



Next Step to Success Weekly Update



A Message from our Executive Director

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Stay up-to-date on news, events, inspiring stories and more from **Next Step to Success**.

Next Step to Success - NSTS

nextstepstosuccess_nsts

We're building opportunity for Norfolk youth.

CONNECT. ENGAGE. EMPOWER. Together.

What a summer it's been! Every day at Next Step to Success, our students are learning, laughing, growing, trying new things, building friendships, and discovering just how capable they are. From splashing around during swim lessons to conquering the bowling lanes, exploring career pathways, and cheering each other on through every activity in between, our scholars have shown up this summer with heart, curiosity, and so much joy. Watching them

show up for themselves and for each other is the very best part of our work, and we don't take a single day of it for granted.

First and foremost: thank you. Thank you for trusting us with your amazing kids this summer. It is a privilege to be part of their lives, and we see every day what you already know — that these are remarkable young people with bright futures ahead of them.

To help every scholar get the very most out of what's left of this summer, we're asking for your partnership in two simple ways.

Come every day. The magic of summer programming happens through consistency. Each day builds upon the one before it — the skills, the confidence, the connections. Our program is designed so that every session matters, and when your student attends daily, they experience the full benefit of everything we've planned for them. When your student is here every day, they feel the difference, and so do we.

Be ready at the door. Our van drivers work hard to keep every family's pick-up running on schedule. Please have your student dressed, prepared, and waiting at the door at their scheduled pick-up time. Because our routes serve so many families across Norfolk, drivers are unable to turn around or return if a student isn't at the door when the van arrives, and we never want anyone to miss a day of the fun and growth happening here.

Thank you for being the most important teammates we have. Here's to a wonderful rest of the summer — we can't wait to see what these last few weeks bring!

James Harris
Executive Director

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.

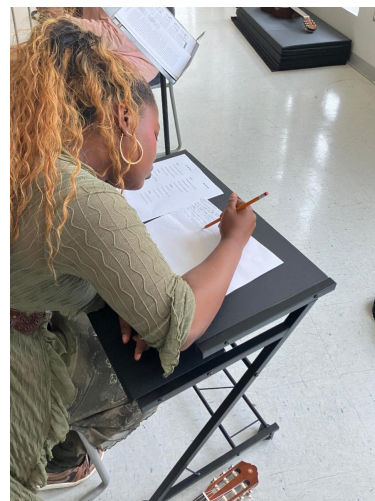
When complete, St. Vincent DePaul House will include two classroom buildings, an arts and media center, a gymnasium, an auditorium, a cafeteria, administrative offices, and outdoor athletic facilities, all built on 10 acres of the former hospital property. NSTS currently serves approximately 120 students, 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!

Community Partner Spotlight: Joaquin Garza





This week, we're shining a light on one of our wonderful community partners, guitar instructor Joaquin Garza. Each week, Joaquin brings his passion for music into our program, teaching our scholars everything from their first chords to writing and putting their own lyrics to paper.

A self-taught musician himself, Joaquin brings a unique understanding of what it means to learn something new from the ground up, and he pours that patience and encouragement into every lesson. When asked about his time with NSTS, Joaquin shared how much he has enjoyed working with our youth, expressing appreciation for the opportunities Next Step to Success provides for young people to learn new skills and explore new interests.

From strumming their first notes to writing original songs, our scholars are discovering just how much they're capable of, thanks in large part to partners like Joaquin who show up week after week to invest in their growth.

Thank you, Joaquin, for sharing your gift with our NSTS family!

NSTS Leadership Insights

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

The final weeks of our 2026 Summer Program are here, and what a summer it has been! We're so grateful to our families for partnering with us to make it a season full of growth. From leadership development and academic enrichment to field trips, workforce readiness, and hands-on learning experiences, every day has brought new opportunities for our scholars to shine.

This week, we hit our highest attendance ever in programming! We are so thankful that our youth and families are taking attendance seriously and showing up daily. Your commitment is what allows every scholar to get the full Next Step to Success experience, and we couldn't be prouder of this momentum as we head into the final stretch of summer.

Our goal remains to reach an average daily attendance of 80% through Friday, August 7. We need your continued partnership to finish the summer strong by helping your youth attend at least four out of five program days each week whenever possible. Regular attendance allows youth to build meaningful relationships with peers, mentors, and staff, participate in engaging academic,

leadership, and enrichment activities, enjoy exciting field trips and special events, strengthen life skills, confidence, and resilience, and experience the consistency needed to maximize their personal growth and success.

Attendance matters, and every young person makes our program stronger. Thank you for making attendance a priority and helping us provide the highest-quality experience for every youth we serve.

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, more user-friendly registration experience while improving communication and ensuring accurate information throughout the school year.

Every family must submit a new application, including returning participants. 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.

Together, let's finish the summer strong and prepare for another successful school year at Next Step to Success!



A Note from Carly Gelles, Director of Education

Program Spotlight: Building Connection Through Coach-Led Activities.

One of the things that makes NSTS special is the intentional, coach-led activities our scholars take part in every day, designed not just for fun, but to build real connection, confidence, and community among our youth.

A recent favorite was our "Web of Connection" activity, where students took turns naming something genuine and kind about a peer across the circle before tossing them a ball of yarn. By the end, what started as a simple game had transformed into a literal web stretching across the room, a beautiful, hands-on reminder of just how connected our scholars are to one another.

Activities like this are a core part of our coaches' approach: creating moments where students practice kindness, build trust, and see firsthand the impact of lifting each other up. It's a small activity with a big lesson, one our scholars carry with them well beyond the circle.

We're proud of our coaches for continuing to find creative, meaningful ways to help our scholars grow, together.



A Note from Kaelyn Hundley, Director of Programming

Field Trip Spotlight: Strikes, Smiles, and So Much Fun at AMF Little Creek

This week, our NSTS scholars traded the classroom for the bowling alley, heading to AMF Little Creek for a morning full of strikes, spares, and non-stop energy! From perfecting their bowling form to battling it out in the arcade, our students showed up with the same confidence, teamwork, and joy that make our program so special.

Between rounds, scholars took on the arcade, racing motorbikes, testing their luck at the claw machine, and cashing in tickets for prizes. Laughter echoed through the lanes as students cheered each other on, celebrated every strike, and picked up a few new personal bests along the way.

Days like this are about more than just fun (though there was plenty of it!). They're about building friendships, stepping outside comfort zones, and creating memories that our scholars will carry with them long after the summer ends.

Thank you to everyone who helps make outings like this possible. Here's to many more days of laughter, learning, and connection with our NSTS family!



Good Food. Good Mood. Chef B's Got You Covered!



CONFIDENCE CAFÉ

WEEKLY MENU

JULY 20TH – 24TH

LET'S EAT AND LEVEL UP!

Day	Breakfast	Lunch
MON	 BREAKFAST Continental Breakfast	 LUNCH Chicken Sandwiches & Wedges
TUES	 BREAKFAST Sausage or Bacon Breakfast Muffins	 LUNCH Chicken Elote Bowls
WED	 BREAKFAST Continental Breakfast	 LUNCH Wings & Wedges
THURS	 BREAKFAST Chicken Biscuits & Hashbrowns	 LUNCH Lasagna
FRI	 BREAKFAST Continental Breakfast	 LUNCH Salmon Burgers & Chips

GIVING THANKS & GRATITUDE

FOR YOUTH **EMMANUEL** FOR TAKING CONTROL OF THE KITCHEN ON **FRIDAY, JULY 10TH**, PROVIDING HIS PEERS WITH BOTH **BREAKFAST**, **LUNCH** AND **SNACK...** HE RAN **CONFIDENCE CAFÉ** WITH PRIDE AND HAD AN **AMAZING DAY!**

THANK YOU E-MAN!

 **#HOWYOU EATING** **FLAVOR YOU FEEL. PASSION YOU TASTE.** 

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](#)

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