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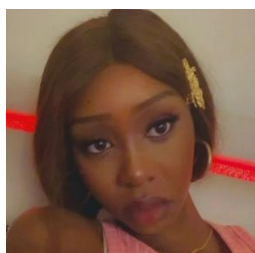
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Finding Yourself Through Music

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Liza Koko
Wildcat Times
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Ms. Johnson has a love of music.

Music was always in her life: always playing in the house because her mom would sing and constantly play music – even before she was born... so she feels like she never really chose music, it kind of chose her.

When she was three her mom took her to see *Peter and the Wolf*. She remembers being completely amazed at how the violins worked together without talking, how the conductor and everyone else somehow knew exactly what to do. She was hooked.

She started playing at the age of five and was naturally good at it. And her teachers encouraged her.

Diagnosed with dyslexia, and having had a lot of hand surgeries growing up, life was made. frustrating and sometimes painful.

School wasn't really her favorite place either as she would finish her work fast and then just sit there feeling bored.

Teachers noticed and would send her to practice music instead of just sitting there. The routine honestly saved her because it gave her something to focus on, a reward for completing her work: doing something she actually enjoys!

Johnson describes music as, "Where words stop and feelings start because when you're sad or overwhelmed, and can't explain it, music explains it for you."

Music gave her comfort and a way to express herself when words weren't enough. And that shaped the way she is today.

Since music had helped her, she tries to pass it on. Johnson loves helping others feel seen, especially the ones sitting alone.

Success is about relationships and loving what you do. And Johnson gets to do that every day through music.