



Next Step to Success Weekly Update

A Message from our Executive Director



James Harris

This week at Next Step to Success, we continue to strengthen our commitment to the whole child, with a growing focus on mental hygiene helping our students develop healthy habits for managing stress, emotions, and daily challenges. Through our expanding partnerships and on-site programming, students are learning practical strategies to support their well-being, confidence, and resilience both in and out of the classroom.

Behind the scenes, our team is also working diligently to secure grants and build new community partnerships that will help expand the opportunities available to our youth. These partnerships are essential in bringing additional academic, enrichment, and wellness resources directly to our students and families. The continued support from organizations and individuals across the community shows just how much people believe in the potential of our young people.

We also want to thank everyone who has participated in our Brick Fundraiser. Each brick purchased represents a lasting investment in our mission and a powerful statement that someone believes in the future of our students. These

contributions help sustain the programming, mentorship, and resources that make NSTS possible.

Thank you for continuing to stand with us as we build brighter futures together.

James Harris, Executive Director



Follow us on Socials!
Stay up-to-date!

Like & follow for news, updates & photos.



Next Step to Success- NSTS



nextsteptosuccess_nsts



www.nextsteptosuccess.org



Youth Spotlight: Eliza



Eliza, an 11th grader at Granby High School, has been part of the Next Step to Success community for the past year. She enjoys spending time in the kitchen and especially loves cooking, which connects closely to her favorite subject in school—Culinary Arts. Inspired

by both Coach Carly's leadership and her father, who is a chef, Eliza is focused on improving her grades and continuing to grow both academically and personally.

1. What is your name and grade? **11th, Granby HS**
2. How long have you been a part of Next Step to Success? **1 Year**
3. What do you like most about coming to NSTS? **I like cooking.**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Getting my grades up.**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **Coach Carly – She is a great leader and My father – I want to follow in his footsteps since he is a chef.**
6. What is your favorite subject in school? **Culinary Arts**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Beach**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song right now? Movie: **The Notebook**
9. What does success mean to you? **Making something of your life.**
10. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Just be you. Don't let the world negatively influence you.**
11. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Child Psychologist/Owning my own restaurant.**
12. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **I enjoy spending my time with my siblings.**
13. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you? **Kyla**
14. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Smart, Anxious and Talkative.**
15. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **I got out of bed.**

Looking ahead, Eliza dreams of making something meaningful out of her life—possibly becoming a child psychologist or even owning her own restaurant one day. She encourages other students to stay true to themselves and not let the world negatively influence who they are. This week, Eliza is especially proud of something simple but powerful: getting out of bed and showing up. At NSTS, with support from people like Kyla and the encouragement of her peers, she continues taking steps toward the future she's building.

NSTS in Action

Learning new skills in our shelf building class with Andie.





Volunteer Spotlight: Nolan



Nolan brings energy and dedication to Next Step to Success through his passion for working with youth and supporting after-school programs. Inspired by his father's example of hard work and commitment, Nolan enjoys mentoring students and encouraging them to stay focused on their goals. He hopes every student remembers that the effort they put in today can make their future brighter.

1. What inspired you to volunteer at Next Step to Success? **I always enjoyed working with kids and like after school programs.**
2. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Ambitious, Relaxed and Driven**
3. What's one lesson you hope every student you work with carries with them? **The hard work you put in now will make it easier for you in the future.**
4. Who was a mentor or role model in your own life, and how did they shape you? **My dad... He was always working but took time out to help me and my brothers.**
5. What's your favorite way to spend a Saturday when you're not working? **Playing basketball or trying new food spots.**
6. If you could have dinner with any historical figure or celebrity, who would it be and why? **Labron James – I am a huge fan.**
7. What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? **I am pretty good at tennis.**
8. If you had to pick a theme song for your life, what would it be? **Kodak Black – Like That**

9. What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? **Your mistakes do not define you. Be the best person you can be.**

10. Finish this sentence "Volunteering at Next Step to Success means..." **Passing on my knowledge to the next generation.**

11. What's your all-time favorite TV show or movie? **Breaking Bad**

12. If you had a superpower for a day, what would it be? **Teleportation**

NSTS Leadership Insights



Carly Gelles
Director of Education

As we move further into the semester, I want to take a moment to recognize the continued effort our students are putting into their academics and personal growth. Each week we see our youth taking advantage of tutoring time, asking questions, and putting in the work needed to stay on track with their classes.

Our goal is always to support students both inside and outside of the classroom. Through tutoring, enrichment activities, and partnerships with community organizations, we are working to ensure that students are building the skills they need not only for school, but for life beyond graduation.

Families play a critical role in this process. Please continue checking in with your student about their grades, assignments, and overall progress. Even a quick conversation at home can make a big difference in helping them stay motivated and accountable.

If you ever have questions about your child's academic progress or feel they may need additional support, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly. We are always happy to connect and work together to help your student succeed.



Program Update
Kaelyn Hundley

All of our partnerships continue to run smoothly, and it has been great seeing the positive impact they are having on our youth. Recently, boxing has become a particularly popular activity, and the youth have really been enjoying the energy, discipline, and focus it brings.

As we move closer to summer, many of our youth have begun expressing interest in finding summer jobs. Coaches have been supporting them by focusing on career readiness during group time. This week, some groups practiced practical skills such as learning how to tie a tie, while others worked on building and strengthening their resumes. Throughout the program, coaches continue to emphasize strong communication and other important career development skills.



Operations Update Muhanna Garcia

Program Participation & Summer Enrollment

To help our program run smoothly each day, consistent attendance is important. Our daily planning for meals, activities, field trips, and dismissal relies on accurate participation counts. While we understand youth may occasionally have appointments or school commitments, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- **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.**

Enrollment for the Next Step to Success Summer Program 2026 is now open for youth currently enrolled in our after-school program. Families can enroll by logging into TraxSolution and selecting Summer Program 2026. For questions, please contact Muhanna Garcia at mgarcia@nextstptosuccess.org.

Program Growth & Enrollment

We are excited to share that Next Step to Success currently has 120 youth enrolled in our after-school program. We appreciate the continued support of our community and would like to recognize Ghent School, Norview Middle School, Northside Middle School, and Maury High School for their recent student enrollments.

Please remember that enrollment is not complete until families meet with staff in person to confirm information and finalize registration in TraxSolution. New

participants begin on Mondays, and enrollment will continue until program capacity is reached.

We encourage families and community members to continue sharing information about Next Step to Success with others who may benefit from our programs.

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 to 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

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

Culinary Corner



From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts, Chef B

Good afternoon, Team & Families,

Chef B here 🧑🍳 coming through with next week's menu lineup, and let's just say... the kitchen is about to be BUSY in the best way! Our youth will be enjoying some flavorful favorites along with a few comfort classics.

Here's what's cooking next week:

Chicken Tenders Night

Crispy Chicken Tenders served with **Broccoli & Mac and Cheese**

Dessert: **Classic Cheesecake**

Walking Taco Bar

Individual **Walking Tacos with all the fixings** so everyone can build their own!

Dessert: **Ice Cream Station** – Choose from **Strawberry, Chocolate, or Vanilla**

Wing Night

Flavorful **Wings & Wedges**

Dessert: **Soft Sugar Cookies**

Chef B's Feature Dinner

Salmon with Garlic Mashed Potatoes & Grilled Vegetables

Dessert: **Chocolate Ganache Filled Bundt Cake**

We're looking forward to another great week of good food, great energy, and full bellies. Nothing brings people together like a good meal, and the kitchen is always excited to serve something special for our youth.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

With flavor and good vibes,

Brittany "Chef B" Brown

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.

NEXT STEP  TO SUCCESS

BUY A BRICK



*CEMENT YOUR LEGACY &
INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION!*



NEXTSTEPTOSUCCESS.ORG



Buy a Brick

Next Step to Success | [Website](#)



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact](#)
[Data Notice](#)

Next Step To Success | 3401 Tidewater Dr. | Norfolk,
VA 23509 US



Try email & social marketing for free!