



Next Step to Success Weekly Update



A Message from our Executive Director



NSTS Family,

What a week at summer camp. I want to start by telling you how proud I am of our students every single one of them showed up last week and put real work into their GRIT goals. Watching young people name something hard, commit to it, and chip away at it day after day is what Next Step to Success is all about.

And because I would never ask our students to do something, I'm not willing to do myself, I want to share my own GRIT goal with you: I am learning how to swim.

Let me tell you... it is scary. There is a moment when you step into that pool and the water comes up over your head, and everything in you wants to retreat to the

shallow end where it's safe and comfortable. But that moment is exactly where growth lives. You have to trust yourself, push through the fear, and rise to the occasion. Literally.

That's what I see our students doing every day. A GRIT goal isn't just one action or one accomplishment. It's a decision to break the trend of mediocrity, to go beyond what anyone expects of you, and to keep rising even when the water is over your head. Every GRIT goal is a step into success, and our students are taking those steps together.

To our staff: thank you for creating a space where students feel safe enough to be brave. To our families and partners: thank you for trusting us with these remarkable young people.

The deep end is where we grow. See you at the pool.

With gratitude and GRIT,

James Harris
Executive Director
Next Step to Success

Community Partner Spotlight: Centura College





Since 1969, Centura College has been a fixture in career-focused education right here in Norfolk, offering hands-on training in skilled trades like Construction Electrician and Electrical Lineworker inside fully equipped labs built to mirror real-world job sites. Recently, Centura opened its doors to a group of our scholars for an interactive day of exploration, letting them build, tinker, and get a firsthand look at what a career in the trades can look like.

The visit was a perfect match for what we teach at NSTS. Trying something new and unfamiliar, like handling tools or exploring a hands-on trade for the first time, calls directly on Growth Mindset and Confidence — the belief that effort and practice build real skill, even outside a student's comfort zone. Centura's own philosophy, that success comes through discipline, practice, and real-world preparation, mirrors our commitment to Grit: showing up, working hard, and sticking with something long enough to see it pay off.

Just as importantly, Centura's mission to prepare students for real careers speaks directly to Agency — showing our scholars that their future is something they can actively build, not something that simply happens to them. We're grateful to Centura College for investing time and expertise in our youth, and we look forward to continuing to grow this partnership as our scholars explore what's possible for their own paths forward.

NSTS Leadership Insights

A Note from Muhanma Garcia, Director of Director of Strategic Growth, Partnerships, and Youth Engagement

One Week to Go!

As we enter our final week of the 2026 Summer Program, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our incredible families for your continued support, trust, and partnership. Your commitment has played a vital role in making this a successful summer for our youth. Over the first seven weeks of programming, NSTS maintained an average daily attendance of 88 youth, representing an overall attendance rate of 73.7%. Together, we have created a safe, engaging, and

enriching environment where young people have learned, grown, built friendships, and created lasting memories. We look forward to finishing the summer strong and celebrating an amazing season with our youth.

Thank you for being an essential part of the Next Step To Success family!

Casting Call: Middle School Students & Faculty/Staff Extras Needed!
We're looking for middle school-aged students and faculty/staff volunteers to appear as background extras in Mayson Show TV as we bring a realistic middle school to life!

Filming Details

- Date: Sunday, July 13, 2026
- Time: 8:00 AM – Approximately 7:30 PM
- Location: Norfolk, VA
- Roles: Middle School Students & Faculty/Staff (Background Extras)
- Compensation: Volunteer (Non-Union)
- Meals: Provided

Scenes Include:

- Classroom activities
- Hallway interactions
- Cafeteria scenes
- School blood drive
- Science class experiment
- Student campaign event

Interested? Please email katlyn.kearney.specinkcomics@gmail.com with "Confirmed" to reserve your spot. Additional details regarding wardrobe, the filming location, parking, and check-in instructions will be shared once your participation has been confirmed.

2026–2027 After-School Program Enrollment Opens August 10!

Mark your calendars, because a new school year is right around the corner! This year, all families including returning families must complete a new application through our updated enrollment system. The new platform is designed to create a faster registration experience while improving communication and ensuring accurate information throughout the school year.

Enrollment is limited and will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, so we encourage families to complete their application as soon as it becomes available on August 10 to secure their youth's place in our After-School Program. Additional instructions, required documents, and key deadlines will be shared in the coming weeks.

We look forward to welcoming both returning and new families for another incredible year of academic support, leadership development, mentorship, workforce readiness, and opportunities that empower every young person to thrive.

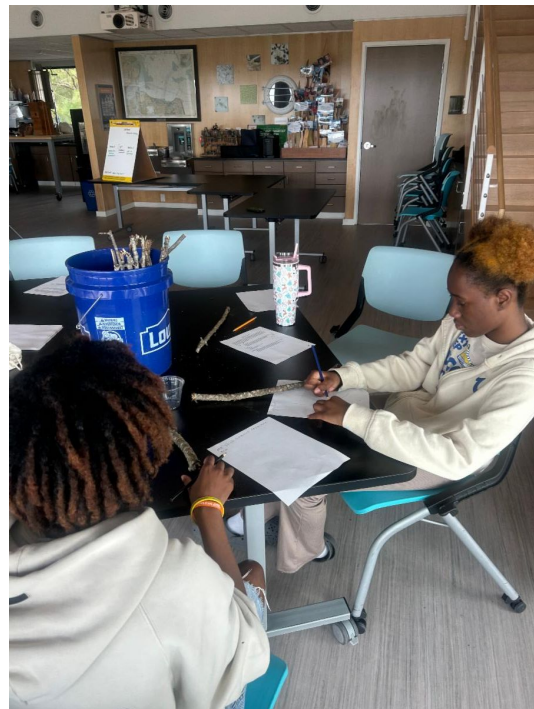
A Note from Carly Gelles, Director of Education

Our summer program continues to be filled with meaningful learning, laughter, and personal growth, and none of it would be possible without the incredible dedication of our

coaching staff. Our coaches have done an outstanding job creating an environment where students feel supported, challenged, and encouraged to become the best versions of themselves.

Throughout the summer, students have strengthened their teamwork skills, learned how to navigate conflict in healthy and respectful ways, and practiced communicating, leading, and encouraging one another. These life lessons have been woven into every aspect of our programming—from engaging team-building games and exciting STEM challenges to creative arts projects and hands-on activities with our community partners. Whether students were solving engineering problems, expressing themselves through art, exploring new interests, or participating in partner-led experiences, every activity was intentionally designed to build confidence, resilience, and collaboration. We are incredibly proud of the growth we've seen in our students this summer and grateful for the passion, creativity, and commitment our coaches bring each day to make these experiences possible.

As we head into our final week of summer programming, we encourage all students to attend each day as we begin preparing for a successful transition back to school. Next week will include activities focused on setting students up for a strong start to the academic year, reinforcing positive habits, and ending the summer with the same energy, excitement, and sense of community that has made this program so special.





A Note from Kaelyn Hundley, Director of Programming

This week at Next Step to Success, our youth continued to learn, grow, and make meaningful connections through a variety of engaging experiences. Participants explored local colleges and career opportunities while also strengthening important life skills through hands-on activities and community partnerships.

One highlight of the week was our visit to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center. Youth learned about the important role oysters play in improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay and explored how the Brock Center was designed and built using environmentally sustainable practices. To wrap up the experience, students participated in a hands-on art activity that encouraged them to reflect on what they learned in a creative way.

Students also enjoyed an engaging performance by **The Rhythm Project**, presented through the Virginia Arts Festival. The interactive performance introduced youth to the power of rhythm, music, and collaboration while encouraging creativity, teamwork, and active participation.

As we head into the final week of our summer program, we are grateful for the continued support of our families, volunteers, community partners, donors, and board members. Your investment in our youth creates opportunities that inspire confidence, curiosity, and growth, and we look forward to finishing the summer strong together.

Good Food. Good Mood. Chef B's Got You Covered for the End of the Summer!

NEXT STEP TO SUCCESS

END OF SUMMER CELEBRATION MENU

LET'S FINISH SUMMER STRONG!

AUGUST 3RD - AUGUST 7TH

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
BREAKFAST CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
				
LUNCH CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICH WITH CHIPS	LUNCH NACHO TYPICAL TUESDAY!	LUNCH WINGS & WEDGES	LUNCH GRILLED DOGS WITH CHIPS	LUNCH PIZZA

A NOTE FROM CHEF B

Thank You so much for a great summer.. Your menu suggestions have been amazing and I look forward to what we come up with this school year.. Have a safe and great rest of your summer.. be safe, be smart, **BE YOU!**

GOOD FOOD. GOOD VIBES. GREAT MEMORIES!

#HOWYOU EATING • #LEVELUP • #YOUTHFIRST • #NSTS

Construction Begins This Fall: St. Vincent DePaul House Breaks Ground



We have exciting news to share, and it made headlines this week! The Virginian-Pilot recently reported that construction on our new campus, St. Vincent DePaul House, is set to begin this fall at the former DePaul hospital site in Norfolk.

This milestone comes on the heels of a major vote of confidence from our city. Norfolk City Council voted unanimously to approve a \$25 million revenue bond to help fund the project, issued through the Norfolk Economic Development Authority and financed through TowneBank. Importantly, this bond comes at no cost or liability to the city itself.

NSTS Board Chair Chuck McPhillips shared with the Pilot that this project reflects a generational investment in the future of our city and our youth, and that our organization is putting everything we have into making it a reality.

The numbers behind this project are just as remarkable as the mission driving it. The total cost of the redevelopment now stands at more than \$50 million, funded through a combination of the James Barry Robinson Trust, generous private donors, and now the city-backed bond. Construction is expected to take approximately 16 to 18 months, with hopes of moving our programming into the new space by the middle of the 2027-28 academic year.

When complete, St. Vincent DePaul House will include two classroom buildings, an arts and media center, a gymnasium, an auditorium, a cafeteria, administrative offices, and outdoor athletic facilities, all built on 10 acres of the former hospital property. NSTS currently serves approximately 120 students, and we're hopeful this new campus will allow us to grow that number to 300 or more.

This is more than a construction project. It's a permanent, purpose-built home for Norfolk's young people, made possible by the belief and generosity of this entire community. We are so grateful to everyone who has helped bring this vision to life, and we can't wait to break ground this fall.

Want to be part of our future? There's still time to purchase a brick or make a donation to help cement our future in Norfolk's youth. Every gift, big or small, helps us build something that will serve our community for generations to come.

Stay tuned for more updates as construction begins!

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

WERE YOU BORN AT DEPAUL HOSPITAL?

Your story started here. Now, help write the next chapter.

Then



Our Future



From a Legacy of *care...* To where *futures* are built.



**HONOR THE PAST.
INVEST IN THE FUTURE.**

Purchase a commemorative brick
and be part of transforming the historic
DePaul Hospital site into the future home
of Next Step to Success.



Leave a Lasting Legacy



Honor a Loved One or Family



Support Norfolk's Youth



SCAN TO

**BUY YOUR
BRICK
Today!**



**NEXT
STEP**



**TO
SUCCESS**



St. Vincent de Paul House
Future Home of Next Step to Success

Were You Born at the Historic DePaul Hospital?

For generations, DePaul Hospital was more than 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 historic 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 Norfolk's youth.

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

**Honor your DePaul story. Invest in their future. Purchase your
commemorative brick 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!