



Next Step to Success Weekly Update



A Message from our Executive Director



Dear NSTS Families,

We are in the home stretch of an incredible summer, and now is the time to finish strong! These final weeks matter, consistent attendance and full participation are how our students turn a good summer into a great one. Every day your student shows up, they're building the habits, relationships, and skills that will carry them into the school year with momentum.

As we look ahead to back-to-school season, our team is helping students prepare to make smart decisions about their goals, their time, and their commitments for the year ahead. The choices they practice now become the confidence they carry into the classroom.

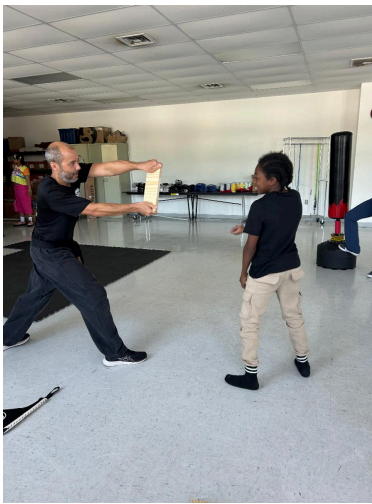
Most importantly, we're challenging every student to keep working toward their GRIT goals. GRIT means pushing through when things get hard, staying committed, and finishing what you start, and there's no better way to model that than showing up strong through the final day of camp.

Thank you for your partnership in getting students here every day, on time, and ready to grow. Let's finish this summer the NSTS way, together, with purpose, and with GRIT.

Sincerely,

James Harris, Executive Director

Community Partner Spotlight: Choe's HapKiDo of Norfolk



This summer, Next Step to Success is proud to partner with Choe's HapKiDo of Norfolk to provide our youth with a powerful combination of physical activity, character development, and positive mentorship.

Led by Instructor Patrick Hitchings, Choe's HapKiDo serves students throughout Norfolk and the greater Hampton Roads region. The academy's approach extends well beyond kicks, blocks, and self-defense techniques. Students are encouraged to develop the focus, discipline, confidence, respect, and perseverance they need to succeed in every area of their lives.

Through our partnership, NSTS students participate in weekly HapKiDo instruction. During each session, students practice foundational martial arts skills while strengthening teamwork, personal responsibility, self-control, and resilience. These lessons connect naturally with NSTS's GRIT philosophy. Students learn that progress requires patience, effort, consistency, and the courage to keep trying—even when something is difficult. Those same qualities help them face challenges at school, at home, and in their communities.

We are grateful to Instructor Hitchings and the entire Choe's HapKiDo of Norfolk team for investing their time and expertise in our students. Their encouragement is helping our youth grow stronger—not only physically, but also in confidence, character, and determination.

Thank you, Choe's HapKiDo of Norfolk, for helping our students take their next step toward success!

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.

As we head into the final stretch, our focus is shifting toward what's next — and we couldn't be more excited for what's ahead.

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.

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

Thrift Flip Fashion Show: Style on a Budget!

Who says you need a big budget to look good? This week, our youth proved that great style is really about creativity — not the price tag.

Our coaches challenged the group to head to a local thrift store and put together a complete, runway-ready outfit, all while learning how to stretch a dollar. The goal: build confidence in budgeting and smart shopping while showing off some serious personal style. The result was a full-blown fashion show, right here in our building, complete with a runway walk, music, and plenty of cheering from the crowd.

From graphic tees and denim to bold accessories and standout sunglasses, every outfit told a story — and every "model" owned the runway with confidence. Beyond the fun, this activity gave our youth a real, hands-on lesson in financial literacy: how to shop smart, mix and match pieces, and create something stylish and unique without overspending. It's a skill that will serve them well far beyond the runway.

Huge thanks to our coaches for turning a lesson on budgeting into an unforgettable, confidence-building experience our youth won't forget anytime soon!

A Note from Kaelyn Hundley, Director of Programming

We survived another rainy week — but that didn't stop our youth from having a fantastic time! With the weather working against us, our coaches got creative, planning a full lineup of indoor activities to keep the energy and learning going strong.

One of the week's biggest highlights: a group outing to an escape room, where our youth put teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills to the test in real time. Several groups successfully beat the clock and escaped within the 60-minute window — proof that when our kids work together, there's not much they can't figure out. Our coaches did a wonderful job guiding their groups through the challenge, encouraging collaboration and celebrating every win along the way. We were also excited to welcome ECPI and ATI to our program this week for engaging, hands-on activities designed to introduce our youth to the educational and career pathways available to them after high school. Both organizations did an incredible job connecting with our kids, sparking real excitement about what their futures could look like.

None of this happens without the community that shows up for us, week after week. A heartfelt thank you to all our visitors and partners who continue to walk through our doors and invest in our youth — we appreciate each and every one of you!



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

THIS WEEK AT

CONFIDENCE CAFE

JULY 27TH - JULY 31ST

EAT GOOD. DO GOOD. BE GREAT.



MONDAY

BREAKFAST: Continental

LUNCH: Chicken & Waffles



TUESDAY

BREAKFAST: Steak Hashbrown Bowls

LUNCH: Cold Cut Sandwich Box

FIELD TRIP DAY!



WEDNESDAY

BREAKFAST: Continental

LUNCH: Cold Cut Sandwich Box

FIELD TRIP DAY!



THURSDAY

BREAKFAST: French Toasty & Sausage

LUNCH: Burgers & Fries



FRIDAY

BREAKFAST: Continental

LUNCH: Southern Pulled BBQ Chicken, Baked Beans & Potato Salad



THANK YOU, JAYDEN!

For all your help in the kitchen! Jayden is always eager to help, willing to learn and will make an **AMAZING SOUS CHEF** one day!

YOU BRING THE VIBES WE'LL BRING THE FLAVOR!

CONFIDENCE CAFE

#HOWYOU EATING?

GOOD FOOD
GOOD PEOPLE
GREAT VIBES

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!

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

JANE FORREST
BORN AT DEPAUL
MAY 15, 1992

SCAN TO

**BUY YOUR
BRICK**
Today!



**NEXT
STEP**



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](#)





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