

Jestina Raceen Gilbert was born on January 28th, 2001 in Hartford Hospital to the parents by the name of Recina Reynolds Gilbert and Stanley Gilbert. She is not the first child; she also has a sister, 36 years old named, Yolina Owens. In her younger years she participated in various areas in the arts. She attended the Hartford School of Ballet, danced in the "Boat to Obama", and also dances as a committed praise dancer at First Cathedral. While being a star on the stage, Jestina also dedicates her time to being a stellar student, volleyball player, and leader in her community. In her more mature adolescent years, Jestina attended Hartford Youth Scholars, Heads up Hartford, YMCA Achievers Programs, and founded her own foundation called "I shall NOT be Afraid". The Hartford Youth Scholars program is a program that puts Hartford students through a rigorous summer and school year, in order to be prepared for high school and private school. Jestina is proud to be a graduate of 2015, Cohort 8. The additional three organization's goals are to empower and assist the Greater Hartford community, by continuously giving back. Heads up Hartford and "I shall NOT be Afraid" participate in hands on community service throughout the Greater Hartford area. In addition to the organizations' Community service, Jestina's own foundation has hosted an event called "Adopt a Family" where they give families chosen by the Wilson Grey YMCA: food, presents, an appearance by Santa, and LOVE. Everyone needs Love during the Christmas Season. In addition to the "Adopt a Family" event Jestina also dedicates her time to mentoring young women about the importance of being bold, beautiful, confident, and about conquering their dreams no matter the cost. The "I shall NOT be Afraid" foundation has also serviced other organizations such as Brown Skin Women Beauty & Wellness, Chosen Generation Fashion Show, CIRCLE of Hands Foundation (cares for kids with HIV and Aids), First Cathedral Holy Productions, Greater Faith Church Ministries, InaScents Natural Products, LEVAS (Lift every voice Bushnell parks), Mother Against Guns (Faith Congregational Church), Northern Connecticut Black Nurses Association Inc., Rise up (Cocktail for Change), Sandy Hook, Violet Rose / True Colors, Wadsworth Atheneum Black History Program, Women of Color Expo, and Village for Children and Family Services. She not only assists her community of the Greater Hartford Area; she also contributes to her school community by conducting a Black History program that helped educate the community of Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy. She also serves as a Varsity Athlete on the Volleyball team and Track and Field team at East Hartford High. In conclusion Jestina continues to use her gifts and leadership skills to positively impact the community around her.

Jestina is a Hartford Girls Rock Honoree 2016, Emerging Philanthropist Honoree Aurora Foundation 2017, YMCA Youth Achiever, Hartford Youth Scholar Graduate, Urban League Youth Advisor.

She received Citations /Awards: Mayor Luke Bronin, Senator Chris Murphy, Former State Treasurer Denise Nappier, Eric L. Adams President Borough of Brooklyn City Of New York , AARP Plainville Chapter #4146 , Counsel Women Rjo Winch, YSP Award, ANS Youth Empowerment Award , From the Heart of Hartford Award and more

Jestina's Mantra:

I Shall Not Be Afraid

Whatever should cross my path I Will Accomplish

I will not let Fear hinder me from Success

I Will not do this Alone

I Will SEEK help

I Will seek GREATNESS

My duty is to work HARD no matter the task

I SHALL NOT BE AFRAID