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**Questions for Our UPrep Coaches** 





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EDITORIAL

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elcome back to school! The past year has been full of so many challenges for all of us. You have faced many trials, changes, disappointments, opportunities, and maybe even triumphs as well.

The Pittsburgh Promise staff has worked remotely for over a year and we learned a lot about how to do that well. We also learned that our office could be used differently, and better. We changed our office space to be more collaborative and flexible and so that we could invite more students to join us for workshops and coaching opportunities. We look forward to welcoming more of you into our space in the future!

### In the pages that follow, we ask the question: What did you/we learn this past year and how can those lessons be used to grow and serve in every possible way?

This magazine issue is also special because it is sent to every sixth to twelfth grade student. This year, as the sixth grade class enters the rite of passage that is middle school, we honor them as our class of 2028. Since they were in kindergarten, we have maintained laser-focus on ensuring that we can fulfill our commitment to fund scholarships through the high school graduating class of 2028, and we will continue to do so.

I have repeatedly said since our beginning in 2008 that every one of you is Pittsburgh's promise. Our hope, our future, and our highest aspirations live inside of you. And that hope, that future, and those aspirations shine brightly.

I urge you, young friend, to maintain your resolve in the face of the many challenges you are facing, and to keep working hard to reach your dreams. May you flourish this year in new and surprising ways. We look forward to seeing more clearly because of the light and radiance that you are going to produce.

Sincerely,

Saleem Ghubril Executive Director | The Pittsburgh Promise

### the pittsburgh promise

The Pittsburgh Promise is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and is an affiliate of The Pittsburgh Foundation. The Pittsburgh Promise is a partnership between Pittsburgh Public Schools, the City of Pittsburgh, UPMC, and other key funders.





LIVE In the City of Pittsburgh

> Neighborhoods to choose from!

ATTEND Pittsburgh Public Schools or one of its charters

A Promise scholarship

Attendance 90% + 2.50 GPA cumulative

Your Promise scholarship



Empowering inner-city youth to become leaders in their community by helping to develop character, vision, and knowledge of the world.

### Imagine a community where no one laughs at you for your mistakes and supports you no matter what.

After being a part of Project Destiny (PD), first as a volunteer and later as an after-school program tutor, I discovered the beauty of helping others. Project Destiny is a place where inner-city youth are empowered to become leaders in their community as they develop character, vision, and knowledge of the world outside their surroundings.

I became involved with PD through their summer camp when I was young. (They still have the summer camp and lots of other activities and programs for kids and teens.) At the time I thought they were just a summer camp, but I began to understand as I grew up just how powerful they were at helping the community.

In my eighth-grade year of school, I began volunteering at Project Destiny as an after-school program tutor and helper. Basically, I helped children in kindergarten to fourth grade with homework and understanding academics. When I wasn't doing that, I was playing with the kids.

### PD always tries to find the best in people. They even help youth with community service opportunities because they believe everyone can do better.

They will never restrict you by past mistakes or family problems. Being with PD let me experience different parts of life without bias. They helped me to be patient, to know that it is okay to simply listen to someone's story, and that a smile can brighten someone's day especially a child's. Every time I think of PD, I think of the family I joined that will always have my back.

After all this time, PD hasn't given up on the community. During the COVID-19 outbreak they opened a second early learning center. Through a waiver with the state, they were able to keep this early learning center open for the children of first responders. They partnered with Allegheny General Hospital and the health department to supply COVID-19 vaccines. During the pandemic PD never forgot about the families. They implemented COVID-safe regulations at summer camp while also reconnecting friends with positive adult interaction over the summer.

When you participate in a people-focused organization, you get to experience all aspects of humanity: the good, the bad, the happy, the sad. But most of all you get a chance to see what it looks like to help someone without expecting anything in return.

Working with people who care for the community as much as the folks from Project Destiny has awakened me and others who have interacted with the organization to understand what it means to have a safe haven and what it means to thrive!

**Project Destiny** 



Project Destiny started small with some support for families like daycare and after-school programs but eventually became so much more. They began to branch out and develop a greater impact helping more than 6,000 families. They launched Thrive 18, which as in the name, is 18 different units to help youth and families. There are units on food and security, housing, life security, healthcare, education, and connecting families with schools. There is also conflict training and help with both court appearances and truancy.



### Get Involved!

If you or someone you know needs more help with food, healthcare, mental health, utilities, job search, housing, troubled youth or family struggles, or other issues, please call Project Destiny at 412-231-1258

### www.projectdestinypgh.org Facebook: Project Destiny PGH 2200 California Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15212

China Reddix is a former Promise Ambassador and 2021 Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy graduate. China attends Gannon University.



# **Rising** Above Disability

Destiny Osterritter's rare disorder provided obstacles in her education, but she never gave up. Today she's studying psychology at Carlow University so she can help low-income families and people without insurance.

### 0

0

### I attended Brashear High School, and I worked extremely hard to get good grades because I always knew that higher education was in my future.

From an early age, my parents and grandparents taught me that college helps you succeed in life. I was also always very persistent and stubborn. If I was told no, I pushed harder for a yes.

I was born with a rare muscle and joint disorder called Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita, or AMC for short. I am missing certain muscles and my joints are in a fixed position, leaving my range of motion extremely limited. With my physical disability being present my entire life, I quickly learned that success meant trying harder than everyone else because society will look at me and instantly assume what my abilities are. I was determined to prove them all wrong.

Since I cannot use my arms or hands much, I require assistance to even go through an accessible door when I am out, so in-person classes would be impossible without a caregiver. Seeking higher education was difficult because I had to go to college online, which initially was not covered by The Pittsburgh Promise. I fought for that to change because I am disabled and did not have enough hours of care to attend class in person, but I worked just as hard as anyone else, had great grades, and never got in trouble, so why shouldn't The Promise still help me?

I called The Pittsburgh Promise and explained my situation. I made the argument that I worked all my life to get good grades, so why should the money not go to me? Just because I am disabled and do things differently?

# The Promise honestly saved my life. Without it, college would not have been in my future.

I was struggling emotionally from losing my grandfather, great-grandfather, and my father all within three months of graduating high school. I also lost my mother as a young child. With the tragedies that my family suffered, I would not have been able to afford college. I can proudly say that I am now a junior at Carlow University studying psychology.



estiny Osterritter is a 2012 graduate of Brashear High School. She is urrently a junior at Carlow University majoring in psychology with minor oncentrations in counseling and crisis trauma.

### PROMISE VOICES

Destiny Osterritter

I decided that psychology would be my major while I was still in high school. My teacher for the subject, Mr. Geller, made it fascinating to learn about, and I was already deeply passionate about mental health and disability advocacy. My decision solidified after tragically losing my father to suicide—I vowed to help anyone that I could who was in that state of mind.

My goal is to get a Ph.D. in psychology and become licensed with the state so I can open my own mental health facility for low-income families or those without insurance.

*My* advice for students is: Never give up on yourself, you are worth fighting for!





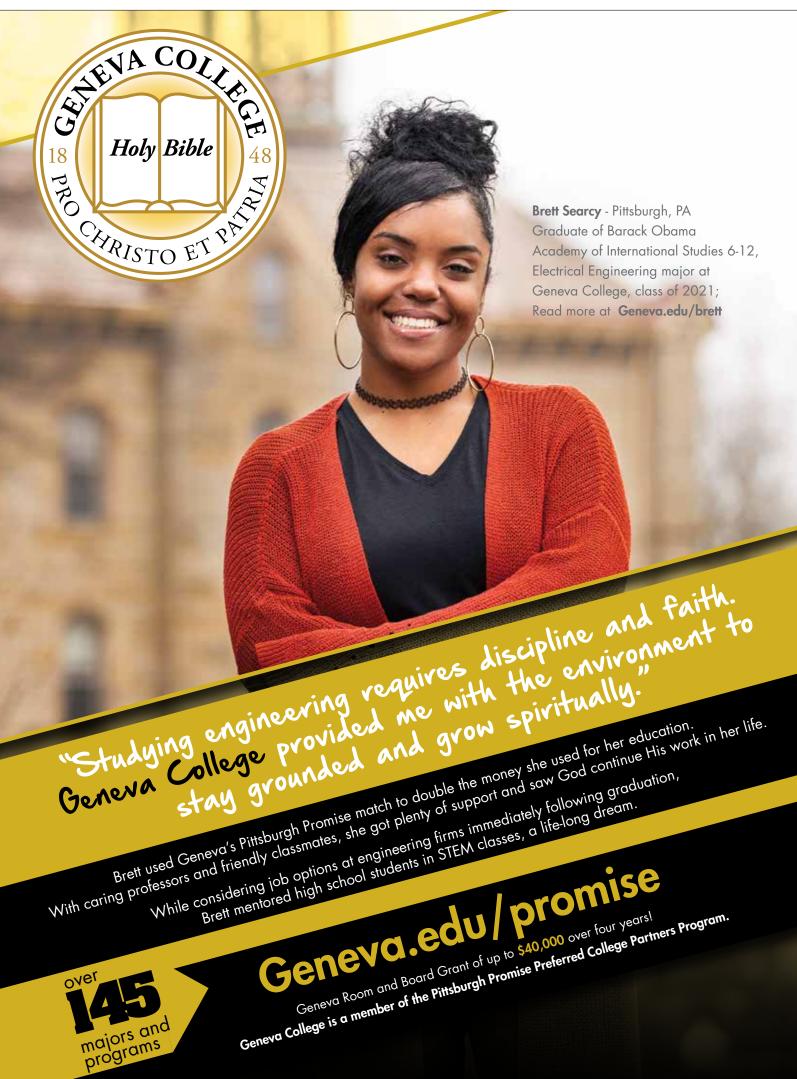
# **TOGETHER,** WE RISE.

Saint Vincent College attracts high-achieving students who place we ahead of me.

- More than 50 majors and programs
- Merit and need-based scholarships available
- Test-optional admission process available
- 98% of recent graduates are employed or furthering their education
- Catholic, Benedictine values-based community



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Brett Searcy - Pittsburgh, PA Graduate of Barack Obama Academy of International Studies 6-12, Electrical Engineering major at Geneva College, class of 2021; Read more at Geneva.edu/brett

# The Fundamental Principles of Engineering

As a child, I was always fascinated by the things surrounding me created by humans – the building where we lived, the amenities that made our lives easier, and the transportation network that enabled us to go from place to place.

These advancements came about thanks to human ingenuity and fulfill needs in our society. When I looked at these things, I realized they were rooted in fundamental engineering principles.

It was this curiosity that led me to explore a career in engineering and a profession that would provide me an avenue to use my creativity and imagination to make a difference. During high school I found out how to become an engineer and I focused on the subjects that would give me a chance to get into a school where I could study engineering. With guidance from my teachers and parents I was able to fulfill that dream, which has turned into a rewarding career.

Today I am civil engineer by profession. Civil engineering, is one of the oldest and broadest fields of engineering with many disciplines. It offers the flexibility of bouncing between disciplines without a dull moment in your life. Since becoming an engineer, I have worked as an engineering drawing drafter, engineering project lead, manufacturing supervisor, technical operations lead, inside sales leader, Six Sigma Black Belt, and as a leader of quality. This array of positions that I have enjoyed demonstrates the flexibility offered by the engineering profession and some of the many career opportunities available. These roles broadened my knowledge even beyond the boundaries of my original dream.

I currently work in the aerospace industry as a leader of the quality function at Howmet Aerospace. In this role, I am responsible for maintaining industry standards and regulatory compliance for the company. The quality function also ensures that customer specifications and requirements are translated into useful and meaningful products for our customers. It uses "continuous improvement" to stabilize production systems to meet our customers' expectations. At this global company, I have had the opportunity to work with great people from varying backgrounds, professional disciplines, and cultures literally around the world. We take pride in making parts for the aero industry and by keeping people safe in the air with our engineered products.

### Engineering is one of the most sought-after occupations in the world, which means that there is always a career opportunity for you.

It can take you far and wide, and around the globe depending on your discipline. Engineering also has a great impact on the world. You can use your creativity to help solve real-world problems such as climate change, providing clean water in developing countries, developing new machines and methods to improve production, or inventing new medical devices to help the sick.

The opportunities in engineering are boundless. If you want to make a difference in the world, engineering is a good choice.

Engineering gives you the opportunity to work at top companies or become a consultant. If you have an entrepreneurial spirit, you could even create your own company. Being an engineer gave me an opportunity to be a part of something greater than myself, where I have been able to make a difference through my skills and knowledge. I cherish my profession because it allows me to do what I love and get paid for it. If you are considering a career in engineering, talk to your school counselors who will certainly be happy to help you.

Aerospace Engineer

Most people think engineering is only math. While math is a language spoken by all engineers, it is not the only subject that makes an engineer. It is equally as important to be creative and to work hard. Often, I hear young people say, I want to be an engineer, but I am not good in math. I was not good in math either, but I worked at it by studying hard, and I didn't want it to be the impediment to fulfilling my dream. Today there are many more sources of help in science subjects that didn't exist when I was younger. Just remember that we can do anything as long as we put our minds to it.



Osa Omoruyi is Vice President of Quality for Howmet Engine Systems at Howmet Aerospace Inc. His interest spans mentoring and coaching, supporting "CommonBond" building homes for the elderly, delivering baskets of blessings on behalf of his church, and profound interest in jazz music.

# Questions for Our UPrep Coaches

Vanessa Dunn

**UPrep Promise Coaches** answer questions about the challenges of last year and the year ahead!



What challenges did you face through remote learning? How did you overcome these challenges?



What are you looking forward to most for the 2021-22 school year? What plans do you have in place for UPrep students?



The main challenges I faced were the lack of student engagement and face-to-face interaction. It was very hard to connect with students who would not say hi back to you or even let you know they heard what you said. Sometimes it made me feel like I was talking to myself.

The first step for me in overcoming these challenges was to continue to give 100% effort regardless of the situation and to always come with a positive attitude. Next was adjusting to the virtual environment, such as messaging students to see how I could assist them and providing workshops that were interactive and relevant. Most importantly, I tried to be in the virtual classroom as much as possible to be a constant presence with the students in case they needed anything.

I am excited to connect with students and develop relationships with them. The personal touch was missing because of the virtual environment so I am hoping that being in-person will allow me to better get to know the students and help them be the best they can be.

One thing that the UPrep Promise Coaches have in the works is a Shark Tank Entrepreneurship Challenge. Many students expressed an interest in being an entrepreneur, so we want to give students the opportunity to learn how to create and manage a business. Another plan is creating an after-school spot for students to hang out, play games, or get help with college or career planning.



Marna Owens-Bailey



### COACHES CORNER

uprepcoaches@pittsburghpromise.org

It was tough to build relationships with students over a computer screen this past school year. Teams is a great tool, but it was a struggle for everyone. Nothing can replace interactions and relationships built in the classroom. I overcame these challenges by working with the other Promise Coaches, teachers, and staff. We worked together and talked about how to best connect with and serve our students. I also made sure to really take the time to interact with students in person once we were back and stayed consistent in coming to class and getting to know them each day.

I am looking forward to being back in-person full time. Much like needing face-to-face interactions, routine is also important for students and their ability to learn effectively. I am especially looking forward to meeting the rest of my students who stayed virtual for the entire school year!

UPrep is an amazing school to be a part of, and the Promise Coaches are so excited to be back in the building. We hope to continue our Wellness Wednesdays, lunch office hours, collaborate with partners to do college visits, and more!

One of the greatest challenges was building a relationship with my students. I overcame this goal by being consistent, building relationships with teachers, and by letting my students know that I care about them and I am here to help.

I am looking forward to getting to see students' faces every day. We have a ton of fun groups and workshops planned for the 2021-2022 school year. I am excited to do them in-person!



# At our core, we're focused on human impact and the pursuit of change for good.

With diverse and interesting majors and customized individual learning, supportive mentorships that help you succeed, and a wide variety of student organizations and groups to choose from, it's a an opportunity for a better you and a greater good. And, with five unique campuses in Western Pennsylvania, we have you covered.

It's no wonder that more than 10% of Pittsburgh Promise scholars chose Pitt.

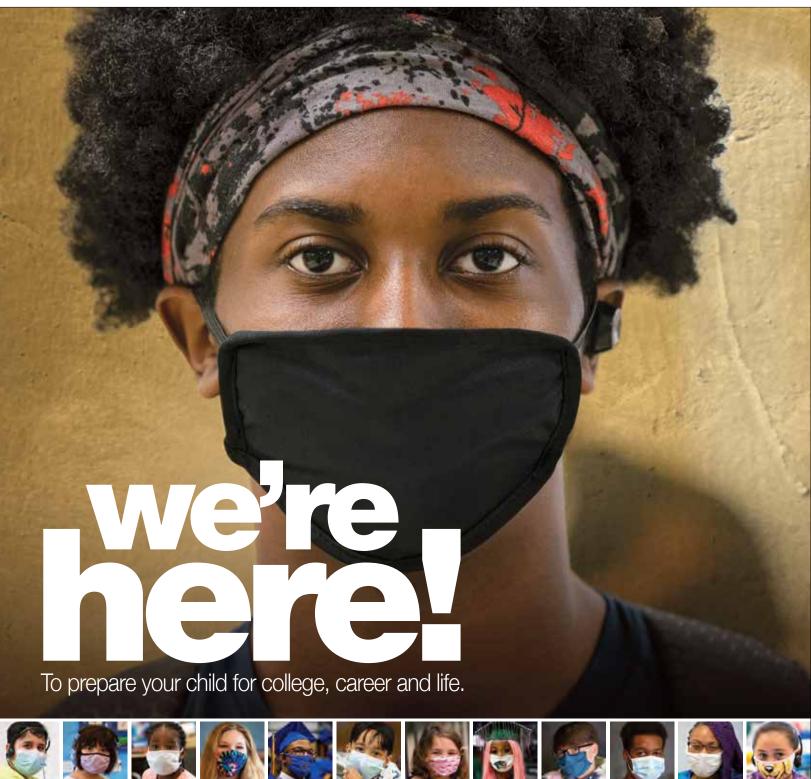


University of Pittsburgh.

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admissions.pitt.edu

Forge Ahead.





At Pittsburgh Public Schools, we're here for every child, from PreK to graduation. That's why we offer magnet programs that develop your child's interests and talents, academically challenging coursework in the arts, sciences and world languages, and career and technical education that gets high school students ready for jobs in high-demand fields. Our goal is to provide all the supports and opportunities your child needs to succeed, so they graduate ready for whatever the future holds.

Enroll today at www.pghschools.org/enroll.

Expect great things.





### There is a severe shortage of medical doctors, especially doctors referred to as "primary care" physicians.

This is especially true in under-resourced urban and rural communities throughout Western Pennsylvania. A primary care physician is a medical doctor who is trained to prevent, diagnose, and treat a broad array of illnesses and injuries. Primary care physicians not only play a critical role in helping the general public stay healthy, they also are often the first point of contact that most people have with the healthcare system. These physicians include family practitioners, obstetrician gynecologists, internists, general surgeons, psychiatrists, and pediatric doctors.

### The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, together with heightened racial unrest and social discord, has shone a bright spotlight on health inequities among our most vulnerable populations.

Sadly, far too many of our neighbors who live in underresourced urban and rural neighborhoods are exposed throughout their lifetimes to many of the negative social factors that make being healthy difficult. These social factors include poverty, lack of education, unemployment, poor physical environment, structural racism, discrimination, and, as noted above, lack of access to high quality health care. As a direct result, they suffer from higher rates of asthma, cancer, obesity, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and other chronic health conditions. All of this may then result in a lower quality of life or premature death.

If you have a proclivity for science, can relate well to diverse groups of people, and care deeply about the health and wellness of all people in our region, you should consider becoming a medical doctor. We need you!



**William Generett Jr., Esq.,** is the Senior Vice President of Duquesne University's Office of Civic Engagement and External Relations, where he also serves as the Executive in Residence for the Palumbo Donahue School of Business.

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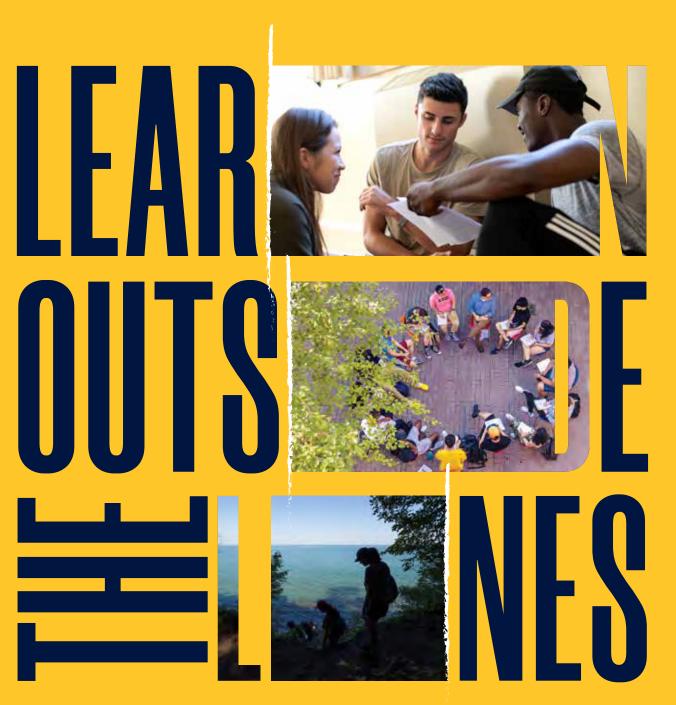
### MEDICAL DOCTORS

Duquesne University



Duquesne University is establishing a College of Osteopathic Medicine, targeted to open and admit its first class in the fall of 2023.

- Doctors of osteopathic medicine primarily serve as family doctors or general practitioners, for which a large unmet need exists nationally.
- In addition to practitioner training, Duquesne's program will include work in the ethics of integrative medicine as well as a focus on serving marginalized populations.
- It will become the second medical school in Pittsburgh and the first Catholic osteopathic medical school in Pennsylvania.
- The college will recruit an initial class of 75, with the intention of growing enrollment during its initial years to a total of 600 students enrolled at full maturity.





At Allegheny, you'll declare your major during your sophomore year. But that's just the start of it. You'll also be asked to choose a minor from an alternate discipline to keep your perspectives fresh and your mind wide open. Because when you learn outside the lines, you discover things you never knew were possible.

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ON AWARDED MORE THAN





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# FOR THOSE WHO STRIVE



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Resilience is the ability to achieve positive outcomes - mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually - despite adversity.



K-12 students have learned a lot about the difficulty of remote learning in the last year and a half.

A lack of structure can demotivate. **Students struggled to define boundaries** between school and home. Many missed the extracurricular and social aspects of school. Anxiety and mental health issues were more pervasive.

ever imagined.

### But from that struggle, came resilience.

Teachers, principals, school staff, parents, and - most importantly - our students rose to the occasion. Resilience provides hope, an essential experience for not just students but all of the adults working with them. We may not be able to take away the stress a child has experienced during COVID-19 or will continue to experience in their homes or communities post-pandemic, but we can create new experiences of resilience.

While those experiences were challenging, it's time to forge ahead. The 2021-2022 school year and in-person learning brings hope and resilience. Resilience is about thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that can be learned, and can help you bounce back after facing adversity. Building resilience is key to helping you prepare for the future and all the curves that life may throw your way. Resilience has a positive influence on academic performance, as well as social and emotional wellbeing.

of Adversit

Over the past year and a half, we experienced struggles like never before. Schools, teachers, students, and families were challenged in ways none of us

# There are seven qualities that can help build resilience.

By focusing on these seven qualities, you can become more flexible and more easily recover from life's challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



COMPETENCE. The ability to effectively handle various situations.



CONFIDENCE. The ability to face and cope with life's challenges.



### CONNECTION.

Close ties to family, friends, school, and community give you a solid sense of security that produces strong values.



### CHARACTER.

A fundamental sense of right and wrong that allows you to stick to your own values and demonstrate a caring attitude toward others.









### RESILIENT IN THE FACE

of Adversity



### CONTRIBUTION.

Understand that you can make the world a better place. This will motivate you to take actions and make choices that will improve the world.



### COPING.

Capacity to enact a wide array of positive, adaptive coping strategies protects you against unsafe behaviors; in turn you will be better prepared to overcome challenges.



### CONTROL.

When you realize that you can control the outcomes of your decisions you will have more trust in your ability to handle adverse situations.

### Citation of the 7 qualities

Kimberly LaFountain, LMHC The Seven Cs of Resilience and How Parents Can Build Resilient Childrer https://www.lifespan.org/lifespan-living/seven-cs-resilience-and-how-parents-can-build-resilient-childre







### **EXPLAIN YOUR COVID-19 VIRTUAL LEARNING** EXPERIENCE IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

What challenges did you face? What did you learn about yourself from the experience? What are you looking forward to forging ahead?

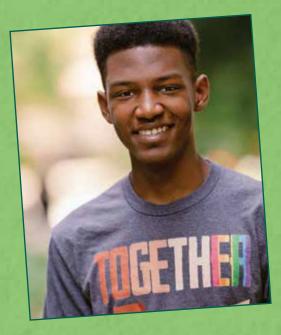


## JOHN GRIMM

Promise Ambassador, Senior, Pittsburgh Carrick High School

COVID-19 has definitely influenced everyone in one shape or form over the last year. This pandemic has changed our daily life and perspectives too. When first coming into the virtual setting I was very unhappy and frustrated learning to navigate this new environment. It took me a good couple weeks to fully understand what I was expected to do. Once I got into the swing of things, I was happy with the results I obtained. The reason I did so well is because I am motivated and always focused on completing my assignments and attending school over day. When it came to my learning

What I learned about myself through this pandemic is that I am a self-motivated and happy guy. A few reasons why I missed synchronous learning is because I did not see my friends on a daily basis, I didn't see my cool teachers, and I especially missed making memories along the way. In the future I can picture more productive in-person school days, because the skills and strategies we gained during online schooling last year helped open new possibilities in how we learn and interact.





Kristin Koerner is the Communications Manager at The Pittsburgh Promise.



# **TYRIQUE WHITSON**

Promise Ambassador, Senior, Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy If anyone had told me back in 9th or even 10th grade that I was going to spend my whole junior year of n anyone had told the back in Striot even four grade that that geing to operating the high school on a computer, I would've called them absurd. It's been nothing but a challenge navigating the online environment. Learning wasn't easy. Some subjects felt impossible to grasp at times because they

Although I maintained good grades and raised my GPA, those are only measures of school performance that can track how well you do on assignments and tests. They don't tell you whether you are learning and how well you are learning. Tests were challenging because sometimes you would need one-on-one attention and you couldn't raise your hand. At the beginning of the year, I woke up on time and ready to go, but I slowly lost my motivation to get up in time for the attendance check-in. By the middle of the year

I was on a downward spiral and didn't have the energy or motivation to keep up. In spite of the challenges, I managed to earn decent grades. This taught me that I accomplish what I set out to achieve, even when my energy is low or I feel unmotivated. Although I believe that I would have learned more academically if we had been in the building, I value my peers and the teachers who helped

me learn so much about myself this past year. Being home with my mom and sister for over a year didn't offer the opportunity to be out and go places without worrying about bringing COVID-19 into my house, so I'm looking forward to chances to be more independent. Moving forward, I want to see what doors maybe open for me. Something I will keep with me from my time online is to not allow my skepticism to guide me, but instead to let it take me forward.

### LANIAH WALKER

### Promise Ambassador, Senior, Pittsburgh Milliones University Preparatory School

My virtual learning experience was a bit rocky. Before COVID-19 I enjoyed school and didn't really mind going. I got straight A's with no issues and had a steady routine. When COVID-19 first hit, the first few months with no school messed up my schedule. Because I didn't have a job or siblings to care for, I had few responsibilities and started staying up all night. I was living my best life, to be honest! After a while I realized it wasn't healthy for me and when online school started, I fought to get up every morning. I also struggled with the online learning set-up and began to drown in the overflow of classwork. I had been doing well in school and didn't want the change to online to make a difference in my grades, so I decided I needed to set a routine for myself. I tried to get all of my assignments done without overworking myself and appreciated how understanding my teachers were. They sought out student feedback and aimed to make things run as smoothly as possible.

This pandemic caused me to develop more discipline and independence. There was no one forcing me to go to school or right in the same room helping me do assignments. I had to get up and do it on my own. I used to procrastinate and get distracted, but I have learned to be more focused-not just in school, but also in life. I am really looking forward to my senior year and hope we all get to have a prom and graduation somehow.



Beat the Odds

# AND FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL IN A PANDEMIC

THE CLASS OF 2021 HAD THE MOST PECULIAR SCHOOL YEAR EVER - A SENIOR YEAR WITH NO HOMECOMING, NO PROM, AND MOST OF THE YEAR SPENT AT HOME FOR REMOTE LEARNING. BUT THAT DID NOT STOP GRADUATING SENIORS FROM PERSEVERING DURING A PANDEMIC.

ow, more than 1,400 recent PPS graduates are prepared to take on the new world with college, career, and life.

"The class of 2021 was tested during the pandemic, and they have proven to be resilient, self-reliant, and goaloriented. From Yale University to the workforce, the most recent class of Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates are prepared to take on the world no matter the circumstance," said Dr. Anthony Hamlet, former Superintendent.

One of those students who persevered during a tough time is Kayla Campbell. The Pittsburgh Obama valedictorian and Promise Ambassador opted to remain in remote learning after schools reopened on April 6. 2021. With several setbacks, Campbell made the best of a non-traditional school year.

"What was meant to be the greatest year of my life thus far turned to an abundance of losses balanced between my freedom, my health, and my happiness. This year didn't turn out how I wanted but I think it consisted of lessons that I needed and made me all the stronger to face this next amazing chapter of my life," said Campbell.

Her next chapter is attending Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, as a Dovey Johnson Roundtree Presidential Scholar, which is a full scholarship funded by Netflix CEO Reed Hastings and his wife, Patricia Ann Quillin. At Spelman, Campbell is enrolled in a dual degree program to study civil engineering.



One of the things Campbell was looking forward to her senior year was an in-person graduation, and in early June, Pittsburgh Public Schools held in-person commencement ceremonies.

"We were guite excited and incredibly thankful that this year we are able to celebrate the class of 2021 with in-person commencement ceremonies for the first time during the pandemic," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Nina Sacco. "The health and safety of our graduates, guests and staff will always be a top priority. So, it was a rewarding task to provide seniors, family, and friends with the opportunity to come together for the momentous occasion."

In his graduation speech, Pittsburgh CAPA instrumental major and valedictorian Aiden Magley reflected on his four years at Pittsburgh CAPA, including working alongside the school's all-Black student leadership, protesting for civic and social change, and a tough 15 months in a pandemic.



Magley said the pandemic has failed to steal their "spirit".

"2021 now marks the year that this group of people," stripped of nearly all the pomp and circumstance of a senior year in high school, overcame the woes of a global pandemic to celebrate and appreciate the achievements, experiences, and excitements that we have shared."

He is now a freshman at Yale University where he is studying political science.

Also in June, the District further celebrated seniors with their annual Pittsburgh Public Schools Scholarship, where 40 students earned an academic scholarship to continue their education. In total, \$94,000 was awarded to support deserving seniors.

The Pittsburgh Promise, too, has stepped in to continue its mission and vision to provide higher education support to PPS students. In February, The Promise removed attendance and minimum GPA requirements for the class of 2021. Then, in the Spring, Howmet Aerospace Foundation and Gateway Health Plan, Inc. each announced \$1 million gifts to The Pittsburgh Promise at Senior Signing Day, securing \$12 million in total for the Pittsburgh Public Schools Class of 2021.

Merecedes J. Williams is an award-winning journalist who currently serves as Media Manager for Pittsburgh Public Schools. In the role, Mrs. Williams manages social media, event planning, good news stories, and serves as a liaison between the media and school district. She is a proud Pittsburgh Public Schools alumni, employee, and parent.



# **STRIVING TODAY** TOWARD A BETTER TOMORROW

The challenges the world faces are continually evolving. Today's young people — relentlessly curious and creative — will lead the way in solving tomorrow's problems.

Carnegie Mellon University's collaborative environment cultivates critical thinking, communication and problem-solving — skills that are essential to tackle our most pressing issues. Even in these extraordinary times, CMU's research continues to make a positive global impact on humanity.

We are proud to partner with the Pittsburgh Promise in supporting young dreamers and strivers as they set forth on a journey of change, opportunity and lifelong learning.

"Carnegie Mellon University is positioned like no other institution to define and lead the space where technology and humanity intersect."

- Farnam Jahanian President, Carnegie Mellon University

"Walking To The Sky", © Jonathan Borofsky, (2006) Jonathan Borofsky is a graduate of CMU's College of Fine Arts (CFA). "Walking To The Sky" was donated to the university by Jill Kraus, a CFA alumna, and her husband, Peter.

Carnegie Mellon University

The **Preferred College Partners** program is intended to strengthen relationships between The Pittsburgh Promise and certain post-secondary institutions that provide additional financial aid and robust support services for Promise Scholars. Preferred College Partners will provide grants for room and board to Promise-eligible students who are accepted to the institution and live in on-campus housing.



These **Preferred College Partners** will extend program benefits to Promise Scholars who enter as freshmen in fall 2022:

**Allegheny College** California University of Pennsylvania **Carlow University Carnegie Mellon University Chatham University Cheyney University Clarion University Duquesne University Edinboro University** Geneva College **Grove City College** Indiana University of Pennsylvania Juniata College **Kutztown University** La Roche University Lincoln University **Mansfield University Mercyhurst University** 

Our thanks to these Preferred College Partners, who share The Pittsburgh Promise's commitment to helping make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable.

Consider Preferred College Partners during your post-secondary school search.



Complete the FAFSA (FAFSA.gov) and PA State Grant Form (Pheaa.org) as early as possible (Oct. 1st) and no later than May 1st.

# Preferred Cellege Partners





### Mount Aloysius College

Penn State (Beaver, Greater Allegheny, Hazleton, Mont Alto, and Schuylkill campuses)

Pittsburgh Technical College

**Point Park University** 

**Robert Morris University** 

**Rosedale Technical College** 

Saint Vincent College

Seton Hill University

**Shippensburg University** 

**Slippery Rock University** 

Susquehanna University

**Thaddeus Stevens** College of Technology

Thiel College

Washington & Jefferson College

Waynesburg University

Westminster College

Williamson College of the Trades





### **NEXT STEPS FOR FUTURE PROMISE SCHOLARS:**

Visit the schools and ask about financial aid and support services for Promise Scholars.



Apply to all schools of your choice.



Once accepted to a Preferred College Partner school, reach out to the school's financial aid office to learn more about your individual financial aid package. Financial aid packages will vary by school and by student.

# Fittsburgh Promise Executive Scholars WE ARE PROUD TO INTRODUCE OUR 2021 CLASS OF EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS.

### THE EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS PROGRAM BUILDS A PIPELINE BETWEEN HIGH-PERFORMING STUDENTS AND OUR MAJOR CORPORATE DONORS.

The program provides students with the chance to connect with the prestigious company with which they are matched and pursue professional development opportunities and relationships during their college years. High school seniors with a strong academic performance, a commitment to community service, and leadership skills are encouraged to apply. The Executive Scholars Program is one of the ways that The Promise can help students transition not only from high school to college, but also from college to a career. We are very proud of our 2021 Executive Scholar Class. Congratulations!

### **UPMC Scholars** of The Pittsburgh Promise



Abidemi Asanbe Abidemi wants to make a difference in the world through helping people. At Pittsburgh SciTech, she was on the soccer team, track and field team. Black Student Union, and a Sci-Tech Student Ambassador. Abidemi attends the University of Pittsburgh where she is studying biology.



Jordan Catone Jordan's internship at The Midwife Center drove her to learn more about childcare and the effects of malpractice and structural racism in healthcare. She loves to help others and give back to the community. After graduating from Pittsburgh Allderdice, she is studying nursing at the University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg.



lan Peck lan maintained a 3.9 GPA during the pandemic at Pittsburgh Allderdice. He enjoys learning new things, traveling, and meeting new people. Ian attends the University of Pittsburgh with the career goal to become a physical therapist for a sports team.



China Reddix Passionate about mental health, China wants to be a psychiatrist who can connect to her patients and provide accurate treatment. She enjoys practicing piano and studying chemistry. China graduated from Pittsburgh SciTech and is attending Gannon University on a pre-med track.



Mackenzie Sabol Mackenzie is very proud of her academic performance at Pittsburgh Allderdice, which allowed her to attend Duquesne University. By having a growth mindset and being an avid learner, she wants to be the best version of herself. Mackenzie is studying business management and wants to become an entrepreneur.

### Highmark Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise



Azriah Crawley While attending Pittsburgh CAPA, Azriah worked a job and participated in several extracurriculars including the Frisbee Team, Black Student Union, and Mock Trial. Azriah currently attends the University of Pittsburgh with the career goal of becoming a lawyer.









volunteering at a nursing home and Waverly Presbyterian Church. While attending Pittsburgh CAPA, he achieved High Honor Roll and was a member of the National Honor Society. Ben is studying computer science at the University of Pittsburgh.

Benjamin Gradek Ben loves to give back by

Jah'liyah Smith While attending Pittsburgh Westinghouse, Jah'liyah was cheerleading captain, Class Council member, and Promise Ambassador. She has showcased her leadership by being a part of different organizations such as YouthPlaces and Neighborhood Learning Alliance. Jah'liyah is studying graphic design and American Sign Language at Temple University.

Lauren Smith Lauren won many scholarships and awards for her outstanding academics and humanitarian work, including the SciTech Student of the Year and the Challenge Program Award for Community Service. Currently studying information systems at Carnegie Mellon University, she wants to impact the lives of others and push for a better world

Madison Young At Pittsburgh Brashear, Madison was a cheerleader, Co-Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper, and was ranked top 20 in her graduating class. She studies journalism at Temple University and wants to be an investigative broadcast journalist. Madison is passionate about creating video content to inspire and entertain others.

### **PNC Scholars** of The Pittsburgh Promise



JaQuay Blair At Pittsburgh Obama, JaQuay was a High Honor Roll student while working and participating in extracurriculars including cheerleading and cooking club. She is a creative spirit who loves to make things with her hands such as t-shirts, keychains, pens, and trinket boxes. JaQuay attends Robert Morris University pursuing a business degree.





Tirzah Duncan Tirzah is passionate about working with children and pop culture. She loves exploring how entertainment reflects people in society as well as how entertainment affects people. Moreover, Tirzah's passion for health equity has led to her studying at Temple University to be a healthcare provider.



**Emily Kane** Emily is a huge baseball fan, being a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox and Pittsburgh Pirates. That love for the game led to her to study sports marketing at the University of Pittsburgh. Emily wants to fight to make the world better for LGBTQ+ people, especially the youth.

Ben Schachter Overcoming ADHD and childhood epilepsy, Ben achieved High-Honors and the Best Teammate award on the Fencing Team at Pittsburgh Allderdice. Ben attends Penn State University majoring in computer science and aspires to create his own video game.



### 2021 EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS

of The Pittsburgh Promise

**Reggie Branson** The pandemic taught Reggie that success does not come without some sacrifice. He loves to learn, especially when it comes to understanding how things work. Reggie attends Waynesburg University and wants to own and manage an automotive mechanic shop.

### **BNY Mellon Scholars** of The Pittsburgh Promise











**Quinn Butcher** Quinn's passion for computer science led him to joining the Robotics Club and his founding of the Cyber Security Club at Pittsburgh Allderdice. In addition, he has been a key asset on successful teams in the CyberPatriot cyber security competition. Quinn attends Penn State University and wants to become a software engineer.

Taras Chernetskiy Taras is most proud of his hard work and academic success at Pittsburgh Brashear. He is focused on continuing to be successful at the University of Pittsburgh as a finance major. Taras is passionate about playing ball hockey and traveling. He aspires to live his best life and travel as much as possible.

Jaydn Gibson At Pittsburgh Allderdice, Jaydn was a member of the Black Student Union and the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, advocating for the student body. Learning has been the powerhouse to her growth, but she loves to educate others as well, especially concerning issues that affect other people. Jaydn is furthering her education at Temple University.

Jaden Vincent During his high school years, Jaden followed his passion by playing basketball for Pittsburgh Brashear and Urban Impact. He is studying business management at Slippery Rock University and wants to become an entrepreneur.

Lauryn Wilson Lauryn was a cheerleader. African American Centers for Advanced Studies council member, and math tutor while at Pittsburgh Allderdice. She attends the Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a major in nursing.

**PROMISE SCHOLARS TO DATE** HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS

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### 2021 EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS

of The Pittsburgh Promise

### American Eagle Outfitters Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise



Jade Chatman Over their four years at Pittsburgh Obama, Jade was an honor roll student and a Promise Ambassador. They are passionate about writing, specifically poetry and plays. Jade attends the University of Pittsburgh where they study psychology and astronomy.



Brookelynn Herrera Brookelynn graduated Valedictorian of Pittsburgh Brashear and is a former Promise Ambassador. She loves to travel and learn about other cultures, especially Latin cultures. Brookelynn is attending Penn State University where she majors in marketing.



Sebastian Mull Sebastian took first place in digital media at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild Invitational. He loves creating artwork and wants to direct and produce his own movies. Sebastian majors in film and digital technology at Chatham University.



Carmel Ricketts Working two jobs six days a week while balancing school, Carmel is no stranger to hard work and responsibility. She is very passionate about visual arts, fashion, photography, and aerial acrobatics. Carmel loves the Pittsburgh area, where she is studying studio arts at Chatham University.



Zharia White With the help of her village – family, community, and Pittsburgh Public Schools – Zharia was able to overcome adversity and turn it into opportunities. After graduating from Pittsburgh Obama, Zharia's passion for film and journalism led her to the University of Pittsburgh. Her career goals include becoming a director, producer, screenwriter, and journalist.



### Giant Eagle Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

Ashanti Anderson Ashanti is proud to have graduated from Pittsburgh Obama, overcoming the adversity of a pandemic. During her years in high school, she worked while balancing schoolwork. and was a member of the Superintendent Student Advisory Council and Neighborhood Learning Alliance. Ashanti is attending Carlow University with a focus on criminal justice.

MacKenzi Harris A Ben Carson Scholar, MacKenzi aspires to be a pharmacist and to educate others about the importance of taking care of their health. She was a High Honor Roll student at Pittsburgh Obama, and now attends Duquesne University in their pharmacy program.

**Devin McArdle-Larrow** Devin was a High Honor Roll student during his time at Pittsburgh Allderdice and became a member of the National Society of High School Scholars. He loves robotics and working with a team towards a common goal. Devin is a mechanical engineering major at Robert Morris University.

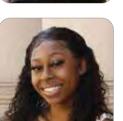
**Charlie Schwartz** "I am proud of me," a sentiment made by Charlie regarding his progress in life and school. He was a member of the Book Club, Youth & Government, and the Gender & Sexuality Student Union over his four years at Pittsburgh Obama. Charlie is attending Allegheny College and wants to have a career in media communications.

Kate Strong During her four years at Pittsburgh Allderdice, Kate showcased her talent in the choir, orchestra and concert, jazz, and pep band. She is a computer science major at Bucknell University, with the goal of becoming a programmer to help address societal challenges in multiple industries.

### Highmark Wholecare Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise



of Pittsburgh. Jessie Assaf Jessie was valedictorian at Pittsburgh Brashear and is a former Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador. Along with her many academic accolades, she also was on the first place team in the PIAA Tennis District Championship three years straight. Jessie is studying anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh.



Finnea King Finnea is a loyal person who will give her all to someone in friendship, and she is very proud of her family. After graduating from Pittsburgh Perry, Finnea attends CCAC and wants to become a nurse practitioner.



Gamar Muya Gamar has a strong work ethic. She completed college classes at CCAC, AP classes, and earned her Certified Nursing Assistant certification. At Pittsburgh Perry, she was a member of the African American Centers for Advanced Studies, National Honor Society, and helped organize the Perry Pop Up Pantry. Gamar attends the University of Pittsburgh studying biology.



Konstantinos Papazekos Konstantinos loves to think outside the box to solve problems and wants to make his mark in Pittsburgh. While at Pittsburgh Obama, he was the varsity boys' soccer captain, a high-honor roll student, and won the Leadership Award. Konstantinos is studying history and political science at the University of Pittsburgh

### **LA ROCHE UNIVERSITY**

The Pittsburgh Promise and La Roche University made an investment in me because they believed I am worth it. Because of The Promise, in addition to the welcoming, encouraging and positive atmosphere of La Roche, I can proudly say that I am a college graduate. - NICOLE LINKES '16



Engaging Minds. Embracing the World.

# 30



of The Pittsburgh Promise

Niya Allen Niya is proud to have earned the honor of being valedictorian at Pittsburgh Obama during a pandemic. She was a member of the academic enrichment program Breakthrough Pittsburgh, and now has gone full circle as she is the Assistant Program Director for the summer. Niya is studying to become an orthopedic surgeon at the University

### Howmet Aerospace Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise











Oday Abushaban Oday is proud of his Palestinian heritage and wants to be a shining star for his country. While attending Pittsburgh SciTech, he won Engineering Student of the Year in 2019. In addition to his love for cinematography, Oday is attending the University of Pittsburgh where he studies engineering. He wants to someday become a pilot.

Elliot Escalante Elliot was very proud of his accomplishments while attending City High, including being a member of the National Honor Society and the Rock-Climbing Club. He attends Carnegie Mellon University and wants to pursue a career in the aerospace industry.

Abigail Miller-Peterson While attending Pittsburgh Allderdice, Abigail won the prestigious Harvard Book Award in 2020 and left her mark as a leader. She is a creator and loves to see the progress of her idea becoming a reality. Abigail is studying mechanical engineering at Carnegie Mellon University.

Harkamal Singh Studying mechanical engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, Harkamal has always had a "never give up" mentality. He is very proud of being able to balance school while at Pittsburgh SciTech with helping manage his family's business. Harkamal wants to make an impact in his community.

**Damian Williams** Damian consistently pushes himself to be the best version of himself, graduating valedictorian of Pittsburgh Online Academy. He also is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars and the Boy Scouts, earning the prestigious Eagle Scout honor. He attends Penn State University-Behrend, studying mechanical engineering.

**"THE EXECUTIVE SCHOLAR PROGRAM HELPED ME LEARN HOW TO** CONDUCT MYSELF IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER. I'VE DEVELOPED NEW AND EFFECTIVE WAYS TO MAINTAIN A PROFESSIONAL MINDSET AND APPEARANCE THAT WILL BE BENEFICIAL IN MY FUTURE CAREER."

ANAI'YA JONES, 2018 KEYBANK SCHOLAR

### 2021 EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS

of The Pittsburgh Promise

### **KeyBank Scholars** of The Pittsburgh Promise



**Rico Harper** Rico grew from a shy kid into a leader who took on more responsibilities and initiatives. Over his four years at Pittsburgh Allderdice, he was a High Honor Roll student and a member of the National Honor Society. Rico is attending CCAC and wants to earn a Ph.D. in psychology.



Atasia Little Proudly being accepted into 17 colleges, Atasia wants to be an advocate for others in the medical field. She loves basketball, playing in high school for Pittsburgh Allderdice. Atasia attends Lincoln University to further her goal of being a physician assistant.



Mica Siegler Mica is passionate about making a difference in the world and believes it is crucial that everyone should work together to make the world a better place. She is proud of her ability to connect with others and loves building relationships. Mica is enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh.



Chau Truong At Pittsburgh Brashear, Chau was a member of the Varsity Tennis Team, Medical Club, and Asian Club. She loves to learn about different cultures and languages and is also very fascinated by science and human anatomy. Chau is a first generation college student at the University of Pittsburgh and wants to become a doctor.



Isabella Vincent With a love for education, Isabella plans to share it with young people in her career as an elementary school teacher. She is a former Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador and earned multiple scholarships to attend Chatham University.

### McGuinn Family Foundation Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

high school youth.





Grayce Ransome At Pittsburgh CAPA, Grayce was a member of the Black Student Union, Green Team, and was a 2021 class officer. Through her creativity, she won the Scholastic Key Award for her sculptures. Grayce majors in fine and studio arts at Edinboro

Nikko Poole Nikko Poole Day was an honor

bestowed to him for his successful completion of

his Eagle Service Scout Project at the Brookline Teen

Outreach Program. Nikko is attending Slipperv Rock

University to be a health and physical education

teacher and hopes to have a positive impact on

Carter Stokes Witnessing police brutality as an African American male has motivated Carter to fight against hate in this world. Carter hopes to unite the world through his music as a songwriter and rapper. He majors in commercial music technology at the California University of Pennsylvania.

Starr Wasler "Change is inevitable if you wish to progress." Starr wants to change minds and the world and serve those who are disproportionately affected in their daily lives. She is studying architecture at Carnegie Mellon University.

Grey Weatherford-Brown Grey loves writing, as she was a Literary Arts Major at Pittsburgh CAPA. As Youth Poet Ambassador, she enjoyed showing young people the importance of self-expression and inspiring others with the power of the pen. Grey is studying creative writing at Susquehanna University.

Currently, thirteen organizations are members of The Pittsburgh Promise Executive Scholars program.

UPMC | Highmark | PNC | BNY Mellon | American Eagle Outfitters Giant Eagle | Highmark Wholecare | Howmet Aerospace | KeyBank McGuinn Family Foundation | PPG | Thermo Fisher Scientific | Viatris

### **PPG Scholars** of The Pittsburgh Promise

environment.



Jaden Coffey Through his community service, Jaden learned the importance of community effort when creating change. While attending Pittsburgh SciTech, he played basketball all four years and was awarded the Spirit Award for having the spirit of Dream, Discover, and Design. Jaden currently attends the University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg and wants to be a nuclear engineer.





Aneesha Dell After graduating from City High School, Aneesha is continuing her education at Slippery Rock University. A leader in her own right, she is a former Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador and started the Student Assembly to bridge relationships between administration and students at her school. Aneesha's goals are to teach high school students art and history, and to bring positive change in the urban school system.





Izzy Graham Izzy is very passionate about criminal justice reform, environmental advocacy, and social justice. She attends Penn State University studying political science with plans to attend law school. At Pittsburgh Allderdice, she participated in the spring musical, cross country team, and National Honor Society.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE **EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS PROGRAM?** EMAIL executivescholars@pittsburghpromise.org.

# **COMPANIES**



of The Pittsburgh Promise

Eli Copich At Pittsburgh Allderdice, Eli was in drumline, marching band, and a High Honor Roll student. He studies environmental science at the University of Pittsburgh. Eli is passionate about the world around us and the natural features of the world and hopes to pursue a career improving the

**Ciara Gordon** Ciara loves to help and uplift people in their time of need. While attending Pittsburgh Allderdice, she was a High Honor Roll student, and a member of the National Honor Society and the Feminist Student Union. Ciara is attending the University of Pittsburgh with aspirations to work in

### Thermo Fisher Scientific Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise

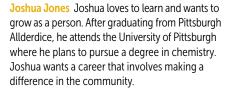




Dorothy Crow Dorothy uses creativity as an outlet, such as painting, sewing, or creating digital media. While at Pittsburgh CAPA, she maintained at least a 3.9 GPA, along with being a Change Agent, Debate Club Co-President, and Green Team President. Dorothy is at CCAC studying computer science and environmental studies.

Garrett Grodin Baseball and family will always be in Garrett's heart. The process of discovering how to sell a product or service and be profitable excites him. Garrett wants to enhance his business skills as he attends Penn State University.





Paula Mendoza Taking pride in her education and wanting to make her family proud, Paula is a first-generation college student attending Point Park University. At Pittsburgh Brashear, she was a member of the National Honor Society and the Girl's Tennis Team.

Kiera Robinson A former Pittsburgh Promise Ambassador, Kiera is very passionate about learning new skills and cultures of the people around her. She graduated from Pittsburgh Brashear as a tennis team champion and National Honor Society member. Kiera attends the University of Pittsburgh studying molecular biology and Spanish.

of The Pittsburgh Promise

### Viatris Scholars of The Pittsburgh Promise



Robyn Arrington-Epperson "I will be a differencemaker, change my circumstances, and rewrite my family's story." Valedictorian, basketball team captain, senior class representative, and community servant leader all describe Robyn. After graduating from Pittsburgh Westinghouse, she studies sports management and nursing at La Roche.



Anna Cappella While at Pittsburgh Allderdice, Anna was co-captain of Mock Trial Team, vice president of National Honor Society, and dance captain for the spring musical. She loves writing poetry because she feels that communication can shape the way people understand and connect with each other. Anna majors in biology at Carnegie Mellon University and wants to use biology to make a difference.



Vanessa Garcia Vanessa is a first-generation college student attending CCAC. At Pittsburgh Allderdice, she was a member of the Feminist Club and began working while in school. She enjoys learning new things and wants to be a positive role model to younger people.



Alison Harvill Alison is passionate about biology and advocating for women in STEM. She aspires to conduct research and travel the world. One of her proudest accomplishments is having the one-act play she wrote produced by City Theater. Alison graduated from Pittsburgh CAPA and studies biology and computer science at the University of Pittsburgh.



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5

**Chuong Truong** Chuong was a member of the Marching Band Team, BotsIQ Robotics Team, and Russian Olympiad Team, winning the Gold and Silver medal for the latter. As a first-generation college student, he wants to continue his education, obtain a Ph.D., and become a minister or missionary. Chuong is studying philosophy and Russian at Carnegie Mellon University.

THE EXECUTIVE SCHOLARS PROGRAM IS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT THE PROMISE CAN HELP STUDENTS TRANSITION NOT ONLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE, BUT ALSO FROM COLLEGE TO A CAREER. WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR 2021 EXECUTIVE SCHOLAR CLASS.

# A brighter, healthier tomorrow

hatham University offers a blend of professional preparation and liberal arts skill-building in our areas of excellence: health and sustainability, business and communication, and the arts and sciences. We offer approximately 40 undergraduate majors that lead our students to build a brighter, healthier tomorrow for themselves and their communities.

We help students streamline their investment without shortchanging their education, with scholarships and integrated degree programs that let qualified students earn undergraduate and graduate degrees in as few as five years. And with over 50 student clubs, students are guaranteed as stimulating an experience outside the classroom as inside.

### Learn more at chatham.edu



**chatham**UNIVERSITY

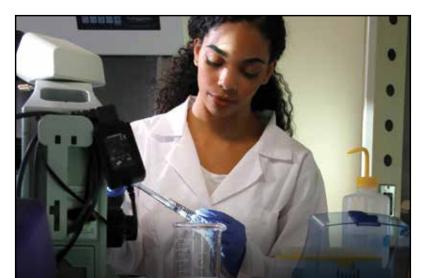


SOCIAL WORK/ **CRIMINAL JUSTICE** 

I'm a first generation student who didn't know what to expect from college, but KU was so welcoming, it made my transition easy. You definitely get more attention than you would at a large university. Administrators helped me find jobs on campus and made me feel really comfortable. I was even able to study abroad in Spain.

– FELIX ALBERTO, BUSINESS MANAGEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS





# ACHIEVING BREAKTHROUGHS WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

CCAC's Pittsburgh Promise Initiative and Pittsburgh Promise Extension Program provide a supportive learning environment where students make the most of their Pittsburgh Promise funding to achieve their goals.

### **CLASSES ENROLLING NOW!**



admissions@ccac.edu ccac.edu



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100% of students receive financial aid.

96% of our graduates do so in four years or fewer.

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Tuition, room and board at Waynesburg is approximately **\$11,000 below** the national average for private, non-profit, four-year colleges.

More than **90 percent** of Waynesburg students receive some form of financial aid each year.

WAYNESBURG

learn more at waynesburg.edu







You have the power to do amazing things. Cal U has the keys to unlock your passion. Your abilities. Your dreams. Unlock your story and build your future

at Cal U.

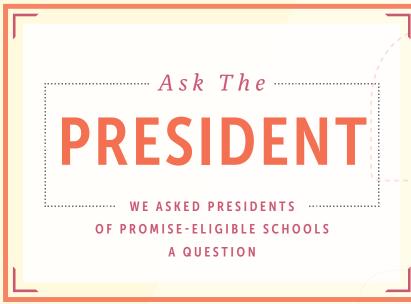




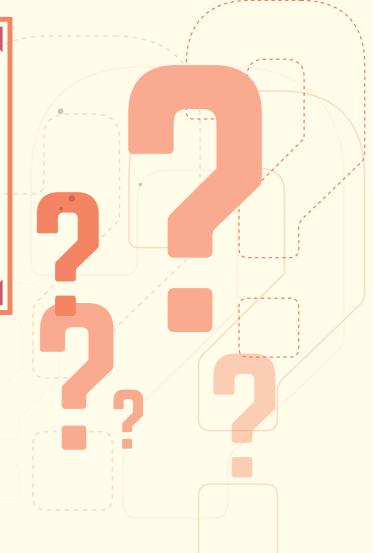
Jour Story.



Start Your Story at **calu.edu** 



What advice do you have for students going from virtual learning back to in-person learning?





As learners return to classrooms, my advice for students is to remember the insights you gained during virtual and hybrid learning. In particular, a silver lining of the pandemic has been embracing creativity and innovation to deliver more opportunities for connection between students and their professors, classmates, and mentors. While we may feel eager to leave the Zoom world behind, the robustness of our virtual interactions during the past year and a half have showed just how powerful technology can be in building bridges and supporting engaged learning. Consider new ways of combining in-person classes with these virtual tools, such



### Hilary L. Link, Ph.D. President Allegheny College

For many students, this fall means returning to the classroom after more than a year of full or partial virtual learning. That's certainly exciting – but also a big adjustment. Remember that everyone at your school wants you to succeed! The most important thing you can do is ask for help, even if you're not 100% sure you need it. Many faculty and staff will be returning to in-person education alongside you, so they're readjusting too. We'll all need extra patience and flexibility.

Remember that colleges also understand the unique high school experience you've had since spring 2020. Allegheny's holistic application

review process, for example, allows us to consider these extraordinary circumstances.

And, of course, make space for fun while you're learning. After months of Zoom meetups, you'll have a chance to get reacquainted with friends and make new ones. If you're on the fence about joining a club or trying an activity, go for it. At Allegheny, we like to say that you can be anything you put your mind to - so why put your mind to just one thing? Take time to explore different interests and keep yourself open to new possibilities.



The start of a new school year is always an exciting time. As you return to in-person classes, understand there will be challenges ahead, but be reassured by the fact you're back on familiar ground, with classmates who know you and teachers who care about you, in an environment that is uniquely designed for learning.

As CCAC's president and someone who is actively engaged with students across the college, students will often ask me for tips on how to succeed academically. Whether I'm talking to students on campus or to high school students I'm mentoring, my advice is always the same-first and foremost, enjoy learning for learning's sake.

### Farnam Jahanian, Ph. D. President Carnegie Mellon University

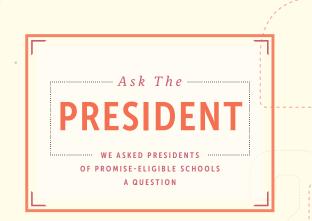
as seeking out a Zoom meeting with your professors during a busy week or suggesting a virtual study session. My other piece of advice is to be patient with yourself and with each other as we go back to school. This promises to be a year of transition – one that requires partnership, patience and resilience as we continue to overcome this pandemic together. It is perfectly fine to have some anxiety about returning to in-person interactions and taking care of your mental and emotional health will help you maintain focus, stay physically well, and enjoy your time at school.

### Quintin Bullock, D.D.S. President CCAC

Embrace the many opportunities that await you. Immerse yourself in your classes, expand your knowledge, and get involved in clubs, activities and events. Challenge yourself! Make this the year you learn a new language, try out for the team or the school play, volunteer in the community, take a leadership role or tackle an advanced subject (and nail it!).

This is your year to discover what interests you make it work for you. Soon you will be applying to college (and may join other Promise graduates at CCAC).

But no matter what you do, have a safe, enriching and successful school year!



What advice do you have for students going from virtual learning back to in-person learning?



Being in Pittsburgh and learning together matters, because we're a true community. Parents, students and teachers have all weathered the past year in impressive fashion. They've shown us that we can be nimble, stay safe and achieve amazing things, even when big challenges face us. Recently, public health news in our region has been encouraging, precisely because we have been working together. That will put us on the path to returning to a fully "normal" life again.

After so much time at home doing online and hybrid learning, it's understandable that you may be "out of practice" attending school full-time

and in-person. But you won't be alone-your parents and families, classmates, and friends, and even your teachers and school staff will be readjusting too. Don't be afraid of starting a new routine. Remember it's another adventure; it will lead to new friends, new activities, and a better year ahead!

Maintaining a positive attitude is a key factor for making your return back to school positive. You've done a great job during the past year, and we're super proud of you. Now comes the reward for your dedication and patience-great things await you in the year ahead!!!



Kutztown University is fully integrated into our town and region and our 9,000 employees and students will once again interact on a daily, if not hourly, basis with the many businesses, agencies, companies, schools, and broader communities all around us this fall. Course offerings will primarily be in-person, residence halls will be open for occupancy, dining facilities will be open, there will be increased events and extracurricular activities, including intercollegiate athletics with fans in attendance, and employees will return to work on campus.



First and foremost: Welcome back! The start of this new academic year-in person and after a year of such hardship-promises to be a brighter and happier one. But moving from the virtual environment to in-person learning also requires an adjustment of your mindset. During the last school year, you did amazing work to be incredibly flexible and strong. As you begin this school year, it is important to take the best lessons you learned from the remote environment and think about how they might fit into your educational plans going forward. For example, maybe what you valued from the virtual time was the ability to connect with classmates and teachers via technology in ways that will still



### Calvin L. Troup, Ph.D. President Geneva College

You may feel a little bit "out of condition" as you move back into the real classroom environment. But the benefits of learning in-person are definitely worth it. Think of the move back into face-to-face more rest and to push yourself through the day, learning as a change to a richer mental diet and exercise program. Lean into the opportunity! Even though we have a strong desire for the upgrade that learning in-person represents, we still have to

get back into condition. People in the workplace have found that it takes a few weeks to build up their in-person capacities, so be prepared to need even as you enjoy better interaction, stronger connections with classmates and teachers, and more engaging class sessions.

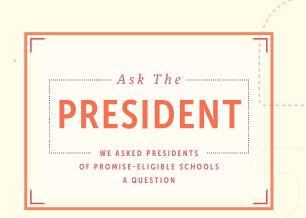
### Kenneth S. Hawkinson, Ph.D. President Kutztown University

The COVID-19 vaccine is an important tool to help us end the pandemic and return to a primarily face-to-face environment for the fall semester. We strongly encourage members of our campus community to get vaccinated before their return.

As I look forward to the 2021-22 academic year, we must "hit the ground learning." We have learned new things in the pandemic how to better incorporate technology into the learning process and how to safeguard against all respiratory illnesses - but we value our future of being together face-to-face and collectively, sharing the educational journey together.

### Ann E. Cudd, Ph.D. Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor University of Pittsburgh

be important. Maybe you discovered a tutoring tool that can help again this year as you continue to work to achieve your highest academic aspirations. Whatever you decide to bring into this new school year from the last one, I think we have all learned that there truly is no substitute for living life in-person: being in class, making and keeping friends, finding inspiring mentors, planning for your bright future, enjoying sports and recreation, taking part in school activities, and spending time with family. I hope you really embrace all these experiential aspects of learning and growing. As we say at the University of Pittsburgh, "Forge Ahead!"—and I send you every wish for a wonderful and successful return to class.



### What advice do you have for students going from virtual learning back to in-person learning?



### Chris Howard, Ph.D. President Robert Morris University

Sure, you are excited to return to in-person learning. But it may take time to readjust. Here are some tips for reducing the stress:

Re-establish a routine. Maintain a schedule that includes getting adequate sleep, rest, exercise, relaxation.

Take time to reconnect. We have all been isolated over the past year, and you may experience difficulty reconnecting in person with classmates, old friends, teachers, and counselors. Be patient as you regain communication and social skills.

Share concerns with others. If you find yourself struggling, talk it through with a friend, teacher, or counselor.

Reach out to help others. If you find a friend or classmate struggling, reach out and listen. Helping them will help you feel better too.

Become actively involved. Engage in your learning by asking and answering guestions in class and joining extracurricular activities.

Note to teachers and administrators:

RMU is ready to help! To help gather these tips, I called on some of the expert faculty in the RMU School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies: Dr. Richard Fuller, Dr. Larry Tomei, Dr. John Zeanchock, and the school dean, Dr. Mark Meyers. They will help you, too, should you need it this fall. Learn more at rmu.edu/education.



### Mary C. Finger, Ed.D. President Seton Hill University

At Seton Hill University, our students, faculty, and staff worked diligently to complete an in-person academic year in 2020-21, but we recognize that many of our incoming first-year students likely experienced all virtual or hybrid learning environments in high school. As students at all levels return to in-person learning, I would encourage them to reach out to their faculty members, counselors, and coaches quickly if they are struggling. Seeking help - and taking advantage of all academic support services offered - will keep problems manageable and set students up for a successful academic year. In addition, getting back to a normal routine –

with more regular sleeping, eating, and studying habits - makes a difference and can help create a better mindset for students as they return to in-person learning. I would ask students to be part of life on campus. All of us have been under an enormous amount of stress during the pandemic. As we begin our return to normalcy, students should find opportunities to meet people and introduce new experiences into their lives. Finally, I would encourage students not to be too hard on themselves and to try to accept that not everything will go as planned. When you engage with those around you, work hard, and find time to relax and have fun, you will find success.



My advice is simple. Make the most of it. If this Also, give some thought to your own prepandemic has taught us anything, it is not to take pandemic behaviors and, if there are things each other for granted. Now that you are returning you've always felt you'd like to become better at, to face-to-face learning, use the opportunity to find the time and commit to changing them – fully engage, to ask questions, and to get to know even just one at a time. your instructors and peers as people.

Most of us have not been together in more than a year. With that in mind, make a point each week to have a conversation with someone you don't normally spend time with.



### Kathy Brittain Richardson, Ph.D. President Westminster College

The truism that "everything old is new again" will likely be demonstrated in your transition to in-person learning. Returning to traditional classrooms with regular schedules, coordinated activities, and busy hallways may seem strangely new, as though you've suddenly flown through a time warp back to day one of kindergarten. Anticipating the uncertainty of the experience may help; such uncertainty is a normal response to this type of change. Set small goals for your re-entry. One goal might be to attend school every day of the first month. Remind yourself to focus on each class you are in, make this adjustment successfully. and don't let your phone or laptop distract you.

### William J. Behre, Ph.D. President Slippery Rock University

In other words, take advantage to this opportunity to make a fresh start. Use it to broaden your horizons, get to know new people, and to commit to being your best self.

Another goal might be to get involved in one extracurricular activity (a sports team, a music group, a student club, a service activity) during the first month back so you can reconnect with classmates. But resist the temptation to jump into multiple commitments because you are excited to be back in person-overloading will bring more stress.

Be confident, especially in your resilience to learn during a pandemic and the challenges it presented. Remember, you had the old routine of being "at" school down, so trust that you can

# Seton Hill

# **A Promising Future**

Pittsburgh Promise Scholar and Seton Hill alumna Samantha Moon '21 challenged herself to overcome her shyness to become involved in numerous activities while majoring in Health Science - Pre-Allied Health at Seton Hill University. "Becoming so involved on campus as president of the Multicultural and International Student Organization, as a Griffin Guide and as a Resident Assistant allowed me to become a better version of myself and helped me gain responsibility, leadership and people skills that I probably wouldn't have gained otherwise." Samantha's Seton Hill experience - made possible thanks to the Pittsburgh Promise program - also encouraged her to pursue her MBA at Seton Hill with a concentration in Healthcare Administration. "I appreciate the rigorous courses at Seton Hill because I know they are preparing me for the career I want to pursue," she said.



Seton Hill University's rigorous academic programs coupled with its nationally-recognized Fit for the World career readiness program prepare students not only for graduate school and their first job but set them on a path to success long after graduation.

For more information on Seton Hill University's academic programs, visit www.setonhill.edu, email admit@setonhill.edu or call 724.838.4281.

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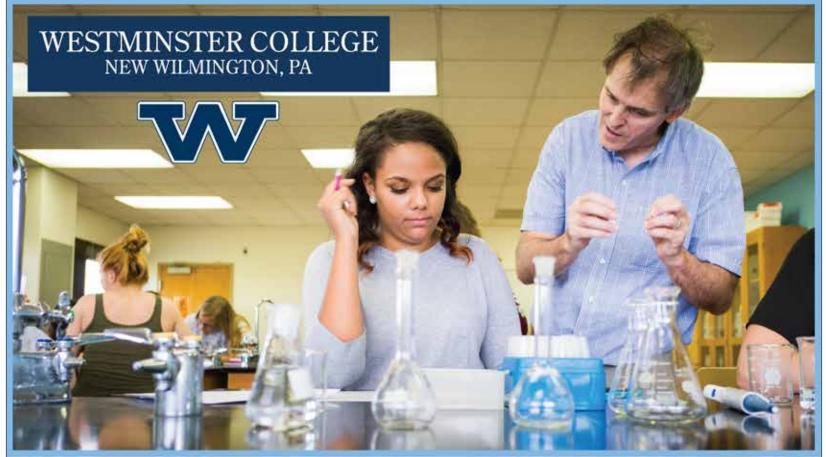
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once again! With incentives of \$40,000 in challenge grants and r \$19,000 in corporate sponsorships, the 2021 grassroots, in-yourhborhood Walk raised more than \$108,000 total! Hundreds of donors and alkers made this year's six-week event something very special as they walked, hiked, ran, and cycled in many locations locally and around the United States. Walk for One Promise plans to return as a hybrid event in 2022 with a morning kick-off walk followed by six weeks of sneaker tracks around the U.S.

### CREEK RE CENTEI LANETAR VER RD.



### 2021 Walk for One **Promise Participants**

- 1 Keepers of The Promise Karalyn and Calum Matheson
- 2 Keeper of The Promise Moriah Lipscomb with daughter Jordan
- 3 Promise Legacy, Rounida Shwaish and Joshua Devine, in Washington, D.C.
- 4 Keepers of The Promise Cynthia and Steve Lackey
- 5 Promise Legacy, Abby Lutton in Boston
- 6 Promise Legacy; Mack Barrett, Meghan Boehm and Taleesha Johnson
- 7 Oxford Development Team
- 8 Keeper of The Promise Lou Testoni
- 9 Keeper of The Promise Janet Hunt, Ghost Town Trail
- 10 2021-2022 Promise Ambassadors

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