



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 clear finish strong. This is a time for our students to demonstrate their growth, stay committed, and take pride in all they have accomplished. We are seeing determination, resilience, and progress across the board.

This week, we reached a new milestone with an enrollment high of 129 students with a powerful reflection of the trust and momentum building within our community. At the same time, summer camp enrollment has begun, and we are excited to continue supporting our students with engaging, enriching opportunities throughout the summer.

A key driver of our success is our focus on GRIT goals and the *Success Sequence* helping students understand the importance of perseverance, responsibility, and long-term thinking. These principles are not just for our students they are now being embraced by our leadership team as well. In fact, my personal GRIT goal is to learn how to swim, something I've always wanted to accomplish. This summer, I'll be learning alongside many of our students who share that same goal.

Finally, our Brick Fundraiser continues. Each brick represents belief in a student's future.

Let's finish strong together.

James Harris, Executive Director

NSTS Alumni Spotlight: Where Are They Now?



This past Saturday, April 11, 2026, we had the powerful opportunity to reconnect with several of our NSTS Alumni for a meaningful and reflective conversation centered on their journeys beyond the program.

As we listened, one thing became clear about the impact of NSTS does not end at graduation from high school; it continues to live through the choices, growth, and resilience of our alumni.

During our time together, we explored where they are now, as each alum shared updates on their current paths ranging from college and career pursuits to personal

growth and life transitions. Their stories were a true reflection of determination, purpose, and the continued pursuit of excellence.

Today, our alumni are continuing their education at institutions such as Norfolk State University, Tidewater Community College, Coppin State University, and East Carolina University, pursuing a wide range of career paths. From aspiring teachers, pediatricians, botanists, chefs, nurses, law enforcement officers, journalists, and engineers, their ambitions highlight the depth of talent and vision within the NSTS family.

We also created space for honest dialogue around the growth and challenges they have faced since graduating high school. From navigating independence and responsibility to overcoming real-life obstacles, their reflections spoke to the resilience and maturity they have developed along the way.

One of the most impactful moments came as each alum shared one lesson from NSTS that has stayed with them. Themes of accountability, goal setting, perseverance, and the importance of community echoed throughout the conversation clear evidence that the foundation built during their time in the program continues to guide their decisions today.

A special thank you to Chef B for providing an exceptional meal of steak, salmon, and greens, creating a welcoming and elevated space for our alumni to connect, reflect, and share.

This gathering served as a powerful reminder that our work extends far beyond the program years. Our alumni are not just participants of the past, they are the living legacy of NSTS in action.

In This Picture

- Michael Adams – Tidewater Community College, Class of 2029 | Culinary Program (Career Path: Chef)
- Mikalah Chapman – Tidewater Community College, Class of 2029 | Health Sciences (Career Path: Pediatrician)
- Nyasia Speller – Norfolk State University, Class of 2029 | Biology (Career Path: Botanist)
- Eriona Holmon – Tidewater Community College, Class of 2029 | Nursing Program (Career Path: Nurse)
- Larina Franklin – Sheriff's Academy, Class of 2026 (Career Path: Law Enforcement)

Virtual

- Kaniyah Taylor – Norfolk State University, Class of 2028 | Education (Career Path: Teacher)

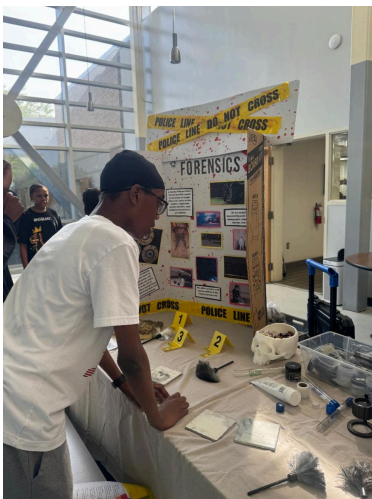
Unable to Attend

- Taniya Turner – Cosmetology School
- Aniya Marshall - Coppin State University, Class of 2029 | Major: Humanities (Career Path: Journalism)
- Josiah Kincannon – East Carolina University, Class of 2028 | Major: Mechanical Engineering (Career Path: Engineer)
- Q'mara Cale – Norfolk State University, Class of 2029 | Major: Nursing & Allied Health (Career Path: Nurse)
- Dave Diejuste – United States Coast Guard
- Janiah Smalls – United States Navy
- Anasia Smith – Tidewater Community College; transferring to Radford University Honors College, Class of 2029

NSTS in Action: Career Paths Come to Life!

Oh Wednesday, our teens had the opportunity to explore their futures at the NSTS Career Fair! Students connected with professionals across a wide range of fields, engaged in hands-on demonstrations, and asked thoughtful questions about career pathways.

We are incredibly grateful to our community partners who showed up, shared their time, and invested in our youth. Experiences like this open doors, build confidence, and help our students see what's possible.



NSTS Leadership Insights



Carly Gelles
Director of Education

Greetings Next Step families,

Our students continue to put in the work each day as they push toward finishing the school year strong, and we are proud of the consistency and effort they are showing. As always, we want to make sure every student is getting the support they need, so we encourage parents and guardians to reach out with any specific academic concerns—this allows us to intentionally match your child with the tutor who can best support their goals. I also had the opportunity to attend the Learning Beyond Boundaries Symposium in partnership with Norfolk Public Libraries, and it was an incredibly valuable experience. We're grateful for such a well-organized and inspiring event, and we are excited to begin incorporating several of the strategies and ideas we gained into our programming to better serve our youth.



Kaelyn Hundley
Director of Programming

Last week's spring break field trips were such a success! Both our coaches and youth had an amazing time exploring the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Virginia Air and Space Museum. We also had a record number of permission slips turned in, which made it even more exciting to see so many youth able to participate. I am already looking forward to planning more fun and engaging adventures for them.

This week, it was great to be back in the building with our youth, welcoming some new faces and continuing to pour into our mission. A special shoutout to our Youth Coordinator, Jontel Evans, for organizing an incredible career fair. On

Wednesday, our youth had the opportunity to explore a variety of career paths, including a barber, forensic crime scene investigator, nurse, Army National Guard, realtor, and more. Be sure to check out our social media to see them in action!

Overall, it has been a wonderful week back from spring break, and we are excited to finish the year strong.



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

Hello everyone! 🙌 ✨

Get ready... because this week's menu is bringing the *flavor*, the *fun*, and a whole lot of "can I get seconds?!" energy 😊 🍴

Here's what's cooking:

📅 **Monday:**

Chicken & Waffles + Yogurt Parfaits

Sweet + savory = the BEST combo 🙌 Starting the week on a high (and tasty) note 🍰🍓

🚫 **Tuesday:**

No Programming

We'll miss you! 💙 Take the day to relax, recharge, and dream about Wednesday's wings 😊

🍗 **Wednesday:**

Wings & Wedges + Pudding Cups

Crispy, saucy, and oh-so-satisfying 😊🍷 + a sweet treat to seal the deal 🍰

🍝 **Thursday:**

Spaghetti, Garlic Bread & Salad

Serving up cozy, classic comfort food vibes 🍞🥗 Perfect for a hearty, happy evening!

🌮 **Friday:**

Birria Bowls + Churro Bundt Cake

AKA the *undisputed champion* of meals 🏆 — a youth AND staff favorite! Come ready, this one disappears FAST 🙄🔥

We LOVE getting to share these meals and moments with our amazing youth, families, team, and supporters 💙 Your energy makes it all even better!

/ ✨ Tell us: #HowYouEating? ✨

See you soon — and bring your appetite! 😊🍴🔥

With appreciation,

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.

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

**ORDER YOUR BRICK TODAY!
NEXTSTEPSUCCESS.ORG**

Were You Born at the Historic DePaul Hospital?

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!

[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!