



## *Next Step to Success Weekly Update*

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### A Message from our Executive Director



**James Harris**

As we enter Week 24, we are excited to welcome Meaghan Campbell, our Development Director, back from maternity leave! Meaghan, we are so happy to have you back with the NSTS family and hope that Baby June is doing wonderfully. Your leadership and heart for this work are deeply valued, and we are grateful for your return.

February also gives us the opportunity to reflect on Black History Month as a time to honor the resilience, leadership, innovation, and courage of those who paved the way before us. At NSTS, we are intentional about helping our students understand that they are part of that ongoing story. History reminds us that perseverance, vision, and community create lasting change and our students are capable of doing the same.

We are also pleased to welcome Empowered Path to campus this week in support of student mental health hygiene. Their work strengthens our commitment to ensuring students have the tools, strategies, and emotional support needed to thrive.

Finally, our Brick Fundraiser continues! We encourage families and community members to participate by purchasing a commemorative brick through our website. Each brick represents belief in a student's future. More information below.

Thank you for your continued support.

James Harris,  
Executive Director



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Next Step to Success- NSTS



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**Welcome Back Meaghan!**





We're so excited to welcome Meaghan back to NSTS! After embracing the beautiful (and sleep-deprived!) season of new motherhood, she returns with even more perspective, gratitude, and heart. This chapter has been filled with growth, joy, and learning to balance it all — and somehow doing it with grace and a lot of coffee.

1. What has surprised you most about motherhood so far? **How little sleep you can function on and somehow keep going. Coffee helps, but mom adrenaline is real**
2. How is Baby June's personality already shining through? **Her pediatrician calls her "Scary Alert" because she notices everything going on around her.**

**She's super observant and doesn't miss a thing**

3. What's one sweet moment you've experienced that you'll never forget? **Her first real smile while making eye contact. Instant melt.**
4. Have you discovered any hidden talents since becoming a mom (professional swaddler? lullaby superstar?) **Apparently I can carry and impressive number of things at once and still manage to do almost everything one handed.**
5. What's been your go-to coffee order these days? ☕ **The more caffeine the better... survival mode**
6. What's one thing you missed about NSTS while you were away? **I missed laughing with my coworkers every day. Work is fun when everyone loves what they do!**
7. What are you most excited about jumping back into this year? **I am really excited to reconnect with the youth and hear their stories. They make my job of fundraising easy because they are so eager to learn and share their success stories.**
8. Has Baby June already mastered her "future Development Director" smile? **She's definitely working the room already! (Picture of smile above 😊)**
9. What advice would you give to new moms balancing career and family? **Give yourself lots of grace and don't be afraid to ask for help.**
10. What's bringing you the most joy in this season of life? **Watching June grow while getting back to work I love**

As she steps back into her role, Meaghan is especially excited to reconnect with our youth and continue sharing their powerful stories of growth and success. This season has deepened her appreciation for community, resilience, and the importance of giving yourself grace. We're grateful to have her energy and leadership back at NSTS — and we can't wait for all that's ahead.

## Alumni Spotlight: Larina



We're proud to spotlight Larina, a high school graduate and four-year member of Next Step to Success who is now pursuing a career with the Sheriff's Department. From exploring career opportunities at NSTS to preparing for her Deputy exam, Larina continues to push forward with ambition and determination.

1. What is your name, School and grade? **Maury HS Grad**
2. What are you doing now? **Sheriff's Department (Testing to become Deputy)**
3. How long were you part of Next Step to Success? **4 years**
4. What did you like most about coming to NSTS? **Career Opportunities**
5. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Working on passing my Sheriff's test**
6. Who inspires you the most, and why? **Mr. Muhanma – Very much a father figure!**
7. What was your favorite subject in school? **Math and English**
8. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Boxing and Gym**
9. What's your favorite book, movie, or song right now? **Favorite movie: Twilight**
10. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Just because you are going through something negative now doesn't mean it will last.**
11. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Sheriff Deputy**
12. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **I am from Nebraska.**
13. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you? **Mr. Muhanma**
14. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Ambitious, Outgoing and Understanding**
15. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **Being able to be moving forward and overcoming obstacles.**

Inspired by strong mentorship and driven by his goals, Larina is proof that growth takes perseverance. Her advice to current students is simple but powerful: tough seasons don't last forever. We're proud of the progress she's making and can't wait to see her achieve her goal of becoming a Sheriff's Deputy.

## NSTS Leadership Insights



**Education Update  
Carly Gelles**

Dear Families,

This week at Next Step To Success, we are incredibly proud of the dedication and perseverance our students continue to show each day. Their hard work, resilience, and commitment to growth—both academically and personally—are truly inspiring and reflect the strength of our community. We are especially excited to celebrate a major milestone through the TCC Apprenticeship Program, as two of our youth officially began their first day of work through this opportunity. This apprenticeship represents more than just a job—it is a powerful step toward career exploration, skill-building, and long-term success. We are grateful for the

partnerships that make experiences like this possible and for the families and mentors who continue to encourage our youth as they take these important steps forward.

Best,  
Carly Gelles  
Director of Education

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## **Program Update Kaelyn Hundley**

This week at Next Step to Success, our youth continued to show growth in both their confidence and character. From meaningful mentorship discussions to active participation in small group activities, it has been exciting to see them lean into new challenges. Our team remains committed to building grit, strengthening a growth mindset, and creating opportunities for every student to feel seen, supported, and empowered.

We were proud to partner with Brighter Horizon, Karate, Chrysler Museum, Vitol Pivot, Hermitage Museum, Empower U, and Together We Can. At the Chrysler Museum, youth designed the covers of their new sketchbooks and explored the contemporary exhibit, expanding their creativity and artistic perspective. Together We Can's Career Club workshop also supported five youth in creating or updating their résumés as they prepare to apply for summer jobs and enroll at TCC — a powerful step toward their future goals.

We are excited to host our Career Fair on April 15th. If you or someone you know is interested in sharing your career journey with our youth, please contact Jontel Evans, Youth Coordinator, at [jevans@nextsteptosuccess.org](mailto:jevans@nextsteptosuccess.org). Thank you to our families and partners for your continued support.

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## Operations Update Muhanma Garcia

**Program Participation Expectations:** We understand that youth may have school obligations, appointments, and other commitments. However, our program structure relies heavily on daily attendance counts to ensure effective planning for meals, field trips, activities, and dismissal procedures.

To support consistent program operations:

- Early Pick-Up: Youth must be picked up by 5:00 PM to fully participate in daily programming.
- Late Arrival: Youth arriving late must arrive no later than 3:30 PM.
- Your cooperation helps us provide a structured and well-prepared environment for all participants.

**Summer Program Enrollment:** Early Summer Program enrollment is extended until Wednesday, February 25, 2026, for currently enrolled youth in our after-school program.

To submit early enrollment:

- Log in to TraxSolution (Log-in Link)
- Update your programming selection to Summer Program 2026
- For additional questions, please contact Muhanma Garcia at [mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org](mailto:mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org)

We encourage families to enroll early to secure their child's spot in our exciting summer experience. Additional details and registration information will be shared soon.

**After-School Program Enrollment Growth:** As promised, we will continue to provide updates regarding our outreach efforts and program growth. We are excited to share that our current enrollment has reached 115 youth. We appreciate the support of our community and extend special recognition to Ghent School, Blair Middle School, Norview Middle School, and Northside Middle School for their recent youth enrollments.

**Reminder: Enrollment is not considered complete until families meet with staff in person to confirm all information and complete enrollment via TraxSolution. Incoming youth will begin each Monday, and enrollment will continue on a rolling basis until program capacity is reached.**

Please continue sharing our program information with families, friends, and community members.

For more information or to apply: [Click Here](#)

## JOIN US FOR SUMMER 2026!

For Youth Ages 13-18  
3401 Tidewater Dr. • Norfolk, VA 23509  
(757) 995-2111



### Your Summer Starts Here!

Beginning June 15th, youth will embark on an exciting 8-week summer experience designed to challenge, inspire, and empower them to become confident leaders.

#### What Your Camper Can Expect:

- Daily transportation to and from home
- Breakfast, Snack & Lunch included
- Transportation Pick-up begins at 8:00 AM
- Camp programming: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

GRIT • GROWTH MINDSET • OPTIMISM • SUCCESS • COMMUNITY SERVICE • AGENCY

## Culinary Corner



From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts, Chef B

Hey NSTS Team & Families,

Happy Week Ahead! Our Culinary Department is excited to share this week's delicious lineup and trust us — the kitchen is bringing the flavor AND the fun! 🍷



Here's what our youth will be enjoying this week:

- 🍝 Monday: Spaghetti & Garlic Bread
- 🍲 Tuesday: Birria Bowls (rich, flavorful, and a student favorite!)
- 🍗 Wednesday: Wings & Fresh Salad
- 🥩 Thursday: Philly Cheesesteaks with Seasoned Wedges
- 🍷 Friday: Breakfast for Dinner — Waffles, Eggs, and Turkey Sausage (a fun end-of-week surprise!)

As always, meals are prepared with care while also giving our youth hands-on culinary experience, kitchen skills, and confidence in food preparation. We love using mealtime as both nourishment and a learning opportunity aligned with our pillars of Growth, Grit, and Serving Others.

Thank you for your continued support of our culinary program and for allowing us to serve your amazing youth each day. We are looking forward to another flavorful and engaging week in the kitchen!

With gratitude,

Brittany "Chef B" Brown  
**Director of Culinary Arts**

## Bricks That Build Futures



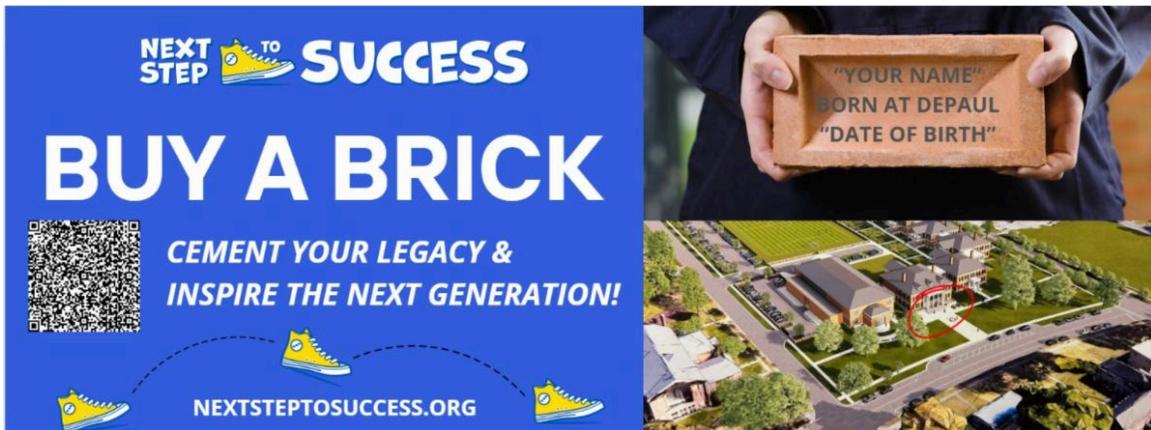
For generations, the St. Vincent de Paul House has stood as a place of compassion, service, and hope in our community. Originally established as a resource for families and individuals in need, the building has long been rooted in the belief that everyone deserves dignity, support, and the opportunity to move

forward. Today, that same spirit lives on through Next Step to Success, as the space continues to serve as a foundation for growth, learning, and second chances.

Through the NSTS Brick Fundraiser, we invite our community to become a permanent part of this legacy. Each engraved brick represents a name, a family, a business, or a message of encouragement—laid literally into the path of progress at the St. Vincent de Paul House. Funds raised through this campaign directly support NSTS programming, helping us provide enrichment, mentorship, and life-changing opportunities for youth and families in Norfolk.

The images below offer a preview of the engraved bricks and the location where they will be permanently installed. Bricks will be laid along the walkway at the St. Vincent de Paul House, creating a visible and lasting tribute to the individuals, families, and supporters who believe in the mission of Next Step to Success. Each brick becomes a meaningful part of the path forward, symbolizing community support and shared commitment to building brighter futures.

Your brick is more than a donation—it's a lasting symbol of belief in our mission and the people we serve. Join us in honoring the past while building the future. Purchase a brick today and leave your mark on a place where the next step toward success begins.



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