

A Portrait of the Outstanding Harvard Academic Teenager: Saheela Ibraheem

Written by www.yourblackworld.com
Tuesday, 26 July 2011 00:00



Saheela Ibraheem, a [Nigerian](#) teenager, applied to 14 universities across the country, not an extraordinary number of applications, but enough to give her some options. One thing that clearly makes Ibraheem different from the other applicants is her age, 15 years old. “It’s the age thing. I wanted to make sure I had options,” said Saheela.

When it was all said and done, the 15-year old had been accepted to 13 colleges, including six out of the eight Ivy League schools across the nation. She applied to seven, with Yale being the only one deciding to reject. This led Saheela and her family to decide that she would attend Harvard University. She is interested to study neuroscience, neurobiology.

“I’ll be one of the youngest. But I won’t be [the youngest](#),” she said.

This was a competitive year for college admissions, for a record number of applications were

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filed. Similar to Melinda Hightower, a Cornell University graduate who started college at the age of 16, Saheela's future was etched in stone at an early age. Her favorite subject was math and her parents pushed to have her moved to a higher grade that would challenge her academically. That's when she skipped the sixth grade.

After feeling unchallenged by public school, Saheela headed to a private school called Wardlaw-Hartridge. At the new school, she skipped her freshman year and started high school as a 10th-grader. She has three younger brothers, twins who are in the ninth grade and another in the second grade, all of whom attended the same school as their sister.

Teachers at the school say that Saheela was far from being a nerd. She studied hard, but was involved in a multitude of activities. She competed in three sports: Softball, soccer and swimming. She also sang in the school choir, played trombone, and worked as president of the school's investment club.

"She's learned and she's very smart. But she keeps pushing herself," said William Jenkins, the Wardlaw-Hartridge School's director of development.

The teenager is polyglot. She speaks Arabic, English, Spanish and Latin. Saheela sets the standard for what [children of color](#) can accomplish when they put their minds to it.

Source: A courtesy of www.yourblackworld.com (May 2011)