



Next Step to Success Weekly Update

Message from our Executive Director



James Harris

As we reach Week 10, I'm excited to share the tremendous progress we've made in improving the Next Step to Success building and overall environment since acquiring the facility. From fresh interior updates to enhanced learning spaces, every improvement reflects our deep commitment to creating a place where students feel safe, supported, and inspired.

Our parking lot renovation is now underway, an important step in completing the transformation of our site. Once finished, it will provide a safer, cleaner, and more welcoming first impression for our families and guests. These updates are more than just physical changes; they represent the pride we take in our mission and the value we place on every young person who walks through our doors.

At NSTS, we believe that a warm, inviting environment communicates to our students that they matter, that their growth, comfort, and success are worth

investing in. As the building continues to take shape, so too does our vision for what's possible when young people are given the right setting to learn and thrive. Together, we're building more than a program, we're building hope, confidence, and opportunity.

James Harris, Executive Director



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Student Spotlight: Cameron

This week, our student spotlight is Cessiah, an 8th grader at Norview Middle School.

1Students of the Week Questions – Cessiah Judd

1. What is your name, School and grade? **Norview High School/9th**
2. How long have you been a part of Next Step to Success? **Since the summer of 2025**
3. What do you like most about coming to NSTS? **The activities and the Coaches**
4. What is one goal you're working on right now? **Succeed in school and participate everyday**
5. Who inspires you the most, and why? **My mom – Because I look up to her**
6. What is your favorite subject in school? **Science**
7. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school? **Cooking and Painting/Drawing**
8. What's your favorite book, movie, or song right now? **Favorite Song – Somebody by Lotto**
9. If you could give advice to another student, what would it be? **Treat others the way you want to be treated**
10. What do you see yourself doing in the future (career, dreams, or big goals)? **Joining the military and becoming a chef.**
11. Share a fun fact about yourself most people don't know! **I used to eat sand when I was little**
12. Is there someone at NSTS (staff or peer) who has made a big difference for you? **Coach Carley**
13. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Impatient, Kind and Optimistic**
14. What makes you proud of yourself this week? **Getting all my school work done and being a really nice person this week.**

We're so proud of the example Cameron sets for their fellow Success Stories!

From the Director of Education



This week, Norfolk Public Schools sent home report cards, and we're taking time to review this information carefully so we can better understand how to support each of our students. Our goal is to celebrate their successes while also providing the extra help they may need to keep moving forward. Our team also had the opportunity to participate in a hands-on STEM training with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, which gave us great new ideas for making science and environmental learning more engaging and relevant for our youth. In addition, we're working closely with Tidewater Community College (TCC) to offer extra support for students and families during this uncertain time with SNAP, Medicaid, and Social Security benefits. As always, we're focused on helping our young people grow—academically, personally, and within their community—by making sure they have



This week has been full of growth, learning, and fun here at Next Step to Success! Here's a quick look at what our youth have been up to:

- Together We Can – Worked with our Juniors and Seniors on resume building and preparing for future career opportunities.
- Urban League of Hampton Roads – Focused on college preparation with our Sophomores, helping them explore options.
- Linda Dyer – Taught our middle schoolers the importance of table etiquette and making a great impression.
- Team Up Mentoring – Partnered with a few of our youth to plan and carry out a community service project.
- Coach Whitley – Helped several students sharpen their basketball skills and build teamwork on and off the court.
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation – Hosted one of our groups for a restoration project, giving our youth hands-on experience in caring for the environment.
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Even though there was no program on Tuesday, our coaches were still hard at work behind the scenes. We also had a great time with some team-building activities, including our

OPERATIONS UPDATE

• **Dates to Remember:**

- November 4, 2025: NPS Teacher Workday – NSTS Closed
- November 11, 2025: Veterans Day – NSTS Closed
- November 20, 2025: NSTS Gratitude Dinner – Family & Community Event
- November 26–28, 2025: NPS Thanksgiving Break – NSTS Closed

• **NSTS Families – We Need Your Voice!**

- Please check your email and complete our Family Satisfaction and Impact Survey. Your feedback helps guide improvements and ensures we continue meeting the needs of our youth and families.

• **Parking Lot Renovation:**

- In the coming weeks, we will begin renovating our parking lot. We kindly ask for your patience during this process. Once dates and times are confirmed, we will share detailed instructions on any adjustments for drop-off and pick-up to ensure smooth transitions.

• **Youth Attendance Matters!**

- Your communication helps us maintain accurate attendance records and ensures our team can best support your youth's engagement and progress. If your youth will be absent during the week or out of the program for an

much-loved Pumpkin Smash! It's always inspiring to see both our youth and adults learning, laughing, and growing together here at Next Step to Success.



extended period, please keep us informed.

- Call: 757-995-2111
- Email: MGarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org



Staff Spotlight



□ Staff Spotlight: Katy Rock, Administrative Director

Katy Rock joined Next Step to Success with a passion for empowering youth and a belief in the program's mission to build brighter futures. Known for her humor, hard work, and heart, she brings energy and dedication to helping young people see that perseverance truly pays off.

1. What inspired you to join Next Step to Success? **I really believe in the program and wanted to work with this age group.**
2. If you could describe yourself in three words, what would they be? **Funny, Silly and Hard-working**
3. What's one lesson you hope every student you work with carries with them? **That hard work does pay off.**
4. Who was a mentor or role model in your own life, and how did they shape you? **My**

former boss (Principal) She taught me the value of working hard and a good support system.

5. What's your favorite way to spend a Saturday when you're not working? **Love going to yard sales.**

6. If you could have dinner with any historical figure or celebrity, who would it be and why? **Both of my grandmothers. I would like to show them how much their family has grown.**

7. What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? **I have been a Type-1 diabetic for the past 18 years.**

8. If you had to pick a theme song for your life, what would it be? **Party Rock – by LMFAO**

9. What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? **From my dad. To not drown in the what ifs.**

10. Finish this sentence "Working at Next Step to Success means..." **Helping to grow a strong community.**

11. What's your all-time favorite TV show or movie? **TV – The Office**

12. If you had a superpower for a day, what would it be? **I would be invisible**

Culinary Corner

From the Coordinator of Culinary Arts



Hey Team & Family,

You already know the vibes — the kitchen's heating up and the flavor train's rollin' ☐☐

Quick heads-up: No cooking on Tuesday! (Even Chef B needs a lil' reboot 😊). But don't get too comfy, because come Wednesday, we're back in the kitchen like we never left — pots clanking, spatulas flying, and taste buds dancing ☐☐☐☐

Here's what's hittin' plates this week:

☐ **BBQ Chicken Sandwiches with Seasoned Wedges — Finger-lickin' approved ☐☐**

☐ **Loaded Nacho Bowls (Chicken or Beef) topped with Queso, Pico & Sour Cream — basically edible happiness 😊**

☐ **Baked Ziti with Garlic Bread — because carbs + cheese = self-care ♥**

☐☐ **Southern Chicken & Pancake Stacks — Syrup drizzle + that Chef B twist 😊**

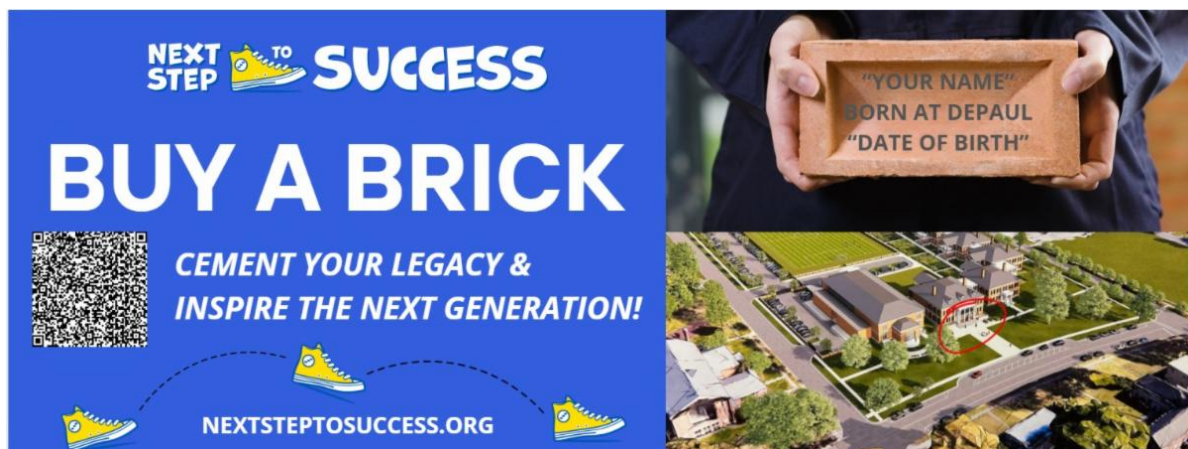
(Don't ask, just eat.)

So rest those forks Tuesday, 'cause Wednesday we're back to business — serving up laughs, love, and full bellies 😊

Stay hungry & stay blessed,
Chef B □□□

Cement Your Legacy with a Brick at St. Vincent de Paul House

Be part of our history and our future! Through our Brick Fundraiser, you can honor a loved one, recognize a business, or leave a family legacy by purchasing an engraved brick. Each brick will be placed on the new St. Vincent de Paul House campus, creating a lasting tribute while supporting Next Step to Success youth programs.



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