



Next Step to Success Weekly Update



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 pivotal time for our students to stay committed, push through challenges, and demonstrate the growth they've made throughout the year. We are proud of their progress and are encouraging every student to end the year with purpose, confidence, and pride in their achievements.

With Spring Break upon us, we encourage students to take time to rest, recharge, and return ready to finish the year at their highest level. Behind the scenes, our team is

actively preparing for end-of-year programming, ensuring we celebrate student accomplishments while continuing to reinforce academic and personal growth.

We are also excited to share that we have reached a new enrollment high of 127 students, a strong reflection of the trust our families and community place in our program. Looking ahead, summer camp enrollment is now open, and we encourage families to secure their spots early as we prepare for another season of engaging and impactful programming. Finally, our Brick Fundraiser continues. Each brick purchased represents a lasting investment in our students and a belief in their future.

Let's finish strong and build momentum for what's ahead.

James Harris, Executive Director

Youth Spotlight: Tahnaya



This week, we're excited to highlight Tahnaya, a 7th grader at Blair Middle School who is already making her mark in her first year at Next Step to Success. Known for her kind and laid-back personality, Tahnaya brings a positive energy to the program and is always ready to jump into activities and new experiences.

1. What is your school and grade? **Blair MS – 7th Grade.**
2. How long have you been a part of Next Step to Success? **This is my first year.**
3. What do you like most about coming to NSTS? **Doing the activities.**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Designing clothes.**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **Coach Nisha and Coach Nicole. They make everything better.**
6. What is your favorite subject in school? **Science**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Cheer and playing football.**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song? **Song - Dandelion.**
9. What does success mean to you? **Able to achieve the things I always wanted to do**
10. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Never give up... And always chase your dreams.**

11. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Be a famous clothing designer.**

12. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **My favorite animal is a zebra!**

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

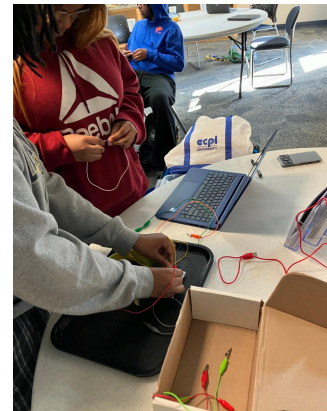
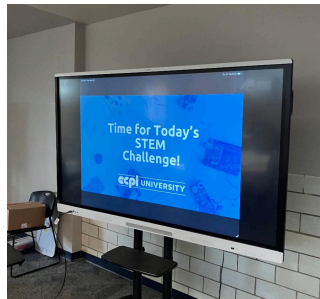
14. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Kind, Chill and Loving**

15. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **Getting to do the tours of the NSTS guests.**

Tahnaya's creativity, determination, and big dreams are just getting started. Whether she's leading tours for guests or working toward her goal of becoming a famous clothing designer, she continues to show what it means to stay focused and chase your dreams. We're proud of you, Tahnaya—keep shining and taking those next steps toward success!

NSTS in Action: Learning, Creating, and Giving Back at NSTS

From hands-on STEM challenges with ECPI, to creative expression through D'Art, our youth are exploring new skills and discovering their potential every day. Whether building circuits, engaging in interactive learning sessions, or creating vibrant artwork, they are growing both academically and creatively. Beyond the classroom, our students are also giving back—taking pride in their community by helping clean and care for Lakewood Park. At NSTS, every experience is an opportunity to learn, lead, and serve.



NSTS Leadership Insights



Carly Gelles
Director of Education

Greetings Next Step families,

As we begin to wind down the school year, we are in the process of collecting academic data for all of our students. Please be sure to submit your student's grades as report cards become available. If your student brings their report card to the program, I am happy to make a copy here for our records.

We have also recently updated our volunteer opportunities through Volunteer Hampton Roads. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting our youth, we encourage you to take a look and sign up for any opportunities that fit your availability.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we close out the school year strong.



Kaelyn Hundley
Director of Programming

This week at NSTS was filled with meaningful connections, engaging activities, and the excitement of welcoming several new youth into our program. We were also excited to bring on two new coaches to our team, further strengthening the support we provide each day. We are incredibly grateful for our partners who continue to show up and pour into our young people. As a reminder, we will be closed next week for spring break. However, we will be offering two optional field trips on Tuesday and Thursday. If your youth is interested in attending, please reach out to me directly for more information.



Operations Update Muhanna Garcia

Attendance Matters: As we move into warmer weather and longer days, we know schedules can shift, but at Next Step To Success, we're still going strong and committed to finishing what we started: providing one-of-a-kind, positive youth development experiences for our youth.

To ensure every student gets the full benefit of our program, we kindly remind families that youth are expected to participate a minimum of three days per week. Consistent attendance helps build routine, strengthen relationships, and maximize growth in leadership, academics, and life skills.

A few important reminders to support smooth daily operations:

- Drop-off: No later than 3:30pm
- Early Pick-Up: Must take place before 5:00pm to allow for a smooth and structured dismissal process
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We truly appreciate your partnership and commitment. Let's stay focused, finish strong, and continue creating meaningful experiences for our youth!

After-School Program Enrollment: 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.

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 additional questions, please contact Muhanna Garcia via email at mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org.



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

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Culinary Corner



From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts, Chef B

Greetings! NSTS Families & Team,



Spring Break is HERE! 🌞🌸

While regular programming will be paused, just know we're still showing up with intention, care, and of course... GOOD FOOD! 🍴❤️

The Programming team and I put our heads together to make sure our youth are still enjoying some 🔥 meals during their special trips this week. Here's what's on deck:

Tuesday – Chesapeake Bay Foundation Field Trip

Our youth will be fueling up with:


-  BBQ Sandwiches
-  Mac & Cheese


Thursday – Air & Space Museum Field Trip

We're taking it up a notch with a fun favorite:

-  Chicken Tenders
-  Waffles

Even during the break, it's always a priority to make sure our youth are well-fed, energized, and experiencing food that brings comfort AND excitement.

Thank you all for your continued support, trust, and love. I'm forever grateful for the opportunity to not only fill bellies but also expand taste buds and create moments our youth will remember 

Enjoy your Spring Break, stay safe, and we'll be back stronger (and even tastier ) soon!

With love,

Brittany "Chef B" Brown  
Director of Culinary Arts

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JERRY FITZGERALD
BORN AT DEPAUL
MARCH 25, 1985

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For generations, DePaul Hospital was more than just a building—it was where families began, where first breaths were taken, and where lifelong stories started. If you or someone you love has a connection to DePaul, this is your opportunity to honor that legacy in a meaningful and lasting way.

Next Step to Success is proud to carry that history forward as we transform this space into a place where young people can grow, learn, and build their futures. By purchasing a commemorative brick, you become a permanent part of this next chapter—celebrating the past while investing in the future of our youth.

Each brick tells a story. Each name becomes part of the foundation.

Don't let your story be left out. Claim your place today!

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