

H. BROWNING SPENCE EDUCATION AWARD PAST RECIPIENTS

Below are excerpts from the annual Cooperman-Bogue KidsFirst Awards Luncheons in which past H. Browning Spence Education Award recipients were honored:

2024-2025 Recipients

Jasmia Evans | 20 Years Old

Jasmia is currently enrolled at Eastern Florida State College pursuing her associate's degree in general studies. Her long-term goal is to transfer to a four-year university to complete her bachelor's degree in psychology and social work.

Gabriel Green | 20 Years Old

Gabriel is attending Pinellas Technical College after being placed in foster care for a year and a half. He also owns and manages his own car detailing business.

Sayuri Vargas-Hernandez | 21 Years Old

After enduring homelessness while in high school, Sayuri is a senior at St. Leo College, pursuing her bachelor's degree in management.

2023 Recipients

Kaylienne Brandis | 18 Years Old

After graduation from Dunedin High School, Kaylienne Brandis has her sights set on college and an architecture degree. Her mantra is to not take opportunities for granted – and she certainly has an abundance of promising ones in her future!

Journey Campbell | 17 Years Old

Journey Campbell, a 17-year-old senior at Pinellas Gulf Coast Academy, will be graduating a full year early with plans to enroll in St. Petersburg College. She would like to pursue a degree in creative writing because, “writing allowed me to tell my own story to help me heal,” and she hopes to use her story to inspire others.

Dylan Chandler | 19 Years Old

Dylan Chandler is attending Pasco-Hernando State College to pursue a degree in Psychology; after graduation, he wants to use his story, his voice, and his education to move the world in a greater direction.

2022 Recipients

April Dempsey Adams | 19 Years Old

When she was just 14 years old, April Dempsey-Adams' family was evicted from their home, and financial hardships resulted in her family being separated. She is passionate about pursuing education for a better life and a future as a nurse or veterinary technician.

Gloria Richardson | 19 Years Old

Gloria Richardson is a student in SPC's medical information and veterinary technology program. She plans to transfer to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University to pursue a career in the medical field, just like her grandmother.

Joanna Steenberge | 19 Years Old

Joanna Steenberge graduated St. Petersburg Collegiate High School at 17 and has completed an Associate of Science in Nursing degree. She aims to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at USF 4.637 GPA and has received offers to attend multiple Ivy League schools next fall!

2019 Recipients

Ashanti Singletary | 18 Years Old

Ashanti Singletary is an 18-year-old student with a contagiously positive personality studying at St. Petersburg College and pursuing her MBA in business.

Maggie Mongue | 19 Years Old

Maggie Mongue is a 19-year-old at Dixie Hollins High School and is preparing to attend the University of North Florida to study Deaf Education.

Robert Hurley | 18 Years Old

Robert Hurley is an 18-year-old senior at Boca Ciega High School who is preparing to graduate with a 4.637 GPA and has received offers to attend multiple Ivy League schools next fall!

2018 Recipients

Kimika Lawson | 18 Years Old

Kimika Lawson is an 18-year-old student at Gibbs High School nominated by Starting Right Now. After graduation, she plans to get a degree in education. Her volunteer experience as an English tutor has fueled her passion to teach English abroad.

Kevin Johnson | 18 Years Old

Kevin Johnson is an 18-year-old student enrolled in Pinellas Technical College where he is pursuing a career in building construction.

Amy Liu | 18 Years Old

Amy Liu is an 18-year-old student at Dixie Hollins High School. After attaining a 4.33 GPA, Amy has been accepted into the University of Florida with plans to become a psychiatrist.

2017 Recipients

Cassandra Altidor | 18 Years Old

Cassandra Altidor is an 18-year-old student at St. Petersburg High School nominated by Camelot Community Care. After graduation, Cassandra plans to enroll in the nursing program at St. Petersburg College.

Shai'Robia Davis | 23 Years Old

Shai'Robia Davis was nominated by Ready for Life. She is a 23-year-old who currently attends St. Petersburg College, on track to follow her dream of a career in the sciences.

Princess Mitchell | 18 Years Old

Princess Mitchell is an 18-year-old who attends Clearwater High School and was nominated by Camelot Community Care. After graduation, she plans to attend college to major in Biology with an ultimate goal of becoming a pediatrician.

2016 Recipients

Hillary Boyd | 18 Years Old

Hillary Boyd is an 18-year-old attending North East High School where she is currently on the Honor Roll. She works part-time at Ready for Life and is very active in her community church. She plans to earn her degree in Nursing from the University of South Florida after obtaining her AA degree from St. Petersburg College. After spending time in and out of foster care, Hillary has found what she calls her "true family" in her foster family.

Eddie Harman | 23 Years Old

Eddie Harman is a 23-year-old who attends St. Petersburg College, where he is finishing up his AA degree. He plans to attend the University of South Florida to obtain his Bachelor's degree in history and minor in education. Edward was 3 years old when he was first placed in foster care, adopted by a foster family at nine, then returned to foster care at 16. He hopes to become a teacher or work with foster children as a case worker or guardian ad litem one day.

Wendy Stewart | 17 Years Old

Wendy Stewart is a 17-year-old who attends Palm Harbor High School where she is involved in flag football, chorus, interact club – and she recently founded a Sign Language Club. After graduation, Wendy plans to attend Florida Gulf Coast University and major in communications after obtaining her AA degree from St. Petersburg College. She was first placed in foster care at age 5, and then re-entered foster care at age 11. Wendy will turn 18 in March and has a future that is very promising.

2015 Recipients

Gabrialla Leone | 19 Years Old

Gabrialla Leone is a 19-year-old who attends St. Petersburg College with a 3.5+ GPA in her second year! She is interning with a local dentist and, after completing her AA degree, plans to enroll in the University of Florida's College of Dentistry. She was placed in relative care at 14 and foster care at 16, where she remained until she aged out of care at 18.

Wilna Maitre | 18 Years Old

Wilna Maitre is an 18-year-old attending Gibbs High School with hopes to pursue a career as a neonatal nurse. She is a member of Ready for Life and participates in their Youth Council and Florida Youth SHINE. She entered foster care at 16 years old – and because her mother refused to provide information regarding her citizenship, she has overcome additional challenges as a result.

Terri Yount | 19 Years Old

Terri Yount is a 19-year-old student at Bayside High School with a 4.0 GPA. Terri plans to enroll at St. Petersburg College after graduation to begin pursuit of a career as a veterinarian, so that she can help animals who have been abused or neglected. She was two when she was first placed into foster care and now lives at Brookwood.

2014 Recipients

Jamie Johnston | 20 Years Old

Jamie Johnston has been in and out of foster care since age 6. Now 20, she is a sophomore at the University of South Florida – St. Petersburg Campus where she aspires to be a social worker upon graduation. She specifically wants to work with foster children, helping mentor and guide them to achieve their full potential. She demonstrates leadership in her part-time work with Sodexo Dining Services; in her college courses where she is always ready to participate and contribute to discussions; and at her church, Northeast Presbyterian Church, where she teaches Sunday school classes to young children. Despite her busy schedule, Jamie finds time to volunteer with Ready for Life, mentoring other foster youth and leading by example. She maintains a 3.0 GPA and is constantly striving to better herself and help those around her.

Gregory McNally | 18 Years Old

Gregory McNally was placed in foster care at age 4 where he remained until his 18th birthday, but he overcame a rocky start to turn his life around. He's enrolled as a full-time student in the Cosmetology program at PTEC – Clearwater Campus and aspires to have his own salon one day. He also wants to attend St. Petersburg College to seek a Computer Networking Degree. Gregory has volunteered at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium for two years, as well as with a local YMCA. He's involved with Ready for Life and hopes his story will help inspire others to set personal goals and dream big!