



## *Next Step to Success Weekly Update*

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### A Message from our Executive Director



**James Harris**

As we approach the end of the school year, our focus at Next Step to Success is on finishing strong. This is a critical time for our students to demonstrate all they have learned academically, socially, and personally. We are seeing encouraging signs of growth, and we are pushing every student to stay committed, focused, and proud of what they can accomplish when they give their best effort.

At the core of our work is a foundation built on strong morals, values, respect, responsibility, perseverance, and integrity. These principles guide everything we do and are reinforced daily through our programming, coaching, and student expectations. It is through this foundation that our students are not only improving academically, but also developing into confident, capable young leaders.

Consistent participation remains key, especially as students work toward achieving their GRIT goals. Finishing the year with purpose and determination sets the tone for continued success beyond the classroom.

We also invite our families and supporters to continue investing in our mission through our Brick Fundraiser. Each brick represents a lasting commitment to our students and a belief in the values that shape their future.

Let's finish strong...together.

James Harris, Executive Director



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

Like & follow for news, updates & photos.



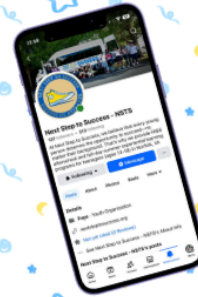
Next Step to Success- NSTS



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www.nextsteposuccess.org



## Youth Spotlight: Taylor



Meet Taylor, a senior at Granby High School and a dedicated member of Next Step to Success for the past four years. She's someone who shows up ready to learn, grow, and take on challenges—especially as she works toward building confidence in her voice and speaking without stuttering.

1. What is your school and grade? **Granby HS – 12th**
2. How long have you been a part of Next Step to Success? **4 years**
3. What do you like most about coming to NSTS? **Learning new things.**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Speaking without stuttering.**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **Coach Carly – She is such a strong and confident person.**
6. What is your favorite subject in school? **History**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Photography and Poetry**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song? **Movie – Polar Express**
9. What does success mean to you? **Being able to show who you are as a person.**

10. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Don't fall in with the wrong crowd.**

11. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Becoming a social worker... I want to help kids and families.**

12. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **I can sew!**

13. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you?

**Coach Carly**

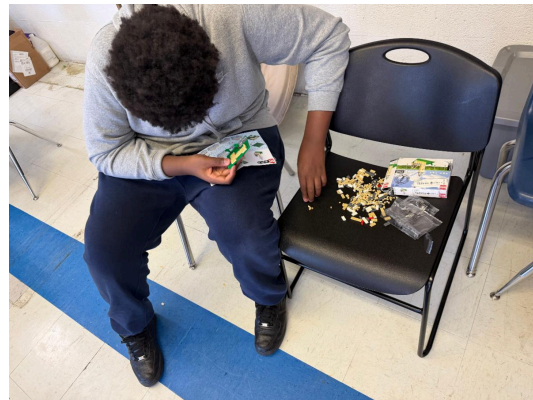
14. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Courageous, smart, and strong**

15. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **Getting good grades in school.**

With a passion for photography, poetry, and helping others, Taylor has her sights set on becoming a social worker to support kids and families. Guided by her strength, courage, and determination, she's a great example of what it means to stay focused, make smart choices, and keep moving forward—we're proud to have her as part of the NSTS family.

## NSTS in Action: Workforce Wednesday!

Our youth rolled up their sleeves and got hands-on—practicing cosmetology skills like styling, braiding, and nail work while also building focus, patience, and confidence through detailed projects and problem-solving activities, including creative LEGO building challenges. From creative expression to career exploration, today was all about learning real-world skills that set them up for success beyond the classroom.





## Coach Spotlight: Diana



We're excited to welcome Coach Diana to the Next Step to Success family! A preschool teacher by day, she supports our youth in the afternoons and evenings, bringing a kind, compassionate, and respectful presence. Driven by her love for working with students, she believes every child deserves to feel supported and loved.

1. What inspired you to join us at Next Step to Success? **I like being around students**
2. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Kind, Compassionate, and Respectful**
3. What's one lesson you hope every student you work with carries with them? **They all need love.**
4. Who was a mentor or role model in your own life, and how did they shape you? **My mom, she is a strong woman. She taught me to respect God and love my family.**
5. What's your favorite way to spend Saturday? **With my family**
6. If you could have dinner with any historical figure or celebrity, who would it be and why? **Chayanne from Puerto Rico – Singer and Actor**
7. What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? **That I have strong faith with God.**

8. If you had to pick a theme song for your life, what would it be? **Kany Garcia, Carin Leon – Te Lo Agradezco**
9. What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever received? **Be good at everything you do.**
10. Finish this sentence “Working at Next Step to Success means…” **Loving the community and family that we are becoming.**
11. What’s your all-time favorite TV show or movie? **Any show with Sofia Vergara.**
12. If you had a superpower for a day, what would it be? **Flying**

Whether she’s lending a helping hand, offering encouragement, or simply showing up with a smile, Coach Diana is already making a meaningful impact. Her heart for service and commitment to our community reflect exactly what Next Step to Success stands for—and we’re grateful to have her on the journey with us.

## NSTS Leadership Insights



**Carly Gelles**  
**Director of Education**

Good afternoon Next Step families,

As we have begun our final quarter of the school year, we would like to finish strong! Report cards will be going home next week. Once received, please be sure to submit your student’s grades to me for our records. If it’s easier, we’re happy to make a copy here to ensure everything is documented.

We are also continuing to grow our support team and are currently looking to expand our volunteer base. At this time, we have a particular need for a history tutor, as well as additional support throughout the building during student arrival hours between 2:00–3:30. If you or someone you know may be interested in supporting our youth in this way, we would love to connect.

Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership and support.

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**Kaelyn Hundley**  
**Director of Programming**

This week at Next Step to Success, our partnerships continued to thrive! We were excited to welcome new guests while also continuing to strengthen our existing collaborations. Our youth are making great progress, especially through their work with Vital Pivot in developing their basketball skills, as well as with Together We Can in resume building and overall career development.

Our youth with a passion for art had the opportunity to work with talented artists from d'Art Center and the Chrysler Museum, which was an incredible experience. On Fridays, students visit the Hermitage Museum, and they are excited to return to their workshop space today.

We would also like to invite you to join us for our Career Fair on April 15th. Our Youth Coordinator, Jontel Evans, has been working diligently to ensure a diverse range of careers are represented, helping to expose our youth to a variety of opportunities as they begin to shape their futures.

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**Operations Update**  
**Muhanma Garcia**

**After-School Program Enrollment Update:**

NSTS enrollment continues to grow each day! We are currently serving 130 youth, a reflection of the strong trust and meaningful relationships we've built with Norfolk Public Schools and our community. If you know families, friends, or community members who

may be interested, we encourage you to share our program information and invite them to experience a high-quality youth development program.

For more information and to apply, please use the link below: ⇒ [Application Link](#)

**Important Reminder: Enrollment is not considered complete until families meet with staff in person to verify information and finalize the process through TraxSolutions. New participants will begin programming each Monday, and enrollment will remain open until capacity is reached.**

**Transportation & Safety Reminder:** The safety and well-being of our youth remain our top priority. All transportation procedures, including supervision, safety protocols, and program expectations, remain in effect until the last youth is safely dropped off. We ask that all families and staff continue to support these expectations to ensure a safe and consistent experience for every participant.

**Summer Program Enrollment Update:** Our Summer Program is quickly approaching capacity, and immediate enrollment is strongly encouraged. To secure your spot, please log on to TraxSolution ([Log-in Link](#)) and update your programming selection to **Summer Program 2026**.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Muhanma Garcia at [mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org](mailto:mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org).

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**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

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

# Culinary Corner



## From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts, Chef B

Good Evening NSTS Family & Team 🤍💛,

Listen... I don't know what type of week y'all thought we were about to have... but just know...

👉 **We are NOT playing about dinner over here.** 😊🍴🔥

Chef B's kitchen is coming with flavor, comfort, AND vibes all week long. Go ahead and loosen that belt a notch now... trust me.

Here's what we're serving up this week:

🌟 **BBQ Chicken w/ Texas Baked Beans & Mac & Cheese**

🍰 Cheesecake

(Yeah... we started strong on purpose 😊)

🌟 **Chicken Elote Bowls**

🌽 Cilantro Lime Rice + Elote Corn + Seasoned Grilled Chicken

🍩 Churro Bundt Cake

(Street food vibes... but make it Chef B 🔥)

🌟 **Wings & Fresh Salad**

🍮 Pudding Cup Dessert

(Balance... because we care about health... a little 😊)

🌟 **Pepper Steak, Rice & Broccoli**

🍫 Chocolate Cake

(Real dinner. Real deal. No shortcuts.)

🌟 **Chicken & French Toast + Fresh Fruit**

🍷 Popsicles

(Breakfast for dinner NEVER disappoints 😊🔥)

💬 Just a reminder...

Every meal is made with love, intention, and a whole lot of flavor to keep our youth full, focused, and feeling GOOD.

We appreciate you all for trusting us with your babies... and we're gonna keep showing up BIG in this kitchen every single time 🍷💙

Now go ahead and ask yourself...

👉 **#HowYouEating?!**  
**Respectfully,**  
Brittany "Chef B" Brown  
**Director of Culinary Arts**

## From DePaul's Legacy to the Next Generation's Future

**NEXT STEP TO SUCCESS**

**BUY A BRICK!**

**CEMENT YOUR LEGACY & INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION!**

**LEAVE YOUR MARK.**  
Support Next Step to Success and have your personalized brick become a lasting part of our foundation.

**ORDER YOUR BRICK TODAY!**  
[NEXTSTEPSUCCESS.ORG](http://NEXTSTEPSUCCESS.ORG)

**JERRY FITZGERALD  
BORN AT DEPAUL  
MARCH 25, 1985**

DePaul Hospital was long a place to celebrate the birth of a new family member and a beloved source of care, compassion, and healing in our community.

Building upon this legacy, the St. Vincent de Paul House campus, as the permanent home to Next Step to Success, will likewise provide a foundation of caring, hope, and opportunity for future generations.

Become a part of this next DePaul chapter through the NSTS "Buy a Brick" campaign. Each brick will be prominently placed at our main entrance to serve as a lasting source of pride for your family and a visible sign that you care about our City's future.

The net proceeds from the sale of each brick will pay for a full week of NSTS programming, mentorship, meals and transportation delivering a much brighter future for a disadvantaged Norfolk teen.

[Buy a Brick](#)



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