



Next Step to Success Weekly Update

Message from our Executive Director



James Harris

Executive Director Weekly Update – Week 13

As we move into Week 13, I want to take a moment to reflect on the Thanksgiving holiday and the importance it holds for our community. This time of year, reminds us how essential family, gratitude, and togetherness are in shaping the support systems our young people rely on every day. We are deeply grateful for our students, their families, and the trust you place in Next Step to Success.

With the holiday break approaching, we encourage everyone to take time to rest, reconnect, and enjoy moments with loved ones. Please remind our students to stay safe, make good choices, and take care of themselves and each other during this time away from the program.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve your children and for the continued partnership that makes our work meaningful. We look forward to welcoming all

our students back after the holiday, re-energized and ready to continue their growth, learning, and leadership development.

Wishing you and your families a warm, safe, and joyful Thanksgiving season.

James Harris, Executive Director



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From the Director of Education



This week at Next Step to Success, our students continue to make steady progress in the Homework Hub, and we are actively seeking dedicated volunteers—especially those with strengths in history, math, and science—to support our youth during academic time. We are also looking for volunteers to help monitor and engage students in the gym each afternoon from 2:00–4:00 PM. Your involvement plays a vital role in creating a safe, enriching, and supportive environment for our young people.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's academic needs or would like to discuss additional support, please reach out to me directly at cgelles@nextsteptosuccess.org.

Thank you for your continued partnership in helping our youth thrive. We are deeply grateful that you share your children with us each day—they bring joy, energy, and purpose to everything we do. As we pause to celebrate the season, we wish you and your family a warm, restful, and very Happy Thanksgiving!



Although it was a short week due to the holiday, it was a full one! Our youth kicked off a new cheer activity on Monday and jumped right into practicing together. We also continued with chess in partnership with the Hampton Roads Chess Association, along with martial arts and basketball. It was a busy and productive week, and we'll miss our students over the Thanksgiving break. Programming will resume on December 1st.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

Operations Update

On behalf of Leadership, I want to wish all of our youth, families, and partners a wonderful Thanksgiving. We encourage everyone to take this time to rest, recharge, and prioritize family and loved ones.

If you are in need of support or community resources, please contact:

- Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (CCEVA): (757) 456-2366
- Urban League of Hampton Roads, Inc.: (757) 627-0864
- Virginia Peninsula Foodbank: (757) 596-7188
- Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore: (757) 627-6599
- United Way of South Hampton Roads: (757) 853-8500

Reminders

- Please ensure your information is up to date in TraxSolutions at all times.
 - If you need assistance accessing your account, contact our main office at (757) 995-2111 or email MGarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org.
- Transportation routes are essential for ensuring smooth daily operations.
 - If there are any changes, or if your youth will not be attending, please call or email using the contact information above.
- NSTS will be closed on:
 - Wednesday, November 26, 2025 (Youth Free Day)
 - Thursday, November 27, 2025 & Friday, November 28, 2025 (NPS Thanksgiving Break)

Requests

- Please complete the NSTS Family Satisfaction and Impact Survey (Extension through the Holidays).
 - Your feedback is vital for program planning, funding, and partnerships that help us continue providing the highest quality care and services to youth across Hampton Roads.
- Stay connected with us on social media:
 - **Facebook:** [[Click Here](#)]
 - **Instagram:** [[Click Here](#)]
 - **LinkedIn:** [[Click Here](#)]
- Leave us a review on Google:
 - **Google:** [[Click Here](#)]



Staff Spotlight

☀ Staff Spotlight: Carly

1. What inspired you to join Next Step to Success? I always enjoyed working with kids and wanted to take my work beyond the classroom.
2. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? Energetic, passionate and whimsical
3. What's one lesson you hope every student you work with carries with them? The only person you should compare yourself to is the person you were yesterday.
4. Who was a mentor or role model in your own life, and how did they shape you? My day. Watching him work as an educator made me want to follow in his footsteps.
5. What's your favorite way to spend a Saturday when you're not working? Playing with my kids.
6. If you could have dinner with any historical figure or celebrity, who would it be and why? Jason Reynolds – His ability to write in a way that draws in an often-ignored audience.
7. What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? I am actually quiet at home – sometimes!
8. If you had to pick a theme song for your life, what would it be? Free – Jessie Reyez
9. What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? To be authentically as yourself because everyone else is taken
10. Finish this sentence "Working at Next Step to Success means..." Supporting children to reach their potential.
11. What's your all-time favorite TV show or movie? Miss Congeniality

Culinary Corner

From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts



Hey NSTS Family,

Guess who's back from the holiday break like we never left?! 🙌✨
The kitchen is unlocked, the aprons are tied, and we're kicking off Week 13 with **big flavor and even bigger energy!** Let's jump right into what's cooking this week — because your taste buds deserve a warm welcome back too! 😊🔥

🎉 **WEEK 13 MENU – THE RETURN OF THE CHEF B FLAVOR TRAIN** 🚂👤

- **Monday – Chicken Tenders & Mac & Cheese**

Comfort food to ease us back into the groove. Creamy, crispy, cheesy... a whole vibe.



- **Tuesday – Breakfast Burritos**

Because breakfast for lunch = elite behavior. 🥘✨

- **Wednesday – Wings & Wedges**

Middle of the week = middle of your plate full of crispy goodness. 🍗🥔🔥

- **Thursday – Meatball Subs with Salad**

A lil' hearty, a lil' healthy. That sub is gonna HIT. 🍞💥

- **Friday – Chili Cheese Fries**

End the week with flavor fireworks. Messy? Yes. Worth it? Also yes. 🍟🧀🌶️😄

🎉 **Let's make this first week back fun, flavorful, and full of good vibes.**

I missed y'all and I'm excited to serve up some NSTS magic in the kitchen this week!



If you need me, you know where to find me — probably by the stove, the oven, or the snack cabinet 😊

With love & flavor,

Brittany "Chef B" Brown 🍷👩🍳💙

Cement Your Legacy with a Brick at St. Vincent de Paul House

Be part of our history and our future! Through our Brick Fundraiser, you can honor a loved one, recognize a business, or leave a family legacy by purchasing an engraved brick. Each brick will be placed on the new St. Vincent de Paul House campus, creating a lasting tribute while supporting Next Step to Success youth programs.

NEXT STEP TO SUCCESS

BUY A BRICK

CEMENT YOUR LEGACY & INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION!

NEXTSTEPTOSUCCESS.ORG

"YOUR NAME"
BORN AT DEPAUL
"DATE OF BIRTH"

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