

## **FUTURE EDUCATOR FEATURE: ATNEATAIES MCLEAN**

*By Arianne Wade, Northern Region Representative, NJFEA*

Atneataies McLean, one of our own thriving New Jersey Future Educator Association (NJFEA) members, aspires to become one of the hundreds of future teachers who will guide the generations to come. Atneataies joined the association when she was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and has been an active member for four years strong; she is now continuing her fifth year as a junior at University High School in Newark, New Jersey. Of those four years, Atneataies has been a dedicated secretary for University's NJFEA chapter for three, and now she is aiming for a higher office in the association.

As a dedicated NJFEA member, Atneataies has participated in the club's bake sales for charity, and book drives, and she has collected hygiene items and clothes for the homeless, conducted school tours, hosted Teacher Appreciation Week, and so much more. Besides community service, Atneataies has also attended the NJFEA state conferences and was a volunteer for Junior Achievement (JA) and Read for the Record, activities that University's NJFEA chapter actively participates in annually. Our young, flourishing future teacher has experience as an actual teacher, participating in such activities as the JA High School Heroes Program and the National Read for the Record. The Read for the Record program gives high school students the opportunity to go to elementary schools in their districts and literally become a teacher for a day. During Atneataies's first year as a NJFEA member, she had the opportunity to become a teacher for the day and, at the age of twelve, Atneataies described the experience as "pretty scary," which was not surprising, since she was teaching students not much different in age from herself. However, she said that, as time progressed, all the "tension left her," and teaching has become as easy as breathing.

Atneataies's inspiration for becoming a teacher was found in her 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. As a child, Atneataies's 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher motivated her to improve her grades. Atneataies McLean found this encouragement inspiring enough to pursue an advanced enhanced education and to become one of our future leaders, since a teacher is a leader or guide for the upcoming generations. For Atneataies McLean, it is so much more: teaching is an endeavor she loves. I asked her what was her reason for becoming a teacher and her response was: "This may sound cliché but I want to make a difference...besides, I love kids."