Bridging the Gap: Young Adult Police Commissioners

The Newport News Police Department (NNPD) is working to connect with young adults in the community through its Young Adult Police Commissioners program. Students from local high schools have expressed their desire to be included in conversations on topics directly affecting them, such as gun violence and school resource officers. By creating the Young Adult Police Commissioners, the NNPD is working to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the young adult community.

Drew and Karson are two juniors from An Achievable Dream Middle and High School who serve as Young Adult Police Commissioners. They are among other students who meet weekly at the Newport News Police Department to learn about

Continued on page 4

Drew and Karson are two remarkable young people, and I have no doubt they will go far and achieve many great things. We began the Young Adult Police Commissioners program to provide a unique opportunity for youth in Newport News to learn about the police department and interact with officers. In doing so, we forge positive relationships with young people like Drew and Karson who want to make the world—and their communities—even better. We are so proud of these young men and women and the impact they will continue to have on our community.

— Steve Drew, Chief of Police, City of Newport News

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Nicole Wilkins is a 2008 graduate of An Achievable Dream. She currently works as an intensive care coordinator with a government agency. In May, she will graduate with her fourth degree—a master’s in social work from Norfolk State University (NSU). Nicole has maintained a 3.87 GPA for the last three semesters, and has secured a job in the social work field. While studying at NSU, Nicole has accomplished her goals of being actively involved in a social work organization, speaking at conferences, maintaining a certain GPA, and completing the program with at least one job offer.

Her next goal is to begin her licensure supervision to obtain her Licensed Clinical Social Worker certification by 2024. Aside from her academic endeavors, Nicole assists her sister in raising her twin six-year-old nephews. An Achievable Dream taught Nicole several life lessons that align with her core value of giving back through social work, including never allowing one’s circumstances to define one’s path. “Although I grew up in an impoverished environment, I was afforded a great education at AAD beginning in the third grade,” Nicole shared. She also believes that AAD taught her accountability. “Being a Dreamer meant we were held to a higher standard of excellence,” Nicole stated.

The most significant aspect of An Achievable Dream to Nicole was exposure. She shared that AAD’s educators and administrators exposed them to new experiences. “Often, children growing up in low socioeconomic neighborhoods and communities were only exposed to things such as sports or community centers. However, An Achievable Dream broadened our horizons in our neighborhood by giving us alternatives such as tennis, golf, table etiquette, amusement parks, trips, and so much more.”

According to Nicole, the exposure AAD provided was so impactful that she taught the same skills to the youth in her community. Many faculty members at AAD specifically impacted her, including Dr. Lee Vreeland, Anthony Brickhouse, Richard Coleman, and Gina Spraggins. “Dr. Vreeland taught me the balance of love and discipline; Mr. Brickhouse provided me safety, reassurance, and positive affirmations; Mr. Coleman taught me compassion and empathy, and Ms. Spraggins taught me security and warmth.” AAD has taught Nicole to always use the resources afforded to her, understand the importance of cultural competency and diversity, and maintain positive relationships.

Nicole would describe AAD as invaluable to the surrounding community. “The students at AAD have limitless opportunities because of the connections, networking, and resources at their disposal,” Nicole shared. She believes that the regional community must know that AAD is an affordable and inclusive educational program. Being an AAD alumna means the world to her, and she is proud to see the program beginning its 30th year.

On June 9, 2022, our Newport News senior class will walk across the stage at the Ferguson Center for the Arts at Christopher Newport University and receive their diploma from An Achievable Dream High School. Family members and friends will cheer the seniors on as they celebrate each student’s accomplishments and future endeavors. We are immensely proud of their determination, resilience, and grit as they navigated virtual learning amid the pandemic, safely returning to in-person learning during the 2021–2022 school year and maintaining academic excellence. Congratulations to the Class of 2022!
Raven Moore, Class of 2014. I currently reside in Manassas, Virginia, and work as a health information specialist in the healthcare field. I am also a member of the United States Army Reserves and a graduate student at George Mason University, studying to obtain a master’s degree in healthcare administration and policy in May 2022. An Achievable Dream taught me to be persistent in achieving my goals no matter the obstacles I faced. Some of the most significant aspects of AAD are the relationships I created with students and teachers because I believe it is essential to have people in your life who know your journey and support you in your endeavors. I attended AAD from kindergarten to 12th grade, and it shaped me into the woman I am today. I am proud to be an AAD alumna!

Tevin Elam, Class of 2016. In 2017, I enlisted in the United States Air Force, and I became a military working dog handler in 2021. I am currently stationed at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton. After seeing the soldiers during the morning program, I became inspired to serve our country. The morning program had a significant impact on my life, and repeating the daily affirmations helped me maintain a positive mindset through every obstacle I faced. An Achievable Dream is not just a great school. It is filled with staff who treat students like family. The staff at AAD are willing to go to great lengths to ensure the students have a bright and prosperous future. It means so much to me to know that I am a part of such a great group of successful people who have set a standard of excellence.

Jorden Alston, Class of 2017. I graduated from Old Dominion University in 2021 and was hired at ForKids. I got married in the summer of 2021 and have enjoyed marriage since! I still reside in the Hampton Roads region. An Achievable Dream taught me not to be afraid to ask for help and find the resources I need to succeed. I love that AAD felt like a family and that the staff genuinely cared about our futures. The value that AAD instilled in me that has stayed with me is that anything is possible with the right vision, passion, and resources. I feel honored to be an alumna of AAD—a meaningful place to me.

Kaleb Coleman, Class of 2020. I graduated from An Achievable Dream in 2020, and I currently work at the Newport News Police Department in Property and Evidence. My most recent accomplishment is purchasing a new car! I often think about how the skills I learned at AAD, such as Speaking Green and professionalism, still help me. When I think of AAD, I immediately think about how much the faculty and staff care and the program’s many opportunities. The staff genuinely cares about all students. Everyone, including the cafeteria staff, custodial staff, and teachers, showed a genuine concern for every student that I don’t think you get at many schools. AAD is a tight-knit environment full of opportunities and room for growth. The surrounding community needs to know each Dreamer’s potential. I am proud to be a Dreamer and become the best version of myself each day to express my gratitude for everything AAD has done for me.
To our Boards of Directors, thank you for your support and dedication to the Dream.

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President’s Message, continued from page 1

during an interactive Saturday School lesson or discovering a new adventure on a field trip, our Dreamers are soaring to new heights. We could not do any of this without your unwavering support and dedication to An Achievable Dream. Your belief in our students, our mission, and our vision allows us to continue the important work we do.

We are preparing to enter our 30th year in operation on July 1, 2022, and I am in awe of how our team has remained dedicated to growing the program while staying true to our late founder, Walter Segaloff’s vision. As we continue to expand our programs in Virginia Beach and Henrico County, we do so knowing we are shaping brighter futures for deserving students. From the moment they enter the building, our students prove their determination to succeed despite any obstacles they may face. The faculty and staff at An Achievable Dream are passionate about educating our Dreamers so they can become independent, productive citizens.

Thank you for being a part of the Dream Community!

With great appreciation, Lee Vreeland, Ed.D., President and CEO

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AAD Alumni Attend ODU Luncheon with University President

Sixteen AAD alumni attending Old Dominion University joined ODU President, Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., and NBA Referee, entrepreneur, and AAD Virginia Beach Board member, Tony Brothers, for a luncheon. In addition to hearing from ODU’s Director of Financial Aid, Vera Riddick, and the Director of the Office of Intercultural Relations, Lesa Clark, our alumni enjoyed an incredibly inspiring conversation with President Hemphill and Mr. Brothers. Each shared how their life experiences influenced their journey to success, and both speakers encouraged students to persist in the face of challenges, finish strong, and achieve their goals.

Brian Hemphill, President of ODU

Tony Brothers, AAD Virginia Beach Board Member
Dreamers Achieving at All Levels!

Congratulations to ninth-grade Dreamer Mikayla for representing AAD Middle & High School at Lynnhaven and earning the highest score in Virginia for Achieve 3000, a learning solution designed to help students improve reading and writing skills. Mikayla read five different articles and answered comprehension questions on the same day to earn the top score in Virginia!

Student Ambassadors to the Southeast Community Coalition:

Our Future Change-makers and Community Influencers

Seniors Raekwon and Elisiana are members of the Principal’s Advisory Council at An Achievable Dream Middle & High School in Newport News. The school’s principal, Courtney Mompoint, selected these student leaders to serve as ambassadors to the Southeast Community Coalition, an organization created to provide equitable opportunities and educational advancement to underserved populations in Newport News. Raekwon and Elisiana were selected based on their academic achievements, leadership abilities, and campus involvement. As student ambassadors, they volunteer at community events, attend coalition meetings, and relay pertinent information to their peers. Raekwon shared the importance of hearing students’ voices in the community. He stated, “I’m the voice of my fellow students in this community to share our collective thoughts and ideas with community leaders.” Elisiana believes that anyone can impact a community. She shared, “You don’t have to be a product of your circumstances. You can use where you came from as a stepping stone for where you want to go in the future.”

Dr. Lee Vreeland, AAD President and CEO, and Reverend Kevin Swann, Senior Pastor of Ivy Baptist Church, are both members of the Southeast Community Coalition. They serve as co-chairs of the Safe Spaces Committee, helping to plan and host a series of engagement events for youth in a safe environment. Reverend Swann shared: “I am in awe of the leadership skills displayed by An Achievable Dream Middle & High School’s Principal’s Advisory students who are serving as ambassadors to the Southeast Community Coalition. I applaud these students for their dedication and desire to strengthen the Newport News community. These student leaders will assist the Community Coalition in planning our Safe Spaces and Back to School events, and they will mentor the rising generation of students to follow in their footsteps. I commend the diligence of these future leaders, change-makers, and community influencers.”

The students at An Achievable Dream never cease to amaze me with their desire to lead and serve. Raekwon and Elisiana are demonstrating great leadership as ambassadors to the Southeast Community Coalition, and I am proud of their commitment to make the world a better place, starting with their own city. I am honored to work alongside our Dreamers.

— Dr. Lee Vreeland, President & CEO, An Achievable Dream
As we continue our Profiles in Leadership series, highlighting a few of the many leaders making a difference and impacting our communities, we are pleased to feature Portia Cameron, An Achievable Dream Class of 2003 alumna and Director of Student Affairs at Legends Charter School in Maryland.

In your current role as director of student affairs at Legends Charter School, how do you create equitable educational practices for your students?

Legends Charter School offers a rigorous curriculum that equips its students with the skills and confidence to overcome achievement and generational gaps. I joined Legends Charter School because of its vision. Every scholar achieves maximum academic potential while developing financial literacy through an engaging, inspiring, and challenging learning environment. As director of student affairs, my role is to create and cultivate these learning environments by providing equitable access and resources to all of our scholars. I target each scholar’s unique needs to meet equal academic performance expectations through an Academic Support program. The student affairs team also identifies institutional or organizational policies that may unintentionally create inequity by giving scholars voices through different school-based clubs and organizations like the “Legends’ Times” and student government.

As an AAD Class of 2003 alumna, what does it mean to you to live out some of the same values and educational opportunities in your community? How has AAD influenced you as a leader?

My favorite AAD banner is, “Nothing was ever achieved without enthusiasm!” As an educator, I am reminded of scholars’ tenacity and grit to achieve their goals every day. I am also aware of the importance of creating student-centered learning environments by hiring teachers with similar ethnic backgrounds to enhance equitable representation, providing scholars with financial literacy resources, facilitating lesson plans based on a social and emotional learning curriculum, and allowing scholars to advocate for their education. My motto is, “If you have the will, we can develop the skill.” It is pertinent to build a culture and community within the school where scholars feel their goals are attainable, and the faculty and staff’s needs are met, making them available and equipped to meet each student’s needs. In education, we often get lost in making sure scholars can pass state assessments and forget about building inclusive communities focused on student needs. Setting scholars on the right trajectory is an integral part of my role at Legends Charter School. AAD does this exceptionally well: simply asking scholars what they want to do with their lives and making sure scholars have access and opportunities to achieve their goals. I am often asked how AAD has influenced me as a leader, and my answer will always be that AAD had a student focus.

What are some of the opportunities you and your team have seen and embraced during the pandemic? What perspective have you developed in such challenging times?

When Atasha James, CEO, and co-Founder of Equity Now Inc. Legends Charter School, envisioned opening Legends, she never thought our scholars’ first day of school would be...
have to be in a virtual setting. As schools across the globe rushed to move their “school” to Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams, my team and I focused on our scholars’ social-emotional learning and developing a curriculum rooted in love. During the first few weeks, we taught our students about Zones of Regulations, managing emotions, and adapting to online learning through our morning meeting program. As our students progressed through the pandemic, they could articulate their feelings and form strong relationships with their peers.

What are some of the ways your students have shown resilience in their nontraditional learning environments?

I was in awe of how flexibly our families moved from in-person learning to virtual learning during entirely virtual learning. I am still amazed at how our scholars show up and work on improving every day. Legends Charter School fosters a culture where students and teachers are encouraged to learn through mistakes. We focus on addressing scholars’ misconceptions and creating multiple learning pathways during team collaborative planning meetings. We all learn from mistakes, and they prove that you are trying.

What are you most looking forward to in the year ahead?

I am mainly looking forward to growth and expansion in the year ahead. I look forward to Legends’ scholars continuing to grow in their academics. In my personal life, I look forward to continuing to grow as a mother, wife, and director of student affairs; and I look forward to our communities continuing to grow together so Dreamers can achieve!

**Henrico Hokie Day with Virginia Tech**

Thank you to our partners at Virginia Tech for facilitating a day of interactive learning for our fifth-grade students at An Achievable Dream Certified Academy at Highland Springs Elementary and our sixth-grade students at An Achievable Dream Certified Academy at Fairfield Middle School! During Henrico Hokie Day, the staff at Virginia Tech facilitated station rotations for students to learn about African American history, create vision boards, engage in STEM activities, and learn aerodynamics!

Thank you, Virginia Tech, for creating this opportunity for our Dreamers!

We held an absolutely incredible Hokie Day event with An Achievable Dream students in Henrico County, and we can’t wait to welcome these Dreamers onto the campus of Virginia Tech in just a few short years! Hokie Day gave students the opportunity to engage with Virginia Tech staff and students and participate in station rotations and fun and engaging activities. We are thrilled to partner with An Achievable Dream to help lay the groundwork for students to see college as not only a possibility, but a very real part of their future as well.

— Karen Eley Sanders, Associate Vice Provost for College Access

Bridging the Gap, continued from page 1

department operations and share their perspective on issues in their community, like gun violence, domestic violence, and diversity. “Teen violence and a lot of the shooting issues happen in our neighborhoods. We are very aware of them, but a lot of the times, we’re left in the dark because ‘a child should stay in a child’s place’ and ‘that’s grown adults’ business’ and things, but we’re almost adults,” said Drew in an interview with 13NewsNow. Karson is proud to serve as a voice for his peers and as a student representative. He shared, “If the youth are dealing with the problem, they should have something to say about it.” An Achievable Dream is proud of our students for using their voices to speak out about issues that impact them in the community.
In April, An Achievable Dream hosted a cocktail reception to celebrate our Tennis Ball sponsors and donors. AAD recognized our dedicated event sponsors who stepped up to close the funding gap to continue to provide support, opportunities, and resources to our students! We premiered a special video to honor the Class of 2022 and announce their class sponsor during the reception. The video also included a special keynote address from AAD Class of 2006 graduate, Travis Jones. We announced the late N.C. Hardee and Linda Hardee as the Class of 2022 graduating class sponsors during the reception. Linda Hardee shares, “I send all of my warmest wishes and congratulations to the Achievable Dream Class of 2022. I am so proud of what they have achieved, and have no doubt they will go on to live out their dreams. My late husband, N.C., would be incredibly proud of these young men and women. The sky is the limit for them!”

Thanks to the many sponsors, supporters, and special guests who attended this celebration and who continue to shape our Dream Community!
Although we made the difficult decision to cancel the third annual A Night to Dream, the Dream Community in Virginia Beach stands up and stands out, choosing to support our Dreamers no matter what. Thank you to our A Night to Dream sponsors for maintaining their support of An Achievable Dream!
I am thrilled for the growth of An Achievable Dream (AAD) in Virginia Beach. The expansion of An Achievable Dream Middle & High School at Lynnhaven provides a dedicated space for our students to explore diverse learning opportunities in a state-of-the-art facility. At AAD, we often say we are a family. For our students, faculty and staff in Virginia Beach, this will be more than just a building: it will be a home.

— Pervis O. Blake, Vice President of Academics & COO, An Achievable Dream

For more information on sponsoring a classroom or space, contact Lee Vreeland at lvreeland@achievabledream.org.
Read Across America Day!

Several volunteers visited our campuses virtually and in person for Read Across America Day! Annualy on Read Across America Day, students, parents, teachers, and community members come together to read books and celebrate the joy of reading! A special thanks to our community partners for making this day a success!

An Achievable Dream Virginia Beach Visits Newport News to Connect Dreams Across Campuses!

AD staff from Virginia Beach took a trip to Newport News to visit AAD Academy and AAD Middle and High School. While at the Newport News schools, the staff greeted students, saw the morning program and social rotations, and visited classes at both schools. Building connections and deepening the understanding of An Achievable Dream was at the forefront of the experience!

The faculty and staff reflected on the experience at our Newport News campuses. Autumn Church, a guidance counselor at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy, shared, “I appreciated participating in the morning meeting; I’ve been repeating some of the banners in my head and home all week! The power of hearing all students in one room and shouting the banners was magical. It is also encouraging to see so many adults who share the same goal and vision for our youth. There was so much love and passion present from everyone we met!”
Fifth-grade Dreamers at AAD Academy learned about ecosystems and life cycles with Cosmic Chelsey from Mad Science! The students participated in hands-on activities to enhance their knowledge.

Principal Darby received a sweet surprise from the students, faculty, and staff at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy for Principal’s Appreciation Week.

Congratulations to our fifth-grade Dreamer, Ne'Vaeh, who represented AADCA at Highland Springs Elementary in the districtwide spelling bee!

Staff at An Achievable Dream Academy recognized 33 students as “Good Citizens” for showing compassion throughout the building, and the students enjoyed pizza and juice!

AAD launched a Black History Month campaign to recognize our alumni, historical Black pioneers in education, and other public figures who continue to shape history through their societal contributions.

What’s Happening at An Achievable Dream?

Ms. O’Sullivan, security guard at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy, takes time daily to read and share reading strategies with a third-grade Dreamer.

Middle school Dreamers at AAD Middle & High School at Lynnhaven participated in AVID Career Spirit Week and dressed as the professionals they would like to one day become. Some of the careers highlighted were movie producers, teachers, scientists, photographers, and doctors!

Mr. Shaffer, an eighth-grade science teacher at AAD Middle & High School at Lynnhaven, presented an excellent lesson on Newton’s Laws of Motion. He even broke wood with his bare hand!
First-grade Dreamers at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy practiced their math skills while skating in class! They identified sums, differences, and number sentences on the plastic "ice-skating rink" and glided to the correct answer.

Faculty and staff across all campuses were surprised with healthy, energizing treats to promote wellness!

An Achievable Dream Middle & High School Young Men of Distinction on the Move!

Young Men of Distinction Wins Youth Academy Program of the Year!

Congratulations to the Young Men of Distinction program for receiving the Youth Academy Program of the Year award, presented by the Kappa Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.! The Young Men of Distinction (YMOD) is a male mentorship program sponsored by An Achievable Dream Middle & High School and the Kappa Iota Iota Chapter (KII) of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. The program focuses on academics, integrity, discipline, and uplifting the community. Currently, 47 young men from grades six through 12 are participating in YMOD.

Young Men of Distinction Visit Brooks Crossing Innovation Lab

Fourteen Members of Young Men of Distinction visited the Brooks Crossing Innovation Lab for a STEM lesson on 3D printing, music recording, and disc jockeying! The young men learned to develop products through digital fabrication, using Ultimaker, one of the world's leading 3D printer manufacturers. The students also manipulated sounds with an electric keyboard and microphones. A special thanks to the Brooks Crossing Innovation Lab for the opportunity!

Virginia Tech Sponsors Young Men of Distinction Learning Opportunities

Jordan, Ni’zjohn, Jaden, and Jiovanni, members of the Young Men of Distinction, attended the 2022 Uplifting Black Men virtual conference, sponsored by Virginia Tech. The theme was "Lift Every Voice," and the students engaged in a discussion on the Black male image and a STEM lesson. Thank you, Virginia Tech, for this enriching experience!

Our Young Men of Distinction traveled to Virginia Tech, where they engaged in several activities while on campus. The young men toured Virginia Tech’s Helmet Lab, where they learned about helmets designed for the NFL and other professional sports. The laboratory’s facilitators displayed a crash test for the young men to see how much impact each helmet could receive. Our students also created and designed helmets and tested them to see how they withstood the impact. Thank you, Virginia Tech, for creating this educational experience for our Dreamers!
What’s Happening at An Achievable Dream?

For Kindness Week at An Achievable Dream Academy, fourth-grade Dreamers read stories to their fellow kindergarteners!

The President’s Advisory Council at An Achievable Dream Certified Academy at Highland Springs Elementary met to discuss plans for the semester!

Our fourth- and fifth-grade Dreamers at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy traveled to Chartway Arena in Norfolk to watch a basketball game between the Harlem Globetrotters and the Washington Generals!

Congratulations to the Dreamers at AAD Academy who earned the honor roll during the first and second marking periods! We are proud of you!

Faculty and staff at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy celebrated the Dreamers who received perfect attendance for the first semester!

An Achievable Dream is proud to be a beneficiary of the 53rd Annual Priority Toyota Charity Bowl! Friends of the Dream gathered at S.B. Ballard Stadium on Saturday, April 9, for an afternoon of fun and ODU football during the Charity Bowl! Thank you, Priority Automotive Charities!

Thank you to Smithfield Foods for its $200,000 contribution to An Achievable Dream Newport News to support our annual fund and Tennis Ball. We are so grateful for your continued partnership!

Sixth-grade Dreamers at AAD Middle & High School at Lynnhaven participated in an engaging field trip to Jamestown. Students enjoyed hands-on learning and making memories during the trip!

AAD launched a Women’s History Month campaign to recognize the phenomenal women, including our Dreamers, like Alauna, who continue to make significant contributions to our community, society, and culture.

The SCA at AAD Middle & High School sponsored a talent showcase for students! Talent included singing, dancing, and poetry.
Members of the running club at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy received a visit from Bob the Leprechaun, J&A Racing, and Orange Theory Fitness to prepare for the Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile. Our Dreamers received a pair of running shoes, socks, backpacks, and t-shirts! Our students traveled to the oceanfront to participate in the Operation Smile Shamrock Final Mile, the culmination of this ongoing running and walking program for elementary-aged children that promotes lifelong fitness and combats childhood obesity.

Students at An Achievable Dream Certified Academy at Highland Springs Elementary tested how acids react to heat during Saturday School.

Dreamers at AAD Middle & High School at Lynnhaven stepped away from their desks for a study session!

Spring into science! Eighth-grade students at An Achievable Dream Middle & High School enjoyed a warm, sunny day in the garden while working on their science project!

King and Marjorie, students at Seatack Elementary AAD Academy, had their artwork featured at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art!

Spring 2022 www.achievabledream.org
An Achievable Dream develops independent, productive citizens through a social, academic, and moral education.

Be sure to connect with us online on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

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Stay Connected with An Achievable Dream. Sign up to receive our monthly email newsletter, the Power of the Dream, and receive the latest information on our Dreamers. Go to www.AchievableDream.org or send an email to information@AchievableDream.org.

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