An Achievable Dream (AAD) announced the executive leadership team from Newport News Shipbuilding as the sponsors of the Class of 2020 during the 27th Annual Tennis Ball gala on Saturday, November 16. As class sponsors, the leadership team have personally committed to providing annual merit scholarships for each member of the class for each year attending college and maintaining a certain grade point average. The graduates of the Class of 2020, who were honored in a special ceremony at the 27th Annual Tennis Ball, will be known as the Newport News Shipbuilding Scholars.

Class sponsorship of An Achievable Dream graduates is a concept dating from 1992 when the late Walter Segaloff, AAD founder and local businessman, rallied the Newport News business community behind the program. Each year since 2001, businesses and individuals

Continued on page 9
The 27th Annual Achievable Dream Tennis Ball was held on Saturday, November 16, 2019 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center. For the first time ever, the Tennis Ball was held in the exhibit halls of the convention center. Guests enjoyed an extensive silent auction, gourmet dinner, and exciting live auction featuring unique items, new cars, a boat, and motorcycles! Proceeds from the event support the students of An Achievable Dream in Newport News.
Thank you to the donors who provided so many wonderful silent and live auction items. Your generous support allows us to continue to provide an excellent education and numerous enrichment opportunities for the students of An Achievable Dream.

Thank you to the many volunteers who gave their time, to our wonderful vendors, and to the staff of the Hampton Roads Convention Center and Embassy Suites, for making the 27th Annual Tennis Ball a success. We could not do it without you!
My name is Isaiah Trevon Lucas. I am an Old Dominion University graduate student in the Masters of Higher Education Leadership, Graduate Assistant for African American Initiatives, the very first African American President of the Student Government Association and I am your 2019 Tennis Ball Keynote Speaker. What do you do when the odds are stacked against you, and society continuously tells you, no? Who do you turn to when you have a dream but reality pushes it from you? An Achievable Dream has been the answer to both of these questions. An Achievable Dream has been there to help me when I was down and has celebrated with me when I am up. As an alumni of AAD, I have consistently pondered the question; how can I ever pay An Achievable Dream back for all the program has done for me. A powerful quote by Catherine Ryan Hyde comes to mind: “If you can't pay it back, pay it forward.”

Today marks the day I pay it forward. Today I have created four letters that will tell my story: one to myself, one to the program that paved the way for me, one to you my audience, and one to my God. I hope you will see the importance of giving back to a program that gives so much to others.

A letter to myself:

Dear Isaiah,

As you stand nervously in front of more than 1,000 people, I ask that you not take this opportunity lightly. Today is the day you can share some moments of your life where tests became your testimony.

Test #1: Do you remember growing up in the projects on Dresden Drive? The norm for your community was if you are a boy, you join a gang and you do whatever your gang does. You are taught the “hood” way of doing things. If you want something, you take it; if you don’t like someone, you fight them. Gun shots are your alarm clock and are the norm for your community. Isaiah, you passed that test, you didn’t allow your surroundings to shape who you are or allow society to define your manhood. Now you are in the process of creating a nonprofit organization geared to ensuring black men from impoverished areas don’t fall through societal cracks.

Test #2: Do you remember senior year when you felt like dropping out and giving up? While your peers were sharing their excitement over getting accepted into multiple colleges, you entered in deep depression, not getting into any of your top schools. My first choice was Old Dominion University, but I was not originally accepted. I then attended Richard Bland College for two years, where I maintained a 3.8 GPA. I then transferred to Old Dominion University. Isaiah, the school where you weren’t initially admitted is the same school where today, you stand as the second-term President of the Student Government Association.

Test #3: Do you remember growing up feeling not good enough? Do you remember feeling like nobody cared about you? Do you remember people in your neighborhoods telling you that you’d never amount to anything? Do you remember domestic violence being an everyday thing? Do you remember the burden on your heart and how it made you feel? Do you remember your sophomore year of high school as you stood in your room alone with a hand full of pills, seconds away from taking your life? My story is that in the tenth grade, I was content with taking my life. But in that moment, I had a vision of the third grade Isaiah saying, “I am somebody,” “I am someone special,” “An Achievable Dream loves me,” the words I dreaded saying every day were the same words that saved my life. You passed that test—you understood your worth and decided to chase your dreams rather than cause nightmares.

An Achievable Dream is transforming, changing, and saving lives and that’s what this program means to me and many more.

Throughout all these tests, one thing remained the same. My Achievable Dream Family was there for me.

A letter to An Achievable Dream,

Thank you for believing in the dreams of those with odds stacked against them. Thank you for making the impossible possible. Who would have ever thought that a group of Dreamers would walk in the White
A
s we enter a new year (and a new
decade!), I am reflecting on not only what we’ve accomplished, but also all that is ahead for our organization, for my team, and for our students. Often, when I self-reflect, I realize there are things I need to let go of, and there are things I need to embrace. I identified four things I want to embrace in the new year—four goals for 2020—and I invite you to join me!

1. Be intentional.

It takes self-discipline and focus to approach every day with intention, unconditionally, and administrators who showered me with the toughest love when I needed it the most. It takes a village to raise a child, and this program is doing that.

To Dr. Lee Vreeland, thank you for keeping the dreams alive.

Dear Audience,

I hope my story gives you a glimpse of what this program means to me and so many people. A mentor in my life once told me that the best way to give back is to pay it forward. Over the last couple of weeks I have worked with the Student Government Association at Old Dominion University to raise money for a program that is special to many in the ODU community. I ask that Student Body Secretary and Vice President join me on stage (present large check) This is how you pay it forward. In the words of H. Jackson Brown Jr.: “The happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more.” Give to An Achievable Dream as they continue to give to others.

In closing:

Dear God,

Thank you for all you have done for me, and continue to use me as an instrument for your purpose in my life.
Remembering Alan Diamonstein (1931–2019)

Alan Diamonstein, attorney, lawmaker, and champion of An Achievable Dream, passed away on October 17, 2019. His wise counsel and friendship have been integral to An Achievable Dream’s success from the very beginning. In fact, Alan and AAD founder, Walter Segaloff (pictured), had been close friends since childhood. Alan’s passion for education was unmistakable and unstoppable. For 27 years, he dedicated countless hours to AAD’s program, provided legal counsel that guided the organization for many years, and served as trusted board member and advisor. More than that, Alan was a confidante and mentor. Alan will be remembered for many things, but to us, he will always be a champion of Dreamers, larger than life, tireless for the mission he truly believed in. Our friend, we will miss you more than we can express.

From AAD president and CEO, Lee Vreeland: "I truly cannot imagine a world without Alan Diamonstein. My heart is broken over the loss of one of the greatest mentors of my life. Alan’s advice and perspective, shared over a friendship of more than 20 years, will always be with me. As I grapple with this incredible loss, I think back over the years of the countless examples of Alan’s work ethic, his dedication to An Achievable Dream, and his heart-and-soul passion to champion education in our commonwealth. Alan was larger than life, invincible, and truly one of my heroes. Today, we have lost a giant. But we know that his legacy lives on in so many ways. One of those ways is through the Dreamers of An Achievable Dream, most of whom never had a chance to meet this man, but whose lives have been changed forever because of him. We love and miss you, Alan. You will always be remembered."

Charles Barker Announced as Chair of An Achievable Dream Virginia Beach Board of Directors

An Achievable Dream (AAD) recently announced that as of December, 2019, the AAD Board of Directors has elected Charles Barker, chairman of Charles Barker Automotive, as the new board chair of An Achievable Dream’s Virginia Beach program. Mr. Barker has served on the board of directors of An Achievable Dream Virginia Beach since the program began in Virginia Beach in 2014. Jay Klebanoff, chief executive officer of Hercules Fence, who has served on the board of directors since 2015 and also serves as chair of the development committee, was elected as vice chair.

This announcement comes after substantial growth for the program in Virginia Beach over the last year. In 2019, through the nonprofit’s partnership with Virginia Beach City Public Schools, the opportunity to apply for the program was extended to students in a total of 23 school zones in Virginia Beach. During the Something in the Water festival in 2019, Pharrell Williams partnered with Seatack Elementary An Achievable Dream Academy to renovate and expand its community garden, which is planted and maintained by students.

An Achievable Dream co-operates public schools with the goal of reaching students who may not otherwise have equitable access to opportunities and resources, and works to level the playing field for students who face socioeconomic or other challenges. In Newport News, where the program began in 1992, it operates as a full K-12 program. In Virginia Beach, the program expands by one grade level per year and will encompass grades K-12 in 2025.

"I have never seen an organization more effective than An Achievable Dream at making its mission a reality,” says Barker. "My goal is to take this program to the next level in Virginia Beach, providing hope and a bright future for as many students as possible.”

Continued on page 8
To our Boards of Directors,

thank you for your time, your support, your commitment, and for sharing the Dream.

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The ability to dream is what I appreciate the most. AAD exposed me to so many opportunities that I never would have imagined.

Brian McGowan, PhD, Class of 2001

Dr. Brian McGowan was taught at an early age that education is the ticket to a fulfilling life. That mindset has fueled his career passion of higher education. Dr. McGowan’s time at An Achievable Dream also helped shape his future endeavors as an educator.

“An Achievable Dream definitely shaped my desire to be a lifelong educator. I was a driven kid who loved to learn new things. I really enjoyed my time in the academic classroom and truly appreciated the co-curricular opportunities offered to me by AAD. The Dream fostered a positive and supportive community where students like myself were encouraged to excel,” McGowan says.

It is that passion for education that pushed Dr. McGowan to go on to complete his bachelor’s degree at Old Dominion University, his master’s degree at The Ohio State University, and his Doctorate of Philosophy in Higher Education/Higher Education Administration at Indiana University Bloomington. Along the way, he has worked at numerous colleges and universities helping students engage in and understand the value of participating in meaningful and educationally purposeful co-curricular activities that complement their formal academic classroom experiences.

Dr. McGowan is currently an associate professor of education and associate director of the Center for Teaching, Research, and Learning at American University. His current research seeks to illuminate how minority populations experience higher education. He carries many of the things that he learned at An Achievable Dream with him in his career today.

“This may sound cliché, but I would say the ability to dream is what I appreciate the most. AAD exposed me to so many opportunities that I never would have imagined. The college tours, tennis lessons at Huntington Park, etiquette dinners, spending time at the YMCA, shadowing a bank teller at Harbor Bank, and the after school professional development opportunities. The list goes on. AAD exposed us to a variety of opportunities that made dreaming beyond our immediate circumstances possible.”

The positive and supportive community that An Achievable Dream provides to all students is one that Dr. McGowan intends to continue to pass on to others along the way as well.

“If I could pass one piece of advice to a current Dreamer, it would be to trust the process and stay the course. AAD has a proven track record of graduating students and preparing them to be change agents in our society. I think about lyrics from the original An Achievable Dream song that stated, ‘Every challenge we face makes us all true winners, as we march on to our goal.’ Despite challenges you may face at home and/or in school, trust the process and stick with An Achievable Dream.”
Selected Class Notes

DID YOU KNOW? The class of 2019 received a total of 211 college acceptances.

Class of 2007

Aryca Wynn
Upon graduating in 2007, Aryca went on to attend the University of Virginia’s College at Wise where she graduated in 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in chemistry. After graduating, Aryca dabbled in the field of teaching mathematics while pursuing her dream of becoming a physician assistant. To become a better candidate for acceptance into PA school, she received an Associate of Science degree from Thomas Nelson Community College, became an emergency medical technician, volunteered for the American Red Cross, and shadow-hosted nurse practitioners and physician assistants. “An Achievable Dream did an exceptional job of preparing me for the future and I will always be appreciative of this program for helping to build a strong foundation of my existence,” Aryca said.

Class of 2009

William Solomon
William graduated in 2009 and briefly shadowed the firefighting program at Tidewater Community College before joining the Navy in 2012 and becoming a hospital corpsman. While in the Navy, William was assigned at the Naval Hospital in Guam where he received the President’s Volunteer Service Award for recording over 200 hours of community service with the Big Brother and Big Sister Program. In addition, William received his overseas ribbon, marksman for pistol, good conduct medal, and meritorious unit commendation medal. William married the love of his life in 2015 and briefly spent time in Texas before he and his family moved back to Virginia. He now works for Marva Maid with future plans to join the fire department. William shared, “Thank you An Achievable Dream for the role you played in my life and the memories that you helped to create.”

Class of 2010

Katrina Joe Berry
Katrina graduated in 2010 and went on to attend Virginia Union University on a tennis scholarship and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in fine arts/theatre. Katrina is currently a preschool teacher in Richmond and is working towards teaching in Africa. She has traveled to Italy, Rome, Paris, France, the Bahamas, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and more and has dreams to open her own art gallery soon. Katrina expressed, “An Achievable Dream was like a second family for me. I am unsure what I would have done in my life had it not been for this extraordinary school helping to make me into the person that I am today.”

Class of 2012

Lamont Livingston
After graduating in 2012, Lamont went on to attend Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering. While there, he was a three-time Dean’s List recipient, the 2017 Aspire Award recipient, a Ut Prosim Scholarship recipient, and went on to graduate with a degree in Packaging System & Design. Lamont is currently an engineer for UPS and the CEO of Abstract Creations, LLC which is a clothing/lifestyle brand. He is a proud father and resides in Nashville, TN. “The Dream was my family and introduced love, friendship, support, and care into my life.” Lamont said. “An Achievable Dream taught me that leadership is not about a title or designation, but about impact, influence, and inspiration.”

Class of 2020 Sponsor, continued from page 1

have stepped forward to serve as class sponsors, ensuring that finances are not a limitation for AAD graduates attending college. On average, 90% of An Achievable Dream graduates have continued to a two or four-year college or trade school, while 10% have joined the military or entered the workforce.

Segaloff, who passed away in 2013, founded An Achievable Dream on the belief that, “given the right tools and opportunity, all students can succeed.” Segaloff’s vision has helped level the playing field for thousands of students since the program’s inception in 1992.
What’s Happening at An Achievable Dream?

Community Support

Thank you to The Law Offices of Daniel J. Miller for your generous gift in support of AAD’s Virginia Beach programs! Pictured with AAD Director of Development, Brittany Lavalleur, are the firm’s founder, Daniel J. Miller, attorney James A. Weaver, and paralegal Tanya S. Lewis.

We were very proud to unveil the brand new Sentara Healthcare and Optima Health sign located in the Seaack Elementary cafeteria! Our very own Garden Breakfast Club helped present the sign and showcased foods made from our Seaack community garden ingredients to our guests. Thank you to Sentara and Optima for continuing to promote health and wellness and for your long-time support of An Achievable Dream!

On Giving Tuesday, we were honored to stand with other local and regional organizations who have received support from Queen of Virginia Skill & Entertainment. The funds An Achievable Dream received from the Queen provided general operating support for our Dreamers in both Newport News and Virginia Beach. Thank you so much, Queen of Virginia Skill & Entertainment!

We would like to give a special thank you to Rose & Womble Realty Company for sponsoring Thanksgiving baskets, which went to all five of our AAD campuses! Each basket came filled with a turkey, stuffing, canned vegetables, and other foods and then was given to families of our students for the long Thanksgiving weekend. Thank you to our AAD alumni volunteers, who assisted with packing these bags for families!

Le Bon Enfants dropped off an annual donation of holiday food to Seaack Elementary! Thank you so much for your gift and helping to ensure that all of our Dreamers had a wonderful holiday!

On the first day of school, more than 100 fathers, uncles and members of the community stepped up to the 100 Men Challenge and were on hand to greet and encourage Dreamers at An Achievable Dream Certified Academy at Highland Springs Elementary as they arrived.

Thanks to Wendy Drucker and the Drucker + Falk family, each child at An Achievable Dream Academy received a book to take home with them over the holiday break!

Our Dreamers at An Achievable Dream Academy were able to open presents donated to AAD through the Schooners Grill Holiday Toy Drive in December! Thank you so much to our sponsors The Brake King and Howard Hanna Real Estate Services for your help in helping provide a wonderful holiday for our Dreamers!
AAD’s Christopher Newport University Community Captains Cohort 1 visited campus this past Saturday to have their first meeting with mentors to discuss college life, expectations, requirements, Q&A session, etc. Some of our senior class at An Achievable Dream Middle and High School visited Virginia Tech, UVA, and Radford Universities!

In December, members of AAD Certified Academy at Highland Springs Elementary’s Girls on the Run Club participated in a 5K to benefit Toys for Tots. Girls on the Run is more than just teaching girls the fundamentals of running. They also receive lessons on how to build their confidence and maneuver using important life skills.

Our Fall 2019 The Littlest Dreamers sessions in Newport News and Virginia Beach! After participating in four sessions on child health and safety, literacy, discipline strategies, and the path to education, participants chose the class name of “Perseverance” and recognized in a graduation ceremony.

Congratulations to senior, Kahron Sharpe-Totten. He was sworn in as a future sailor by the United States Navy! We are proud of you!

The Achievable Dream Middle and High School Band shared some beautiful sounds with us during their Winter Concert! Thank you to our amazing band director, Mr. Davis, for teaching the art and importance of music to our Dreamers!

Congratulations to senior, Kahron Sharpe-Totten. He was sworn in as a future sailor by the United States Navy! We are proud of you!

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Special Visitors

Virginia Department of Education State Superintendent, Dr. James Lane at An Achievable Dream Academy!

Tim Dykstra, Cynthia Edwards, Diane Williams, Jonathan Toms, and Tracy Turner from Smithfield joined us at An Achievable Dream Academy! Students honored Cynthia Edwards with a special gift and thank-you for her special support of An Achievable Dream over the years.

Seatack Elementary Teacher of the year, Matt Cheatham!
Join the Dream Club!

Join supporters like AAD alumna Barbara Banks in this powerful local movement. With five monthly giving levels available, anyone can support An Achievable Dream!

**Step 1:** Visit www.AchievableDream.org/Dream-Club and pledge monthly, recurring support at an amount that is meaningful to you.

**Step 2:** Tell a friend! Share on social media, forward an email and help us spread the word about the Dream Club!

Your tax-deductible donation makes it possible for our children to succeed in school, continue to college and become successful members of society. An Achievable Dream is changing lives through education. With your support, our students are well on their way to achieving their dreams!

*When I saw an affordable way to give to AAD, I thought to myself, “If I can find a way to give to Old Dominion University, a school I might not have attended without AAD, I was surely going to find a way to give to ‘the Dream’—a cause I know to be tried and true.”*

—Barbara Banks, AAD Class of 2009
Instructional Designer, Business Owner, and PhD Candidate

**Upcoming Events**

**February 7, 2020:**
**A Night to Dream**
Help fund the growth of An Achievable Dream in Virginia Beach and change lives in YOUR community! An Achievable Dream has exclusively reserved the Cavalier Hotel for this event. Rooms and suites are included in sponsorship and ticket packages. Visit NightToDream.org.

**April 18, 2020:**
**4th Annual Seafood Festival**
at Chick’s Oyster Bar

**May 12, 2020:**
**Give Local 757**
Visit AchievableDream.org/Events to learn more.