

For Immediate Release

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RRHA Celebrates Academic Excellence During 7th Annual "Open House in the Village" Scholarship Event

RICHMOND, VA. (July, 2026) – The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) will celebrate the achievements of sixteen exceptional students during its 7th Annual Open House in the Village Scholarship Event on Thursday, July 23, 2026, at the Virginia Union University Living and Learning Center.

The annual celebration recognizes graduating high school seniors from RRHA's public housing communities and Housing Choice Voucher Program who have demonstrated academic excellence and have been accepted to four-year colleges, universities, and community colleges. The event shines a spotlight on students whose determination, resilience, and hard work prove that where a person lives does not determine where they can go in life.

This year's class of scholars represents the future of Richmond—students who have excelled academically while overcoming challenges and pursuing higher education with purpose and ambition.

Among this year's honorees is a student who was awarded a prestigious scholarship from the Virginia Association of Housing and Community Development Officials (VAHCDO), further recognizing the exceptional talent and promise found within RRHA communities.

"Every year, these remarkable students remind us that potential exists in every neighborhood and every community we serve," said RRHA Chief Executive Officer Steven Nesmith. "Their accomplishments demonstrate that opportunity, determination, and support can open doors to extraordinary futures. At RRHA, we believe an address should never define a person's destiny. Through events like Open House in the Village, we proudly celebrate these students while reaffirming our commitment to investing in the next generation and fulfilling our mission of Building Vibrant Communities."

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Now in its seventh year, the Open House in the Village Scholarship Event has become one of RRHA's signature celebrations, recognizing educational achievement while inspiring younger residents to pursue their own academic and career aspirations. The event also reflects RRHA's continued commitment to supporting families beyond housing by creating pathways to educational success and long-term economic mobility.

Family members, community partners, educators, elected officials, and RRHA leadership will gather to honor the graduates and celebrate the bright futures that await them.

The following are the RRHA graduating seniors, college-bound students and the college and career paths they have chosen:

1. Quentin Atkins - (Gilpin) Catholic University
2. Zamaya Booker (Hillside) - Old Dominion University
3. Catherine Branch (Fairfield) - Virginia State University
4. Jaria Brown (Hillside) - Norfolk State University
5. Jakiyah Carroll (Gilpin) - Virginia State University
6. Sterling Franklin (Gilpin) - Virginia State University
7. Natangel Gale, Jr. (Mosby) - Old Dominion University
8. Anthony Hanson (HCVP) - Virginia State University
9. Ta'Veon Johnson* (Mosby) - James Madison University
10. Patrice Lambert (HCVP) - University of Virginia
11. Lewis Mallory III (Hillside) - Virginia Peninsula Community College
12. Devonte Parker (Mosby) - Old Dominion University
13. Aa'Niyah Pennington (Fairfield) - Virginia Commonwealth University
14. Javon Spearman, Jr. (Gilpin) - Old Dominion University
15. Cody Thompson (HCVP) - Old Dominion University
16. KeyJohn White (Whitcomb) - Richard Bland College

Those interested in learning more and contributing a tax - deductible donation toward RRHA's scholarship program for these students can contribute online at rrha.com.

* VAHCDO scholarship winner

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