

"How did you get here?" By Michelle Hernandez

Since you asked me after I shared that I'm from the Bronx, let me tell you how I got here. I got here the same way you did, by simply applying. However, even that is hard to know because people like you often use their privilege cards to get what they want. On the other hand, I had good grades, studied extra hard, went to my teachers after school, and had countless sleepless nights trying to be perfect to get myself out of the Bronx. I earned my way to this campus and left a lot in New York. Although I wasn't that far, leaving meant I would see less of my grandparents, parents, and siblings. I learned what it was to care for someone through them, but I needed to choose myself for once. So that's another reason why I'm here; I simply decided to leave home for college. I got a full ride to my top choice, Fordham University, but I knew I needed a change. I got here by a 20+ email exchange with the office of Financial Aid where I was explaining how my parents financially support others in the Dominican Republic because they still have family in need there; all because my financial aid package was not generous as they asked for about 85% of my household income. I got here because, during my junior year of high school, I attended a summer program this university hosted and became exposed to dorming life. I connected with the Associate Director of the Office of Admission. She made me want to become a leader because of how she carried herself and followed her heart and passions. I got here by advocating for myself and following my vision. I got accepted to most of my schools all over the country and earned a scholarship based on my grades. But of course, this is all because to people like you who judge people based on where they're from, details from a reality different than yours are gibberish, useless facts. Would you have asked me if I was from the suburbs or looked more like you?