



Next Step to Success Weekly Update

A Message from our Executive Director



James Harris

This week, we are energized and excited on reaching our enrollment of 120 students. Growth brings opportunity, and every seat filled represents another young person gaining access to mentorship, academic support, and life-changing experiences. Consistent participation is key. Attending every day ensures students fully benefit from the structure, relationships, and enrichment that make our program impactful. Momentum builds through consistency.

Our programming has expanded in exciting ways. Students now have access to SAT preparation, boxing, and mental health hygiene supports, creating a balanced approach to academic rigor, physical discipline, and emotional wellness. With continued support from Old Dominion University and Tidewater Community College, our tutoring and enrichment offerings are becoming even more robust and engaging. These partnerships are helping us raise expectations while strengthening the support systems around our youth.

We are also thrilled that our Brick Fundraiser continues to gain traction. Each brick purchased is more than a contribution it represents a belief in a student's future and a lasting investment in our mission.

Together, we are building something powerful. Let's keep showing up, filling seats, and creating pathways to success one student at a time.

James Harris,
Executive Director



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Next Step to Success- NSTS



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www.nextsteptosuccess.org



Youth Spotlight: Bella



Bella brings a quiet strength and steady determination everywhere she goes. With a thoughtful perspective and a natural ability to connect with others, she continues to grow into a confident young leader who isn't afraid to chase what's next. Whether she's stepping outside her comfort zone or setting new goals for herself, Bella approaches life with heart and purpose.

1. What is your name and grade? **11th Lake Taylor HS**
2. How long have you been a part of Next Step to Success? **2 Years**
3. What do you like most about coming to NSTS? **Meeting new friends.**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Getting a Driver's License.**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **My older sister – Most brave person I've ever met.**
6. What is your favorite subject in school? **History**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Bedazzling and marching band.**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song right now? Book: **Charlotte's Web**
9. What does success mean to you? **Being able to achieve goals you set for yourself.**
10. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Your age doesn't determine your maturity.**
11. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **I want to be a criminal justice psychologist.**
12. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know: **I have a scholarship!**
13. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you? **Coach Katy**
14. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Courageous, Honest and Passionate.**
15. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **That I got out of bed!**

As Bella continues shaping her future, there's no doubt she'll leave a meaningful mark wherever she lands. Her courage, honesty, and passion set her apart, and this is only the beginning of what promises to be a bright and impactful journey. We're proud to be part of her story.

NSTS Leadership Insights



Education Update
Carly Gelles

As we continue moving through the school year, I want to take a moment to emphasize how important consistency and follow-through are during this stretch.

This is the time of year when routines matter most and small habits make a big difference.

Our students are working hard during tutoring hours each afternoon, but their success depends on a strong partnership between school, home, and Next Step to Success. Please continue checking grades regularly, monitoring missing assignments, and encouraging your child to advocate for themselves when they need help. If you would like us to review their progress together, I am always happy to do so.

We are also continuing to build enrichment opportunities that expose students to new career paths and experiences. Participation matters. The more our youth engage, the more they gain — academically, socially, and professionally.

If you have any academic concerns, questions about your child's progress, or simply want to touch base, please reach out directly. Open communication allows us to step in early and provide the support our students need before small challenges become larger ones.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for trusting us to walk alongside your family. We are committed to making every day intentional and impactful for your child.



Program Update Kaelyn Hundley

This week at Next Step to Success, we were grateful to welcome several incredible community partners who poured into our youth in meaningful ways. One highlight was a special guest speaker from NATO who spoke with our students about the importance of connection, movement, and empowerment. He challenged them to build confidence, practice discipline, and strengthen their belief in themselves — reminding them that growth starts from within and is reinforced through daily action.

In addition, a group of our youth had the opportunity to volunteer through Team Up Mentoring at The Up Center, serving alongside ForKids. It has been powerful to watch our students take pride in giving back to their own community. Service continues to be an important part of who we are, and our youth are truly embracing it. If you or someone you know has volunteer opportunities that would be a good fit for our program, we would love to connect.



Operations Update Muhanma Garcia

Operations Update

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

Summer Program Enrollment: Summer Program enrollment continues ! 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

We encourage families to enroll today 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 120 youth enrolled! We appreciate the support of our community and extend special recognition to Ghent School, Norview Middle School, Northside Middle School, and Maury High 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 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



Next Step Success
Summer 2026

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

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Culinary Corner



From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts, Chef B

Good Afternoon NSTS Families & Team! 🧡💙

Chef B in the buildinggggg 🧑🍳✨

I hope everyone is having an amazing week! I wanted to pop in with a fun and flavorful update from the kitchen, where the youth are continuing to cook with confidence and bring great energy into every meal we prepare together!

This week's menu is giving delicious, comforting, and youth-approved vibes 🍷🔥

Here's what's cooking in the kitchen:

🍗 Chicken & Broccoli Bake – A hearty, feel-good dish packed with flavor and comfort.

🧀 Beef Nachos – A fan favorite! Loaded, flavorful, and always a hit.

🍷 Wings & Seasoned Wedges – Crispy, tasty, and definitely one of the most requested meals!

🍷 Coach B's NY-Style Chopped Cheese – Bringing a little Brooklyn flavor to Norfolk with big taste and even bigger smiles.

🌯 Breakfast Burritos – A fun and filling favorite to keep everyone happy and fueled.

The kitchen has been full of great energy, teamwork, and lots of excitement around meal time. It has been amazing seeing the youth enjoy the menu, try new flavors, and look forward to what's coming next each day!

Thank you all for your continued support of the Culinary Program. The kitchen truly feels like home, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve meals that bring comfort, joy, and community to our youth.

With gratitude, flavor, and a whole lot of love,

Chef B 🧑🍳

"Cooking with Confidence & Serving with Purpose" ✨

Bricks That Build Futures



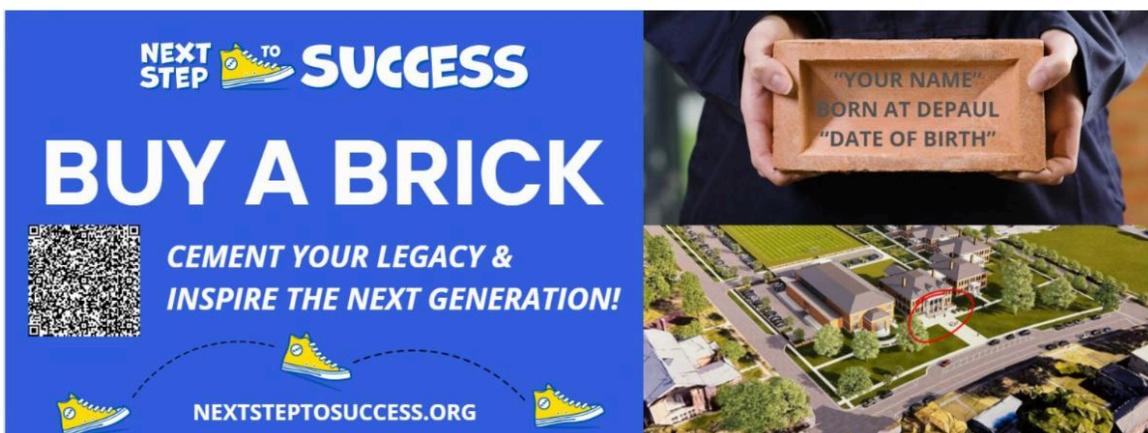
For generations, the St. Vincent de Paul House has stood as a place of compassion, service, and hope in our community. Originally established as a

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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