



PROJECT GRAD AKRON'S  
**ACHIEVING DREAMS**



**SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2024**



**DoubleTree by  
Hilton Akron Fairlawn**  
3180 W Market St, Akron, OH 44333

*Graduation Really Achieves Dreams*



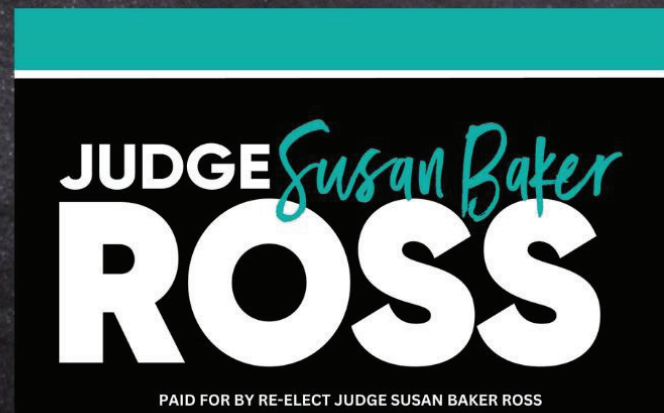
*Thank You  
Project GRAD Akron  
for making dreams a reality  
one student at a time!*



*Judge Jennifer Towell*  
TowellForJudge.com



*Judge Susan Baker Ross*  
JudgeBakerRoss.com



**Project GRAD Akron's  
18th Annual Achieving Dreams "Back to School Bash 2"  
Saturday, September 7, 2024**

DoubleTree Hilton Akron/Fairlawn, 3180 West Market Street, Akron, OH 44333

**Your Syllabus**

**5:00 p.m.**  
School drop-off with valet parking  
Registration - pick up your Student ID badges and class materials

**5:00 to 6:00 p.m.**  
Reception (food & beverages served lobby level, veranda, and lower level)

**5:00 to 8:00 p.m.**  
Silent Auction "School Store" - Visit the School store on the first floor and bid on the amazing items.

It is an old-fashioned auction where you will use your handwriting and math skills to place your competitive bids for a chance to win your items! Good observation skills will be necessary!

Don't forget it is a fundraiser!

**5:00 to 7:00 p.m.**  
**Last chance to donate to Homecoming Court candidates who have been raising funds for Project GRAD Akron's Scholarship Fund**  
Scan the provided QR Code or <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2024projectgradakronshomecomingcourt/donate/>  
Cash and checks are accepted at the registration desk

**6:00 to 6:45 p.m.**  
Elective "Classes" with an adult-twist - (lobby level and lower level)

**6:55 p.m.**  
Program begins in the Ballroom  
Welcome & Introduction of the Mistress of Ceremonies  
Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq., Executive Director & Event Chairperson

Mistress of Ceremonies  
S. Theresa Carter  
President, Synthomer Foundation

Remarks  
Diane Miller-Dawson, Board Chairperson  
Dr. Michael Robinson, Superintendent of the Akron Public Schools

Presentation of the Homecoming Court

Dinner

**8:00 p.m.**  
Live Auction & Fund the Need  
Brooks Ames, Auctioneer

Drawings  
"Class" Activities Baskets  
"Lucky School Days" Lottery Raffle

**8:45 p.m.**  
Crowning of the Homecoming Queen and King and Royalty

After-School Activities until 11:00 p.m.  
Physical Education "Dancing" - Music  
"Karaoke" - & Social & Emotional Health  
"Socializing"

Pick up your item from the "Lost and Found" before you leave!

**Graduation  
Really  
Achieves  
Dreams**



Thank you for your support of  
Project GRAD Akron!  
**#AchievingDreams2024**



# Project GRAD Akron - *Our 22nd School Year!*

Since September 2002, **Project GRAD Akron** has successfully partnered with the Akron Public Schools to positively impact the lives of thousands of students and families. In the fall of 2002, we began our journey with six schools in the Buchtel Cluster. In 2017-18, we piloted an expansion of services to North High School. During the 2018-19 school year, we expanded our services to the East Cluster. In the summer of 2021, Project GRAD Akron co-authored with the school district a federal GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant to benefit the Akron Public Schools. In September of 2021, the Akron Public Schools was notified by the U.S. Department of Education that the District was awarded more than \$7 million for the 7-year life of the grant. Based upon the organization's vision, successful history, and evidence-based programs and services, Project GRAD Akron is the lead partner of the grant as well as one of the contractors. The grant afforded our organization the opportunity to expand our reach to include additional services for students and families, plus the addition of two additional clusters, the Garfield Cluster (formerly Kenmore-Garfield) and the North Cluster. Currently, Project GRAD Akron provides extensive programs and services to students and families in the Buchtel, East, Garfield, and North Clusters of the Akron Public Schools, positively impacting the lives of thousands of young people on an annual basis.

The **heart** of the work that we do is showing the students the pathways to a successful life. We help students make positive transitions through programs including our Bridge to Kindergarten program in collaboration with Kent State University; our College and Career Central (3C) classes and programming for 6th through 12th grades; our Summer Institutes in collaboration with the University of Akron and Kent State University; our GRAD Mentors program; our GRAD Helping Hub; our scholarships; and our GRAD Persists programs for our college students. Since 2006, Project GRAD Akron has awarded **more than \$2.5 million** in scholarships to graduates as they pursue a variety of post-secondary options as well as assisted them in leveraging thousands of dollars in additional funds!

## Vision, Mission, and Core Values

**Vision:** We see a world of hope - where there are no limits on potential, the greatness in every child is inspired and celebrated, and dreams are realized through opportunities and education. As such, Project GRAD Akron will become one of the foremost enablers of underrepresented student success through unique and innovative programs (PG Knoxville).

**Mission:** In collaboration with community partners, Project GRAD Akron will provide a system of programs, supports, and scholarships for underrepresented students to achieve success from kindergarten through career.

**Core Values:** Mutual Respect; Honesty & Integrity; Teamwork & Collaboration; Passion

## Thank You!

**Project GRAD Akron** is grateful for the significant support we receive from the Akron Public Schools, foundations, businesses, and individuals. Since 2007, Project GRAD Akron has hosted a signature fundraising event, Achieving Dreams Celebration, to raise funds for programs, services, and scholarships. For the past seventeen years, Achieving Dreams' events have had some different formats and venues, but all have provided us the same opportunity to raise funds to help young people, from kindergarten through college, achieve their dreams!

The **Achieving Dreams' Back to School Bash 2** will provide us the opportunity to support Project GRAD Akron's programs, services, and scholarships. Additionally, 100% of the funds raised/donated by the 2024 members of the Homecoming Court will support Project GRAD Akron's scholarship initiatives for students in the Akron Public Schools! **Thank you** for believing and supporting the **GRAD** motto that "**Graduation Really Achieves Dreams.**"



## Project GRAD Akron's 2024-2025 Board of Directors

### Officers



**President**  
Diane Miller-Dawson  
Director of Community and Economic Development, County of Summit



**President-Elect**  
Ebony L. Yeboah-Amankwah, Esq.  
VP of Ethics, Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management, Signet Jewelers



**Vice President**  
The Honorable Bradley S. Dunn  
Administrative Law Judge, Ohio Civil Rights Commission

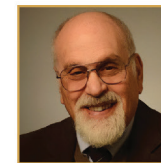


**Treasurer**  
Pamela R. Valentine  
Community Volunteer, Past PGA Board President



**Secretary**  
Debbie Walsh  
Community Volunteer

### Directors



**Martin H. Belsky, Esq.**  
Retired, Randolph Baxter Professor of Law, The University of Akron, Past PGA Board President



**Dr. Angela Brake, DPS**  
Continuous Improvement & Robotic Process Automation Leader, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company



**Anita L. Davis, Esq.**  
Attorney at Law, Past PGA Board President



**Barry Dunaway**  
Retired, Smucker's & Leadership Akron



**Barbara A. Feld**  
Emeritus Executive Director, Tuesday Musical Association



**James Harris Jr.**  
IT Project Manager, Quanex



**Dana K. LaGarde**  
Retired Lead Project Manager, AT&T, Past PGA Board President



**Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval, Ph.D.**  
Vice Provost for Student Pathways & Dean of Williams Honors College, The University of Akron



**Ann Otto, Ph.D.**  
Retired Associate Vice President, NEOMED



**Maura Scanlon Bozzelli, Esq.**  
Attorney at Law, The Scanlon Group, Past PGA Board President



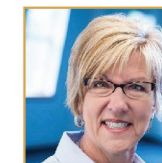
**Torey Stewart Tolson**  
Community Involvement Consultant, OH Region, FirstEnergy Corporation



**Clarence Tucker**  
Retired, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, City of Akron



**The Honorable Annalisa S. Williams**  
Judge, Akron Municipal Court



**Pam Wright, CPA**  
Retired, Consultant



**Shanda-lyn Yaegar, GISP**  
Associate Professor, Stark State College

### Ex Officio



**Dr. Michael Robinson**  
Superintendent, Akron Public Schools



**Jacqueline A. Silas-Butler, Esq.**  
Executive Director, Project GRAD Akron



# Message from the Executive Director & Chairperson

## Welcome to Project GRAD Akron's Achieving Dreams' Back to School Bash 2!

Last year we had so much fun at our interactive event, we decided to repeat the format! Since the inception of our Achieving Dreams fundraisers, our goals have remained the same. We want to make certain that our guests have an enjoyable experience and that we raise significant funds to support our programs, services, and scholarship fund! We hope that the Achieving Dreams' Back to School Bash 2 will be everything and more than what we anticipated!

This year, I have had the opportunity to celebrate a few milestone years for myself and witness the milestone years for others. Preparing for each celebration allowed me and others the opportunity to take a walk down memory lane. Reminiscing, people would often ask, "where did the time go?" At one of our steering committee meetings, we shared pictures from our youth. You will see some of them in this program book. As I look at the eyes of the people in each of the pictures, I wonder what were their hopes and dreams. I also wonder who was there to assist them in realizing their hopes and dreams. That is the same thing I wonder about the young people we are serving. What are their hopes and dreams? Who will walk with them as they pursue their hopes and dreams? What can we do to assist them in fulfilling their hopes and dreams?

Recently, like so many people, I had the opportunity to watch the Olympics. It was amazing and exhilarating! I marveled at their faith, dedication, commitment, hard work, and their sheer will to get it done. In countless interviews, the athletes shared the back stories of their journeys as well as their appreciation for those who helped them pursue their hopes and dreams.

As you support Project GRAD Akron, I hope you realize how much we appreciate your generosity and commitment to supporting young people pursue their hopes and dreams. Whatever your involvement with our organization, your efforts are appreciated. They are also needed. As you reflect over your life and your accomplishments, I hope that you realize, like our young people and the Olympians, that so many people will be in your life to cheer you on, pass you the baton, or support you in your endeavors. Like you, they will or have encountered naysayers and people who discount their hopes and dreams. Your support of Project GRAD Akron shows your commitment to making a positive difference in the life of others.

In closing, please accept my heartfelt thank you and appreciation! Thank you to our parents, students, volunteers, donors, supporters, partners, the members of the Homecoming Court, and to our community, for understanding our mission and for recognizing that we all are in this together to support our students as they "achieve their dreams!" **Thank you for believing in the GRAD motto: Graduation Really Achieves Dreams!** God's continued blessings on each of your lives!

Take care and be safe!

**Jacqueline A. Silas-Butler, Esq.**  
Executive Director & Chairperson



## ACHIEVING DREAMS



★ SATURDAY ★

SEPTEMBER 7, 2024

SPONSORS AS OF: AUGUST 29, 2024

Thank you. Sponsors!

★ ☆ Champion Sponsor ☆ ★



Scholar Sponsors



Achiever Sponsors

Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation of Akron, Ohio  
United Way of Summit & Medina

Mentor Sponsors

Barry Dunaway and Peter McDermott  
Cleveland Clinic Akron General  
Meaden & Moore  
Roger & Sally Read  
Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro's  
Department of Job & Family Services  
The University of Akron

Collaborator Sponsors

Akron Children's Hospital  
Akron Community Foundation  
Akron Public Schools  
Amp Strategy  
Maura & Jim Bozzelli  
Belsky-Waits Family  
Elizabeth A. England of the KAZ Company  
Stark State College  
Stewart & Calhoun Funeral Home & Cremation Service  
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company



# Achieving Dreams Back to School Bash 2 Committee

## Meet the Steering Committee

### Executive Director & Event Chairperson

Jacqueline A. Silas-Butler, Esq.

Elizabeth Z. Bartz

Maura Scanlon Bozzelli, Esq.

S. Theresa Carter

Norma Dansby Daniels

Romona J. Davis

Laura Farris-Daugherty

James Harris Jr.

Theresa Manzell

Debra North Sommerville

Stancy Sykes

Jenn Venuto

Jan Weaver

## Sub-Committee Members

### Auction

Theresa Manzell, Chairperson

### Centerpieces

Laurie Curfman

Theresa Manzell

### "Lucky Schools Day Lottery Raffle"

Mary Outley, Chairperson

Theresa Manzell, Designer & Co-Chairperson

Laura Farris-Daugherty

Teresa Jackson

Megan Mannion

Debbie Walsh

### Invitations

Kalisha Green of Amp Strategy,

Graphic Designer

Jacqueline Silas-Butler

City Printing - Printer

### Marketing & Public Relations

Amp Strategy

Project GRAD Akron

### Souvenir Book

Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Chairperson

Laura Farris-Daugherty

Eric Hancsak, About350 Creative

Kalisha Green & Kat Martucci, Amp Strategy

Jerry Yacezko, Akron Public Schools

### Sponsorships

Theresa Carter, Chairperson

Jacqueline Silas-Butler

### "Lost & Found"

Maura Scanlon Bozzelli

Laurie Curfman

Theresa Manzell

Jenn Venuto

### Table Captains

Jacqueline Silas Butler & Lawrence Butler

Laurie & Scott Curfman

Laura Farris-Daugherty

James S. Harris, Jr.

Dana & Frank LaGarde

Diane Miller-Dawson & Lenwood Dawson

Ann Otto, Ph.D.

Mary B. Outley

Debra & Marco Sommerville

Pamela R. Valentine

Judge Annalisa & Michael Williams

### Administrative Support

Za'Rhyea Bell

Norma Dansby Daniels

Laura Farris-Daugherty

Yvette Johnson

Dana LaGarde

### Event Day Volunteers

Project GRAD Akron's Board & Staff Members

Back to School Bash 2 Steering Committee

Maura Scanlon Bozzelli & Jenn Venuto,

Coordinators of Volunteers

Bonnie Blum

Trisha Blum

Lauren Byrne

Claudia Dansby

Barry Dunaway

Barbara Feld

Tiffany Haddon

Yvette Johnson

Dana LaGarde

Dannielle Owens

Peter McDermitt

Sue Reagan

Elizabeth Smalley

Isabella South

### Homecoming Court Auditors

Charla Martin, Head Auditor

Valecia Pickett, Auditor/Cashier

Cathi Smith Bentley, Auditor

Christi Boyd, Auditor

Ronda Hawkins, Auditor



# ACHIEVING DREAMS *Back to School Bash 2* Steering Committee

Jacqueline Silas-Butler



Elizabeth Bartz



Maura Scanlon Bozzelli



Theresa Carter



Norma D. Daniels



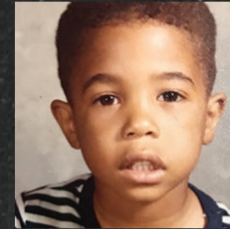
Romona J. Davis



Laura Farris-Daugherty



James Harris Jr.



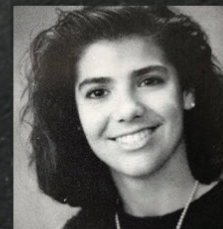
Theresa Manzell



Stancy Sykes



Jenn Venuto



Jan Weaver



Debra North Sommerville  
(not pictured)



# Thank you to all the Presidents of the Project GRAD Akron's Board of Directors!

**Vivian Celeste Neal**  
2002

(Interim Director to establish the non-profit status)

**Robert Kulinski**  
2002 - 2004

**Jocelyn McClendon**  
2004 - 2007

**Jean Van Ness, Esq.**  
2007 - 2009

**Danielle Kimmell, CPA**  
2009 - 2012

**Bennett Gaines**  
2012 - 2013

**Anita L. Davis, Esq.**  
2013 - 2015

**Dana K. LaGarde**  
2015 - 2018

**Pamela R. Valentine**  
2018 - 2020

**Martin H. Belsky, Esq.**  
2020 - 2022

**Maura Scanlon Bozzelli, Esq.**  
2022 - 2024

**Diane Miller-Dawson**  
7/1/2024 - Present

## Meet Our Mistress of Ceremonies



### S. Theresa Carter

Theresa Carter is President of the Synthomer Foundation (formerly OMNOVA Solutions), a nearly \$30 million endowment supporting local communities throughout Synthomer's footprint within the United States. Her passion for bringing communities together and creating tomorrow's leaders is reflected in her role in the Foundation, which in 2023 provided nearly \$1.3 million in support to educational initiatives, civic investments, health and human services, and the arts.

Theresa's purpose-driven mission is to inspire volunteerism and empower others to give back to the community. She is active in her church (deaconess), and serves on a number of non-profit community boards, advisory councils and committees, including the Akron Community Foundation; The NAACP Akron Chapter; Cleveland Clinic

Akron General Medical Center; Cleveland State University Foundation board, The Sojourner Truth Project, The Black Giving Collective, and is an emeritus board member with the Akron Urban League. She also serves as a Park Commissioner for the Summit County Metro Parks.

She has been honored with many awards and recognitions for her service and commitment to the community, including the 2023 Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award through the Akron Community Foundation; ArtsNow Distinguished Patron award; Akron Urban League's Whitney M. Young Jr., Community Service Award; the H Peter Burg Leadership Awards through the Greater Akron Chamber, American Red Cross and Akron Public Schools; Leadership Akron's Lieberth Award, Project GRAD Akron's Community Service Award; and the Executive of the Year Award through the Akron/Canton Affiliate of NSME (National Sales and Marketing Executives). Theresa was also a recipient of OMNOVA Solutions Chairman's Award (the Company's highest honor).

Theresa has been personally and professionally involved with Project GRAD Akron since its inception. She was one of the community leaders who went to Houston, Texas in 2001 to learn more about Project GRAD and to assist in bringing a site to Akron, Ohio. She was one of the original board members and has served the organization in many capacities, including serving as a board officer, fund development chairperson, and as the chairperson of the first Achieving Dreams Celebration in 2007 and has continued to serve on the committee every year.

A native of Demopolis, Alabama, Theresa graduated with a Bachelors of Arts in Communications from the University of Alabama. She's the proud mom of two adult daughters, Erin and Cesily, and is Lovie to her grandson Devon who is the absolute joy in her life.



# Join the 2024-25 Turning Tassels Leadership Society (Class of 2025)

To donate during the 2024-25 fiscal year (Class of 2025), please fill out and return this form with your payment, or use our online donation platform at [www.projectgradakron.org](http://www.projectgradakron.org)

## Auction Donors

As of August 27, 2024

Akron Art Museum  
Akron Civic Theatre  
Akron Symphony  
Akron Zoo  
Anonymous  
Tiara C. Autry, MSW, LSW  
Elizabeth Bartz & John Chames  
Linda Bess  
Blue Canyon Kitchen & Tavern  
Lauren Byrne  
Circle K-Great Lakes Division  
Cleveland Cavaliers  
Cleveland Clinic Akron General Lifestyles  
Norma K. Dansby Daniels  
LaMonica Davis  
Dewey's Pizza - Fairlawn  
DoubleTree by Hilton Akron/Fairlawn  
Laura Farris-Daugherty  
Susan Flowers  
Gervasi Vineyard  
Gold Ribbon Gourmet  
Goodwill Industries of Akron  
Tiffany D. Haddon  
Carolyn J. Jackson  
Teresa A. Jackson  
Willie Mae Jackson

Carolyn Kean  
Leià Love Hair & Nail Salon, LLC  
Megan Mannion  
Theresa Manzell  
Woodrow Nash  
Old Friends Catering  
Ann Otto  
Rock & Roll Hall of Fame  
Signet Jewelers  
Jacqueline Silas-Butler  
Jim Simon  
Kamille J. Smith  
Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens  
The Cleveland Orchestra  
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company  
Tiffany's Bakery  
Tuesday Musical Association  
Western Reserve Historical Society



AKRON

Please join us for our Class of 2025

## Turning Tassels Leadership Society Annual Campaign

Please join us during our Twenty-First Year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025) as a member of our Turning Tassels Leadership Society. We will recognize our donors based upon their annual cumulative level of giving as a member of the Turning Tassels Leadership Society.

### Yes, Count Me In!

Please find enclosed my donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or I would like to make a pledge in the amount of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable in \_\_\_\_\_ installments

beginning \_\_\_\_\_.

All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Form of payment:  Check or  Credit Card

#### Credit Card Information

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa/Master Card/Discover #: \_\_\_\_\_

CCV #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's signature required



Green - \$250.00 +



Blue - \$500.00 +



White - \$1,000.00 +



Red - \$1,500.00 +



Black - \$2,500.00 +



Bronze - \$5,000.00 +



Silver - \$7,500.00 +



Gold - \$10,000.00 +

Please make check payable to:  
Project GRAD Akron  
10 North Main Street, Suite 503  
Akron, OH 44308-1958



For more information, please call  
(330) 761-3113 or email [info@projectgradakron.org](mailto:info@projectgradakron.org)  
or visit [www.projectgradakron.org](http://www.projectgradakron.org)



AKRON

## Graduation Really Achieves Dreams

Thank you for your support of Project GRAD Akron!

*#AchievingDreams2024*



# 2024 Special Acknowledgements

## Achieving Dreams' Back to School Bash 2

### Donors to Support Project GRAD Akron's Programs, Services, and/or Scholarship Fund

Akron Community Foundation's Bud and Barbara Dunaway Fund

Akron Community Foundation's Read Family Fund

As of August 29, 2024

Tom and Marty Beth Breckenridge

Laurie Curfman

Dr. William & Atty. Olivia Demas

Judith Dimengo

C. Joyce Finley-Johnson

M. Annette King

Diane Miller-Dawson

Ohio Black Women's Leadership Caucus - Akron Chapter

Don & Carol Poe

Sandra Shaw

Rochelle Stone

Lou & Micki Trenta

Drs. Thomas & Diane Vukovich

Debbie Walsh

### Donations of Tickets for Special Guests

Maura Scanlon Bozzelli, Esq.

Laurie Curfman

Dr. Erica Liebelt

Theresa Manzell

Roger & Sally Read

Jacqueline Silas-Butler

United Way of Summit & Medina

### In-Kind Donations

Amp Strategy

Laurie Curfman

Gina Krieger of Seven Grains

### "Lucky School Days" Lottery Raffle Contributors

Project GRAD Akron

Theresa Manzell

Jacqueline Silas-Butler

Debbie Walsh

### Special Thank You

Akron Public Schools

Eric Hancsak of About350 Creative

Brooks Ames of Kiko Auctions

Kalisha Green, Lori Krohn, Kat Allen Marttuci of Amp Strategy

Jessie Waterman and DoubleTree at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn

Jerry Yaceczko and APS Printing Services



At Synthomer we know when communities come together, they can accomplish more, shine brighter, grow stronger, and envision more boldly.

It's this commitment to bringing communities together that allows Synthomer's purposeful giving to make the most impact.



Don't forget to turn in your "Attendance Card" for the Classroom Baskets' Drawing!

Global Innovator of Specialty  
Chemicals and Functional Surfaces







- ◆ **Isma'il Al-Amin**  
Al-Amin Films, LLC, Akron Public Schools, Kent State University
- ◆ **Holly Harris Bane**  
City of Aurora
- ◆ **Lakisha Barclay**  
Rubber Division, American Chemical Society
- ◆ **Elizabeth Z. Bartz**  
State and Federal Communications, Inc.
- ◆ **Dr. Angela M. Brake**  
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company
- ◆ **Alexis B. Curry, MSN, RN**  
Summa Health
- ◆ **Brandi Davis**  
Case Western Reserve University
- ◆ **Steven A. Dimengo, Esq.**  
Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, LLC
- ◆ **Elizabeth A. England**  
Retired, The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland
- ◆ **Ellen Esakov**  
The Reynolds and Reynolds Company
- ◆ **John Garofalo**  
Akron Community Foundation

- ◆ **Montrella S. Jackson, Esq.**  
City of Akron
- ◆ **Larry W. Johnson, Jr.**  
Akron Public Schools
- ◆ **Carolyn Brooks Joyce**  
Berkshire Hathaway Professional Realty
- ◆ **Pam Klemm**  
Community Volunteer
- ◆ **Angelia Leggett**  
ASW Global LLC
- ◆ **King Lewis**  
Retired, Frito Lay
- ◆ **Myron Lewis**  
Retired, Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor
- ◆ **Nikki Marchmon-Boykin**  
Kent City Schools & Kent State University
- ◆ **Tony Martucci, Esq.**  
The Cleveland Clinic
- ◆ **Kimberly Moses, Esq.**  
Akron Children's Hospital
- ◆ **Job Esau Perry, Esq.**  
Law Office of Job Esau Perry
- ◆ **Lynn Cheri Puryear**  
Akron Urban League
- ◆ **Catey Breck Scanlon**  
inSite Advisory Group LLC/Welty Building Group
- ◆ **Larry F. Thomas**  
Thomas Tax Service of Ohio  
Retired, G. Stephens, Inc.
- ◆ **Sylvia Trundle**  
Retired, Akron Police Department
- ◆ **Asuama Yeboah-Amankwah**  
Consultant

Members of the Homecoming Court are raising funds to support Project GRAD Akron's scholarship fund.

## 2024 Homecoming Court

*Reasons they are supporting Project GRAD Akron and raising funds for the scholarship fund.*

### Isma'il Al-Amin

To support financial resources that help young people secure money that will allow them to learn skills for life.

### Holly Harris Bane

My life work has been dedicated to helping young people and adults pursue their career passion through education and career pathways, focusing on retention strategies, graduation and career pathways. Project GRAD Akron has helped move the needle in retention and graduation, graduation strategies and career exploration. Project GRAD Akron makes an impactful difference in the lives of Summit County families through education attainment and subsequently economic well-being and empowerment.

### Lakisha Barclay

Project GRAD Akron is a staple in the Akron community and is well known for supporting our Akron children with scholarships to pursue their college dreams.

### Elizabeth Z. Bartz

#1—Who can NO to Jacqueline Silas-Butler? #2 At the heart of it all we are helping students obtain scholarships. Nothing about what we do is for our personal glory. Students all the way.

### Dr. Angela M. Brake

Project GRAD Akron provides a system of programs, supports and scholarships for underrepresented students to provide the bridge needed to achieve success starting at kindergarten. This is a key component to creating an equitable community, one to be proud of.

### Alexis B. Curry, MSN, RN

As a previous scholar myself, obtaining a college education is a high priority. Project GRAD Akron supported that goal.

### Brandi Davis

The mission of Project GRAD Akron truly resonates with me. A system that provides supports and scholarships for underrepresented students allows our kids to gain the necessary skills to create their own seats, have limitless options and start "Good Trouble".

### Steven A. Dimengo, Esq.

I was very fortunate to receive a quality education from Akron Public Schools, Archbishop Hoban, The University of Akron and The University of Akron School of Law. When looking for ways to give back, I am always most interested in working with organizations that focus on education and addressing students that are in very difficult circumstances, including home and other environments, in trying to bridge the gap to eliminate hurdles to achieving their dreams. I have been a member of Hoban's Board of Directors for more than 20 years, last year I joined the Summit Education Initiative Board of Directors, and I taught at the University of Akron in their MTax program for approximately 25 years. I am honored to support a program like Project GRAD Akron that helps so many students in Akron Public Schools who may not otherwise be able to realize their full potential.

### Elizabeth A. England

I support Project GRAD Akron's scholarship fund because I believe in the mission of the organization and I'm a strong advocate for lifelong learning. I believe that education is key to a brighter future.



## 2024 Homecoming Court Remarks, continued...

---

### Ellen Esakov

My parents, the Akron community, and APS really made me who I am. I am forever grateful to Akron and APS for always pushing me along to achieve anything I wanted from academic to sports. APS also showed me the benefit that working hard at any job brings great life lessons all the way through adulthood. I have been volunteering when I can at East and being a part of Project GRAD Akron allows me to continue to spread the positivity and my enthusiasm for the Akron community. Hopefully these attributes will be a touchstone to those I share my life with and help to develop positive and caring future leaders.

---

### John Garofalo

I love the fact that Project GRAD Akron changes lives for our students. From kindergarten to college Project GRAD Akron is making a difference in their lives!

---

### Montrella S. Jackson, Esq.

I want to help remove barriers which may prevent students from accessing a quality education. I received scholarships and community support during my school studies which contributed to me. I want to give others the same opportunity.

---

### Larry W. Johnson, Jr.

I believe in supporting students to pursue their dreams. Project GRAD helps make sure those dreams are realized. Any way I can help with raising scholarship funds for Akron students to attend college, count me in!

---

### Carolyn Brooks Joyce

I'm supporting Project GRAD Akron because I believe in their mission to "reduce dropping out and increase rates of college enrollment and graduation by increasing reading and math skills, improving behavior in school, and providing a service safety net."

---

### Pamela Klemm

The vision statement of Project GRAD Akron really resonated with me "We see a world of hope, where there are no limits on potential, the greatness of every child inspired & celebrated and dreams realized through opportunities and education."

---

### Angelia Leggett

Supporting kids on their journey to graduation is crucial for several compelling reasons, each contributing to their overall development and future success. Academic Achievement, Economic Opportunities, Personal Development, Social and Emotional Well-being, Civic Engagement and Responsibility, Breaking Cycles of Poverty and Reduction in Social Issues.

---

### King Lewis

I am supporting Project GRAD Akron because I believe in the mission of the organization to provide educational opportunities and help finance education for promising students. Assisting talented students in their educational pursuits is very important to me because education has been a primary vehicle for my success and has allowed me to change my prospects, develop a career mindset, and fulfill my dreams.

---

### Myron J. Lewis

Raising funds for Project GRAD Akron is a way for me to put my money where my mouth is and help others to do the same.

---

### Nikki Marchmon-Boykin

All children need and deserve a village that is willing to support them holistically (educationally, emotionally, financially, etc.) as they mature to adulthood. As a proud graduate of John R. Buchtel High School, I wholeheartedly support young people and the Project GRAD Akron mission.

---

### Tony Martucci, Esq.

I have always loved education and the opportunities it has afforded me. School has provided me with exciting career choices and experiences I would have never dreamed of when I was very young. I am excited to help young Akronites experience those same opportunities through receiving a sound education.

---

### Kimberly Moses, Esq.

When I was in high school, I participated in a similar program that laid the foundation for my college education and exposed me to various experiences and opportunities that I likely would not have had if I wasn't in that program. I would like to pay it forward for this generation.

---

### Job Esau Perry, Esq.

Project GRAD Akron is very important to me and I relish the opportunity to further their worthwhile efforts.

---

### Lynn Cheri Puryear

I support Project GRAD Akron because of their mission for equitable education and unyielding support for under-resourced students. Their work to ensure that every child can succeed with the right support is something that I stand behind.

---

### Catey Breck Scanlon

I am supporting Project GRAD Akron because I have been an admirer of the organization for many years. I feel that there is no greater time than now to support our students.

---

### Larry F. Thomas

Enhancing higher education opportunities for urban youth.

---

### Sylvia Trundle

Helping a young person realize their hopes and dreams through academic success is a benefit to our entire community. We all have value.

---

### Asuama Yeboah-Amankwah

I love Project GRAD Akron's mission. Any opportunity to help young student find their voice and way is a blessing.



Thank you for your support of Project GRAD Akron!

*#AchievingDreams2024*





## *Donations to Project GRAD Akron's Scholarship Fund Homecoming Court Donations (To the "Event" or to the Participants)*

Members of the Project GRAD Akron's Homecoming Court agreed to raise/donate a minimum of \$1,000 to support Project GRAD Akron's Scholarship Fund. One hundred percent (100%) of the Homecoming Court donations have been earmarked to support scholarships.

The fundraising period is from July 1, 2024 to September 7, 2024.

**Thank you to the following donors (as of August 29, 2024) for your contributions,  
including those of you who made multiple donations:**

Agelopoulos, Stephanie  
Akron Community Foundation  
Akron Community Foundation's  
Rob and Alyssa Briggs Fund  
Allen, Mitch  
Allison, Suzie  
American Hospitality Group  
Anonymous (several)  
Anthony, Graham  
Armstrong, Carol  
Asila Group, LLC  
Austin, Nikeesha  
Axiotis, Irene  
Ball, Julie  
Bane, Holly Harris  
Bane, Jacob & Heather  
Bankston-White, Coya  
Barba, Lindsay  
Barclay, Lakisha  
Barnes, Charnee  
Benson, Susan Kushner  
Blackwell, Douglas III  
Boggs, Susan

Bond, Marsheba  
Bosley, Catherine  
Bradshaw, Peter & Ellie  
Brake, Daren  
Breck, Debbie & Jim  
Brock, Kesha  
Burton, Brandi  
Butze, Traci  
Buzzelli, Merle  
Caffey, Debra  
Carter, Angela  
Catalano, Tina  
Caywood, Denise  
Cheatham, Cynthia  
Cherkala, Julie  
Christ, Paula  
Connor, Sharon  
Covington, Marie  
Crook, Roxanne  
Culp, Laura  
Curry, Howard  
Curry, Lesley-anne  
Dansby, Claudia  
Davidson, Kelly

Davis, Linda  
Davis, Romona  
Debeljak, Barbara  
Dees, Dr. Flora  
Dewan, Madhukar  
DiCola, Laura  
Dimengo, Judith  
Dimengo, Steven  
Donaldson, Tianne  
Dowdell, Faye  
Dunaway, Barry  
E^NAT IP, LLC  
Early, Jualeah  
East-Jenkins, Antoinette  
Eckman, Nancy  
Elmo, Lynsey & Rachael  
England, Elizabeth  
England, Sara  
Epps, MarQuita  
Evege-Painter, Daphine  
Ewing, Beth  
Farr, Leslie  
Feld, Barbara

Finsley, Rinaldo  
Fitch, Joni  
Foley, Kevin  
Franko, Brandi  
Fritzgerald, Andratesha  
Fry, Richard  
Garofalo, John  
Geffert, Jeff  
Gibson, Geeya  
Gorley, Joan  
Gould, Dr. Felisha  
Greene, Barbara  
Hail, Greg & Culler, Matt  
Haritos, George &  
Valavanidou, Georgia  
Harper, Dawn  
Hatch, Heather  
Hauser, Bill, Ph.D.  
Hayes, Ameer  
Heffernan, Karen  
Herrick, Meloney Karos  
Hine, Kay  
Hisseem, Jess  
Hopkins, Iriel  
Howell, Bernadette  
Hupp, Danielle  
Jackson, Montrella  
Jackson, Yolanda  
James, Gloria  
Jeff Klemm Music LLC  
Johnson, Amanda  
Johnson, Cheryl  
Johnson, Dennis & Ola  
Jones, Eric  
Jordan, Debbie  
Kelly, Ikel  
Kimmell, Danielle  
Klemm, Jillian  
Klinger, Mia  
Kolk, Michael  
Kostr, Trey  
Krocker, Michelle  
Kuzma, Rebecca  
Lacy, Jane  
Lahood, Tony  
Lane, Jolene  
Lane-Jackson, Joy  
Lanier, Linda  
Lash, Dr. Wanda  
Lasher, Morgan  
LeGrair, Teresa  
Lett, Paula  
Lewis, Felicia  
Leyerle, Suzanne

Liberty, Amy  
Lockett, Reuben  
Louis, Drew  
Louis, Susan  
Malone, Robert W., Esq.  
Manby, Ann  
Mansfield, Lisa  
Manzell, Theresa  
Marchmon, Beatrice  
Markota, Aubrey  
Martucci, Rick  
Martucci, Rick & Bernie  
May, Frederick & Erika  
McAlonie, Lynda  
McClaning, Les  
McCormick, Robert  
McDonald, Carla  
McGarrity, Steven  
McKinnie, Taylor  
McWilliams-Woods, Dr. Ellen  
Melton, Matthew  
Miller, Jayne  
Minkler, Daniel A. & Patricia P.  
Mobley, Dr. Marilyn  
Monroe, Tammy  
Morrison, Aerial  
Muhammad, Satya  
Mullet, Nicole  
Nelson, Pastor David  
Niekamp, Chris  
Novotny, Richard  
Nunn, Akela  
Nuru, Christa  
Nwachuku, Brittany  
Ohio Sister Circle  
Otto, Ann, Ph.D.  
Papas, Katerina  
Papish, Trac  
Perry, Job Esau  
Peterson, Rosalie  
Phillips, Rich  
Picard, Patricia  
Powe, Nicolette  
Puryear, Jerry  
Ray, James  
Ress, Kathryn  
Richardson, David  
Richardson, Rhea  
Robinson, Tracey  
Rose, Jane Preston  
Rubber Division, ACS  
Sanford, Carole  
Scanlon, John  
Scanlon, Lisa

Schrey, Terri  
Selby, Sandra  
Sharp, Zulekha  
Shaw, Sandra  
Short, Lindsey  
Silas-Butler, Jacqueline  
Smith, Yahna  
Smith, Lillie Gayle  
Spaar, Destinee  
Spectrum Dispersions, Inc.  
Sperling, Brandis  
Spotz, Richard  
Stefanik, Jon  
Stevens, Brenda  
Stevens, Carlos  
Stewart, Dayna  
Stone, Patricia  
Streb, Jude  
Sykes, Barbara  
Talton, Dr. Rachel  
Tecca, Rachel  
The Light Church of Akron  
Thomas, Larry  
Thornton, Andre  
Tickle, Krsent  
Valentine, Donna  
Van Horne, Catherine  
Wade, Jabree  
Wear, Michael  
Weitendorf, Kurt  
Wheeler-Cooper, Lisa  
White, Marilyn  
Whitfield, Dreama Mason  
Wilcox, Erica  
Wilkins-Stroud, Rochelle  
Williams, Judge Annalisa  
Williams, Bennett L.  
Wilson, Gail  
Wooldridge, Tarsha  
Your Corporate Concierge  
Yuhasz, Christine  
Zake, Susan  
Zalewski, Sharon  
Zangmeister, Sharon  
Zellers, Andrew





# Meet Our Classroom “Instructors” for the Back to School Bash

All of our classes are interactive and have an “adult-twist”

## Art History & Culture - Dara Harper, M.Ed.

Dara Harper, a passionate, creative entrepreneur, artist, and educator, is a true testament to the power of art and education. Her academic journey at the University of Akron, where she earned a Master’s in Curriculum and Instruction, a Bachelor’s in Studio Art with a focus on Painting and a Minor in Art History, has significantly shaped her artistic prowess. This is evident in her public installations at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Downtown Cuyahoga Falls, South Akron in Morgan Park, and the West Side of Akron, Ohio.

When Dara Harper says, “Engaging the community and spaces through art is part of my purpose as an artist,” she is not just making a statement, but revealing her artistic philosophy and her approach to community engagement. Her art is a tool for connection, communication, and change.



## Geography - Gina Krieger



Gina Krieger is Co-owner and Vice President of Seven Grains Natural Market in Tallmadge, Ohio. Since its inception in 1998, Gina has served as the Lead Buyer for several key departments including everything from seafood and poultry to grocery, supplements and wellness products. She speaks frequently to groups small and large about nutrition, self-wellness, and building and strengthening the immune system. She has helped guide Seven Grains Natural Market into one of the most respected Natural Food retailers in the Midwest.

Seven Grains was most recently honored by one of the US’s largest national Natural Food distributor, as one of the top 2 stores in Ohio and in the top 250 Natural Food stores east of the Mississippi—an impressive honor, listed alongside multiple location chains including those in high grossing cities like New York City, Chicago, and Boston. Gina also directs all marketing including monthly circular layout and social media. Prior to Seven Grains, Gina was a Senior Account Executive with Radio One Marketing in Cleveland, Ohio. Gina spent several years in both broadcast sales and voice over talent with WKDD in Akron and WMMS and WMJI in Cleveland for regional and national accounts including Coca Cola, Pepsi, and Belkin Productions.

She graduated from Ashland University with BA degrees in Broadcasting, Business and Marketing and was a member of Delta Zeta Sorority. She currently serves on the board of directors for Crown Point Ecology in Bath, Ohio, is a three-time past chair for Crown Point’s primary fundraiser Taste of Earth, and is a member of Akron Wine Club and Turkey Foot Island Club.

## Language Arts - Kat Allen Martucci & Lori Krohn, Amp Strategy

Join Kat Allen Martucci and Lori Krohn from Amp Strategy as they explore how Gen Z is reshaping language and communication through trendy words.

Heavily influenced by online culture, Gen Z uses these terms to express their unique identity and connect with each other. This duo will quiz you through the latest verbiage and language trends, helping you understand and engage with this dynamic generation!

Kat Allen Martucci, President of Amp Strategy, is a public relations, communications, and branding professional passionate about developing and executing campaigns to increase media exposure and support strategic marketing initiatives. Kat specializes in CX and brand feel, as well as writing and creating messages with a positive and cohesive voice.



Lori Krohn, Vice President at Amp Strategy, is a strategic branding professional, known for her entrepreneurial spirit and forward-thinking approach. With a sharp eye for emerging trends and a passion for driving brand success, Lori is dedicated to leading her clients through the ever-changing strategic and digital marketing landscape.



## Civics - Jackie Derrow & Towanda Mullins

Born in Cleveland, **Jackie Derrow** has lived in Akron since 2009. Her primary work experience includes nearly 25 years in business development: 17 years at global consulting firm Willis Towers Watson, and 7.5 years at global law firm, Squire Patton Boggs. Jackie retired in 2014 and has devoted her free time to volunteering, primarily with the League of Women Voters of the Akron Area where she has served on the Board as secretary, voter service chair, membership chair and as president. Most recently she was honored to represent LWVAA on the Sojourner Truth Project Core Committee as communications chair. She has served as a docent at the Akron Art Museum and currently serves as a mentor in the Akron Public Schools through the i.C.A.R.E. program.

**Towanda Mullins** is dedicated to the Akron community, where she was born, raised, educated, and pursued her professional career and her passion for serving the community. A proud graduate of the Akron Public Schools and the University of Akron, she is also a United States Army veteran. She passionately pursues opportunities to develop positive outcomes and to empower individuals to actively participate in shaping their own communities.



Towanda’s leadership is vast and includes the following: President of the Akron Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; President of the Black Leadership Alumni Council of the University of Akron; a member of the Board of Directors for the Summit County Historical Society; the founder and scholarship chairperson for the United Baptist Church an active member of the NAACP, League of Women Voters, Akron, the Signet Love Inspires (SLI) Foundation grant review Board, and countless committees to support veterans and mentor young people. Notably, she served from 2019-2024 as the Chair of the Sojourner Truth Legacy Plaza, where she and a talented committee raised more than \$1 million for the plaza located in Akron, Ohio. On May 29, 2024, the Truth Legacy Plaza was unveiled. Towanda has received numerous awards and recognitions for her compassionate leadership and community involvement.

## Music & Physical Education - Tasha Young (DJ Tash Beatz) & Roni Jā

DJ TashBeatz, the founder & CEO of Rock The Crowd Ent, brings over 8 years of experience in curating a diverse music selection and promoting positivity and enjoyment through her musical performances. The mission of Rock The Crowd Ent is to use music as a means to unite, inspire, and create memorable and inclusive moments for their audience.

DJ TashBeatz has been showcased on various media platforms like 93.1 WZAK, Rebel 107.9, WNRV, Lock 3, Rock The Crowd Mix Show, and more. Furthermore, she has been spotted alongside Congresswoman Emilia Sykes, Sam Sylk, Coi Leray, Hubbs Groove, and many other notable figures.

Roni J, Chief Operating Officer of Rock The Crowd Ent is a talented vocalist hailing from Akron, Ohio. Renowned for her renditions of Tina Turner and the Emcee of Rock The Crowd Ent., she has collaborated with various bands in Akron and Cleveland, establishing herself as a powerhouse performer. Roni thrives on engaging with the audience during her shows, as music has always been a source of healing for her, aiming to entertain and provide solace to all who listen.

Her dynamic stage presence and soulful voice captivate audiences, leaving a lasting impression wherever she performs. Roni’s dedication to her craft is evident in every performance, where she seamlessly blends passion and professionalism. Beyond her musical talents, she is also committed to mentoring young artists, sharing her knowledge and experience to help them navigate the music industry.





## *Achieving Dreams Celebrations*

---

### *2007 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 1st Annual*

- **Date:** Wednesday, October 24, 2007
- **Location:** Tangier, 532 W. Market Street, Akron, Ohio
- **Keynote Speaker:** Leon Harris (Buchtel graduate)
- **Honorees:** PGA Educator of the Year: Johnnette Snowden Curry  
PGA Parent of the Year: Russel C. Neal Jr.  
PGA Volunteer of the Year: James E. Toles  
PGA Volunteer of the Year: Susan Vogelsang
- **Event Chairperson:** S. Theresa Carter
- **Honorary Chairpersons:** Dr. Luis Proenza (President of The University of Akron) and  
Dr. Sylvester Small (Superintendent of the Akron Public Schools)
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### *2008 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 2nd Annual*

- **Date:** Friday, October 3, 2008
- **Location:** Quaker Station, 135 S. Broadway, Akron, Ohio
- **Keynote Speaker:** Glynis Wheeler Redwine, Esq. (Buchtel graduate)
- **Honorees:** PGA Volunteer of the Year: Buchtel High School PTA  
PGA Volunteer of the Year: Deborah Cunningham  
PGA Parent of the Year: Pamela LeGrair  
PGA Educator of the Year: Dreama Mason
- **Event Chairperson:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Honorary Chairpersons:** Robert W. Briggs (President of the GAR Foundation) and  
Vivian Celeste Neal (Program Officer of the John L. & James Knight Foundation)
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Development Director:** Theresa Manzell

### *2009 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 3rd Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 22, 2009
- **Location:** Quaker Station, 135 S. Broadway St., Akron, OH
- **Keynote Speaker:** Dr. David L. Burnham (Buchtel graduate)
- **Honorees:** **Partnering to Achieve the Dream - Celebrating Our Partners**  
with Kent State University and The University of Akron (recognized various individuals from different departments at both universities)  
Kent State University Top Honoree: H. Scott Curfman  
The University of Akron Top Honoree: Dr. Deborah Owens-Fink
- **Event Chairperson:** Debra Adams Simmons
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Development Director:** Theresa Manzell

## *Achieving Dreams Celebrations*

---

### *2010 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 4th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 28, 2010
- **Location:** Quaker Station, 135 S. Broadway St., Akron, OH
- **Honorees:** **Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Young Alumna – Raynese Scott Fikes, DDS  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – Betty Dalton, Fred Gissendaner, and Gail C. Walker  
Lifetime Achievement – Nicholas T. George, Esq., Judge Carla D. Moore, and Edwin L. Parmes, Esq.
- **Event Chairpersons:** Judi Bevly Hill & Margaret Williams
- **Honorary Chairperson:** Eileen Burg
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Development Director:** Theresa Manzell

### *2011 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 5th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 27, 2011
- **Location:** Quaker Station, 135 S. Broadway St., Akron, OH
- **Honoree:** **Community Service Honoree**  
Tuesday Musical Association, Barbara Feld, Executive Director
- **Honorees:** **Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Young Alumni – Brandon Ford, RN, Esq.  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – Gregory Hill, DO, Kymberly “Kym” Alford Sellers, Victoria Turner-King, and Melodie Morgan-Minott, MD  
Lifetime Achievement – Dianne Rubin Newman, Esq., Herbert Newman, Esq., and Judy Lickliger Read and Roger Read
- **Event Chairpersons:** Judi Bevly Hill & Margaret Williams
- **Honorary Chairperson:** Eileen Burg
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Development Director:** Theresa Manzell

### *2012 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 6th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, November 1, 2012
- **Location:** St. George’s Family Center, 3204 Ridgewood Road, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:** **Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Memorial - Stanley M. Bober, CPA  
Community Service - Magistrate Sharon Hairston Dennis  
Young Alumna – Brittany Grimes Zaehring, Esq.  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – John Saros, Esq. & Marilyn Sanders Mobley, Ph.D.  
Lifetime Achievement – Dr. Robert Stone & Mrs. Rochelle Dienoff Stone
- **Event Chairpersons:** Iris Harvey & Bernett L. Williams
- **Honorary Chairpersons:** Attorneys Dianne and Herbert Newman
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Development Director:** Theresa Manzell



## *Achieving Dreams Celebrations*

---

### *2013 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 7th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 3, 2013
- **Location:** St. George's Family Center, 3204 Ridgewood Road, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**  
**Community Service Honorees**  
Robert "Bob" Kulinski, President, United Way of Summit County  
Stewart & Calhoun Funeral Home
- **Honorees:**  
**Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Memorial – Barbara Dirden Mathews  
Young Alumna – Shayla L. Brown  
Distinguished Service to Humanity –  
Leon Harris and Pamela Hamilton-Stubbs, M.D.  
Lifetime Achievement – Senator Tom Sawyer
- **Event Chairpersons:** Judi Bevly Hill & Iris Harvey
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### *2014 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 8th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 2, 2014
- **Location:** St. George's Family Center, 3204 Ridgewood Road, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**  
**Community Service Honorees**  
Bishop F. Josephus "Joey" Johnson II, Pastor Cathy L. Johnson,  
and The House of the Lord
- **Honorees:**  
**Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Young Alumna – Kelley Coleman Walton  
Lifetime Achievement – Thomas DeBord, Howard Hewett, and Stacey Hodoh
- **Event Chairpersons:** Judi Bevly Hill & Stephanie "Stevie" Turner
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### *2015 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 9th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 1, 2015
- **Location:** St. George's Family Center, 3204 Ridgewood Road, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**  
**Community Service Honorees**  
Elizabeth Z. Bartz, Judi Hill, and State & Federal Communications
- **Honorees:**  
**Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Distinguished Service to Humanity –  
Atty. Crystal Jones and Father Jonathan Morris  
Lifetime Achievement – Woodrow Nash
- **Honorary Chairperson:** Dr. Beverly Warren, President, Kent State University
- **Event Chairpersons:** Traci L. Buckner, Katerina C. Papas, Esq., and Mona Sarkar, Esq.
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

## *Achieving Dreams Celebrations*

---

### *2016 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 10th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 6, 2016
- **Location:** Greystone Hall, 103 S. High Street, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**  
**Community Service Honorees**  
Deborah Owens, Ph.D. & Richard M. Roberts
- **Honorees:**  
**Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Young Alumna - Savannah Brinson James  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – Yanick Rice Lamb, MBA  
Lifetime Achievement – Judge Carol Dezso
- **Event Chairpersons:** S. Theresa Carter & Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### *2017 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 11th Annual*

- **Date:** Thursday, October 5, 2017
- **Location:** Greystone Hall, 103 S. High Street, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**  
**Community Service Honorees**  
S. Theresa Carter, David James, & OMNOVA Solutions Foundation
- **Honorees:**  
**Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
In Memoriam - Frank Marina Jr.  
Lifetime Achievement – Marco Sommerville  
Lifetime Achievement – Dennis Weiner, M.D., FAOA  
Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval & Stephanie York, Esq.
- **Event Chairpersons:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### *2018 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 12th Annual*

- **Date:** Saturday, October 13, 2018
- **Location:** John S. Knight Center, 77 E. Mill Street, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**  
**Community Service Honorees**  
Dana K. LaGarde, St. Paul A.M.E. Church
- **Honorees:**  
**Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – Dana Mitchell Rosser  
Lifetime Achievement – Edward "Ed" Yeager
- **Honorary Chairperson:** Dr. Brian Harte, President, Cleveland Clinic Akron General
- **Event Chairpersons:** Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.



## Achieving Dreams Celebrations

---

### 2019 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 13th Annual

- **Date:** Friday, October 11, 2019
- **Location:** John S. Knight Center, 77 E. Mill Street, Akron, OH 44308
- **Honorees:**
  - Community Service Honorees**  
Christine Amer Mayer, Esq.  
Judge James R. Williams and Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation of Akron, Ohio
  - Honorees:**
    - Celebrating Buchtel Alumni**  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – Denise Brandon  
Distinguished Service to Humanity – Regina King  
Lifetime Achievement – Leland Jones  
Lifetime Achievement – Sheldon Ocker
- **Event Chairpersons:** Barbara A. Feld and Dana K. LaGarde
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### 2020 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 14th Annual

- **Date:** Saturday, October 3, 2020
- **Location:** A Reimagined Virtual Event
- **Keynote Speaker:** The Honorable Stacey Abrams
- **Honorees:**
  - Community Service Honorees**  
The Honorable Emilia Strong Sykes  
Bernett L. Williams  
Akron Community Foundation  
United Way of Summit and Medina Counties
  - Honorary Chairperson:** Dr. Clifford Deveny
- **Event Chairpersons:** Barbara Feld & Dana K. LaGarde
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### 2021 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 15th Annual

- **Date:** Saturday, October 9, 2021
- **Location:** A Reimagined Virtual Event
- **Keynote Speaker:** Al Roker, Anchor of NBC News' TODAY
- **Honorees:**
  - Community Service Honorees**  
Danielle J. Kimmell, CPA  
William R. Ellis, Jr.  
The Reporter Newspaper
- **Event Chairpersons:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq. and Pamela R. Valentine
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

## Achieving Dreams Celebrations

---

### 2022 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 16th Annual

- **Date:** Saturday, October 15, 2022
- **Location:** John S. Knight Center, 77 E. Mill Street, Akron, OH
- **Honorees:**
  - CHAMPIONS OF GRAD HONOREES (20th Anniversary)**  
Leon Bibb  
Laurie Curfman  
Curtis Eaton, Jr.  
Mary Outley  
Dr. Sylvester Small  
University of Akron School of Social Work, represented by Dr. Timothy McCarragher
- **Event Chairpersons:** Pamela R. Valentine & Jacqueline Silas-Butler
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.

### 2023 Achieving Dreams Celebration - 17th Annual

- **Date:** Saturday, September 9, 2023
- **Location:** Hilton Akron/Fairlawn, 3180 W. Market Street, Akron, OH
- **Theme:** Back to School Bash
- **Homecoming Queen:** Christine Amer Mayer, Esq.
- **Homecoming King:** Barry Dunaway
- **Royalty Court Members (based upon overall contributions):**
  - Carol Hodge Poe
  - Dr. Karen Kea
  - Debra Sommerville
  - Dr. Vernon Sykes
  - Dr. Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval
- **Additional Participating Homecoming Court Members:**
  - Elizabeth Bartz
  - LaCresia Beecher
  - Rebecca Considine
  - Romona Davis
  - John Galonski, Esq.
  - Edward Gilbert, Esq.
  - Dr. Gregory Hill
  - Sue Hobson
  - Gina Krieger
  - Frank G. LaGarde Sr.
  - Karen C. Lefton, Esq.
  - Jerry Myers Jr.
  - Walter Noland
  - The Hon. Ilene Shapiro
  - Dr. Leah E. Shaw
  - Jim Simon, Esq.
  - Larry Tolson
  - Ebony Yeboah-Amankwah, Esq.
- **Event Chairpersons:** Susan Flowers & Jacqueline Silas-Butler
- **Executive Director:** Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.



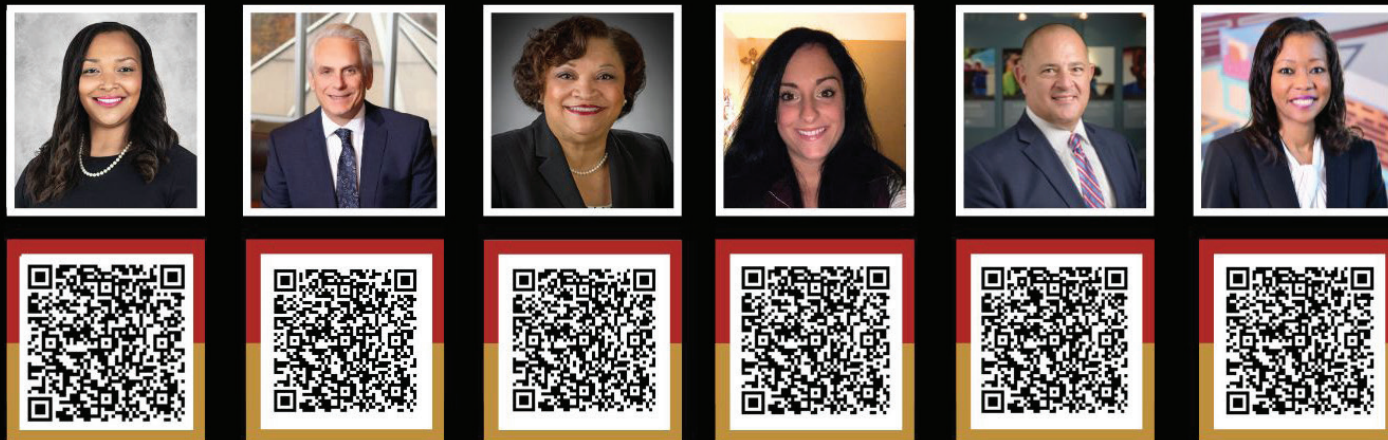


*Back to School Bash 2*

Isma'il Al-Amin   Holly Harris Bane   Lakisha Barclay   Elizabeth Bartz   Dr. Angela Brake   Alexis B. Curry, MSN, RN



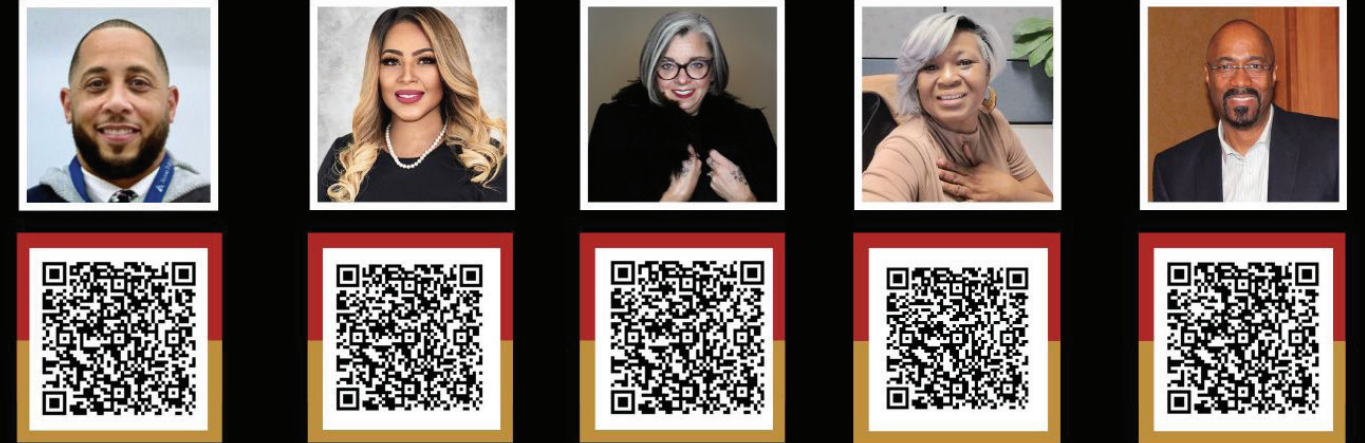
Brandi Davis   Steven A. Dimengo, Esq.   Elizabeth A. England   Ellen Esakov   John Garofalo   Montrella S. Jackson, Esq.



The winners will be crowned at this year's Achieving Dreams Celebration on Saturday, September 7, 2024  
Proceeds support Project GRAD Akron's Scholarship Fund



Larry W. Johnson, Jr.   Carolyn Brooks Joyce   Pam Klemm   Angelia Leggett   King Lewis



Myron J. Lewis   Nikki Marchmon-Boykin   Tony Martucci, Esq.   Kimberly Moses, Esq.   Job Esau Perry, Esq.



Lynn Cheri Puryear   Catey Breck Scanlon   Larry F. Thomas   Sylvia Trundle   Asuama Yeboah-Amankwah





**State &  
Federal  
COMMUNICATIONS**

**GUIDING YOU ALONG THE  
★ ROAD TO COMPLIANCE ★**

[www.stateandfed.com](http://www.stateandfed.com)

Project Grad Akron's  
**ACHIEVING  
DREAMS**

**PROUD TO BE A SCHOLAR SPONSOR  
FOR PROJECT GRAD AKRON**

*A Woman-Owned Company in an All-American City!*

## Are you ready to BOSS up your future?

Building Opportunities for Sustained Success (BOSS) is here for youths aged 14 to 24 to develop essential skills for securing and thriving in employment. With BOSS, you'll get personalized support services and case management to overcome obstacles and achieve your unique goals. Don't miss the chance to shape your career and future with BOSS!

 **OhioMeansJobs.**  
Summit County  
A proud partner of the American Job Center network

 **ILENE SHAPIRO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
Department of Job and Family Services

Call 330.630.4642 or visit [OhioMeansJobs.com/Summit](http://OhioMeansJobs.com/Summit) 

**PROUD SUPPORTER OF**

 **Project  
GRAD**

**AKRON**

**JUDGE KATHRYN  
MICHAEL**

Paid for by the Vote Judge Michael Committee



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out.



**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE *Ohio*

ADM Crisis Center: 330-996-7730

24/7 Addiction Helpline: 330-940-1133

Additional Resources: [www.admboard.org](http://www.admboard.org)



# HELP YOUTH FIND HOUSING & HOPE.



Scan QR code to  
find out how





# Elliot Kolkovich

Summit County Prosecutor

We are proud to sponsor Project GRAD Akron as they help improve the lives of young people, their families, and our community.



*Serving scholars from kindergarten to graduation*

akronschools.com



*Congratulations*

to Project GRAD Akron on another successful Achieving Dreams "Back to School Bash"



**Elizabeth England**

Licensed and Certified Agent  
330-620-5895 (TTY: 771)

eengland@medicareplansneo.com

www.medicareplansneo.com | Text Plans65 to 216-366-7916

**NO cost or obligation to meet with me.**

MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE & PART D PLANS

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently we represent up to 11 organizations which offer up to 165 products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.



PROUD TO SUPPORT  
**PROJECT GRAD AKRON**

The University of Akron thanks Project GRAD and its Board of Directors for their support of APS students as they achieve their goals.

The University of Akron





We use myth because it helps us out in our real life situations and makes you think and realize a lot of things.” — *Alchemy student*



Transforming Lives Through Myth™

AlchemyInc.net

**BE THE REASON**

**FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE**

**BECOME A FOSTER PARENT TODAY!**  
330.379.1990 | [summitkids.org](http://summitkids.org)

Summit County **CHILDREN SERVICES**  
*Building Families . . . Building Futures*

f YouTube Instagram Twitter LinkedIn

**AKRON'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Stark State COLLEGE**

**fits your budget**  
lowest tuition in the area

**fits your schedule**  
online and in-person classes

**fits your plan**  
four-year transfer pathways or training for in-demand jobs

**APPLY! [starkstate.edu/admissions](http://starkstate.edu/admissions)**

**PROUD TO SUPPORT**  
*PROJECT GRAD*

Thank you for all you do to make a difference in the lives of children and families in our community.

*Helping You Help the Community*

[akroncf.org](http://akroncf.org)  
330-376-8522



Lighting the way today—  
and every day.



**FirstEnergy**<sup>®</sup>



Thank you  
Project GRAD Akron  
For your dedication to preparing scholars for their future



Akron Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



ATTORNEYS AT LAW



CONGRATULATIONS TO  
PROJECT GRAD AKRON FOR 22 YEARS OF SUCCESS!  
Thank you for your work with Akron Public Schools' students!

The Scanlon Group Co., L.P.A.  
Attorneys at Law  
4040 Embassy Parkway, Suite 240  
Akron, Ohio 44333  
Phone 330-376-4558  
Fax 330-376-3550  
[www.scangrp.com](http://www.scangrp.com)

Responsible Injury Representation  
For Over 40 Years

Maura E. Scanlon  
John T. Scanlon



**Thank you to all the  
Homecoming Court  
participants!  
Project GRAD Akron,  
thank you for twenty-  
two years of successfully  
preparing Students!**

**Jacqueline Silas-Butler, Esq.  
Lawrence Butler, Jr.**

*Graduation Really Achieves Dreams*



## **Congratulations**

**to Project GRAD Akron and the Homecoming Court**

We're honored to support the mission of Project GRAD Akron and to celebrate the remarkable impact you've made in our community.



**With gratitude,  
Team Amp**

**» SCAN TO  
LEARN MORE:**



**Amplify your story.**

### **OUR SERVICES**

- ✓ Social Media
- ✓ Public Relations
- ✓ Video & Audio Production
- ✓ Conferences & Events (incl. virtual)
- ✓ Communications & Marketing Strategy

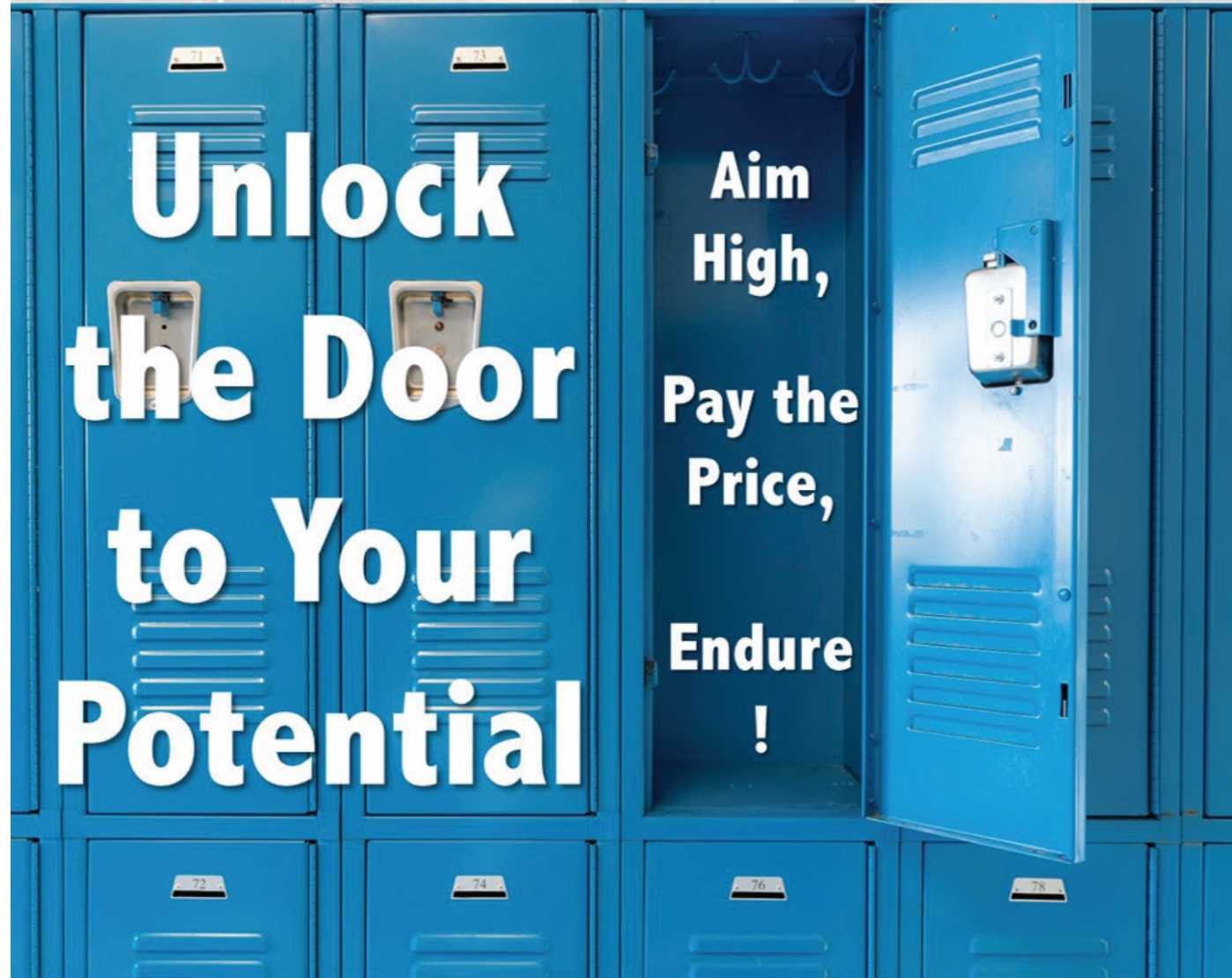
**ampstrategy.com • 330.344.9100**

**FOLLOW US:**   





# Project GRAD Akron's 2024 Achieving Dreams Back to School Bash 2



**ARLINGTON CHURCH OF GOD...**  
*strives to be a congregation in which every person is growing, serving,  
and cared for ...by the body, for the community, to the glory of God.*

Rev. Dr. Charles Myricks, Jr., Senior Pastor  
539 S. Arlington St. | Akron, OH 44306 | [ArlingtonChurch.org](http://ArlingtonChurch.org) | 330-773-3321



CONGRATULATIONS  
ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR



PROJECT GRAD AKRON  
ACHIEVING DREAMS  
BACK TO SCHOOL BASH 2

Tavia Galonski  
Summit County Clerk of Courts

PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF TAVIA GALONSKI  
1137 ALLENDALE AVE AKRON 44306



# Congratulations to Project GRAD Akron!

As your Congresswoman, it's my mission to support the safety, education, and growth of every child in Northeast Ohio. Every child deserves high-quality education so they can make their dreams come true.

**GRADUATION  
REALLY  
ACHIEVES  
DREAMS!**

*Emilia*  
**SYKES**  
FOR CONGRESS

[www.emiliasykesforcongress.com](http://www.emiliasykesforcongress.com)

PAID FOR BY EMILIA SYKES FOR CONGRESS.



We're here from highchairs  
through high school.

Learn more at [akronchildrens.org](http://akronchildrens.org).



*Honoring all the  
Great Work of  
Project GRAD  
Akron*

*Belsky-Waits Family*



**MEADEN & MOORE**

PROUD SPONSORS OF  
**PROJECT GRAD AKRON'S ACHIEVING DREAMS'  
"BACK TO SCHOOL BASH"**

[MEADENMOORE.COM](http://MEADENMOORE.COM)

Advisory & Consulting | Audit & Assurance | Forensic Accounting | Tax | Wealth Center



Congratulations to the award  
and scholarship recipients  
of Project GRAD (Akron)



**Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation  
of Akron**

wishes all of you many blessings  
and continued success.



Congratulations Project  
GRAD Akron on your  
Back to School Bash 2!

Kristen M.  
**Scalise**  
**CPA, CFE**  
Summit County Fiscal Officer

Paid for by Friends of Kristen M. Scalise  
4042 Greenridge Dr., Uniontown, OH 44685





**UNITED WAY  
SUMMIT & MEDINA**

We're working with our community to ensure all children receive a quality education that offers a pathway to a successful life and **EVERYONE** can achieve their human potential.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
**GIVE NOW!**

**HELPING BUILD  
A  
BETTER FUTURE**



©2023 The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. All rights reserved.



*"Celebrating the Lives of Those You Love" since 1963*

**Best Service + Best Price = Best Value**

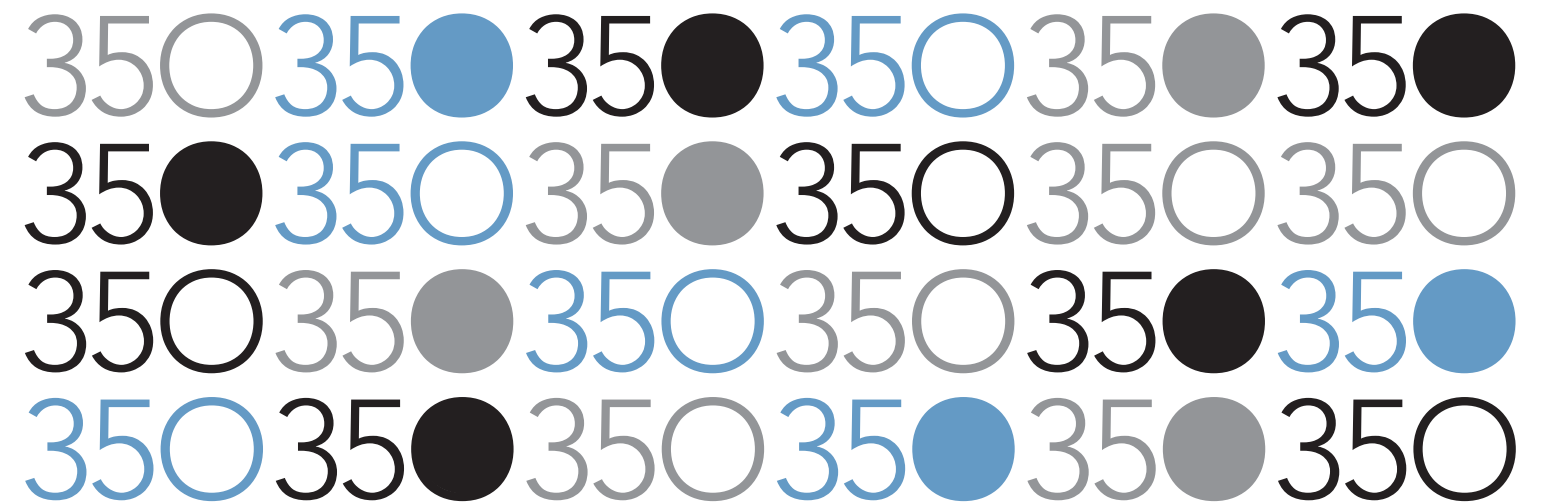


Pre-Planning Consultation  
Affordable Personalized Options

*A Legacy of Excellence*

*"At Stewart and Calhoun Funeral Home & Cremation Service, we know the dedication it takes to serve families at the highest level. For over 50 years the Stewart and Calhoun Family has been serving the people of Northeast Ohio. We are active in the community and are honored to serve our neighbors and friends with love and respect."*

529 West Thornton St. **AKRON**  
330.535.1543 • stewartcalhoun.com  
23000 Rockside Rd. **BEDFORD HTS** • 17010 Lakeshore Blvd. **CLEVELAND**



**Cheers to Project GRAD Akron  
for another year of Achieving Dreams!**

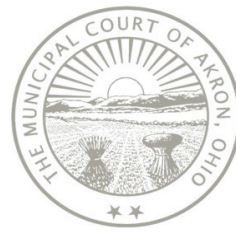
**ABOUT350CREATIVE**

WEB / PRINT / BRANDING

330.208.2447  
www.about350.com







Your Akron Municipal Court Judges are proud to support this evening's Back to School Bash 2!



Judge  
**Annalisa S. Williams**  
Administrative/Presiding  
Judge



Judge  
**Jerry Larson**



Judge  
**Jon Oldham**



Judge  
**Ron Cable**



Judge  
**Nicole Walker**



Judge  
**David Hamilton**

Visit the Akron Municipal Court at <http://www.akronmunicipalcourt.org> or on Facebook to learn about the programming opportunities we offer our community, including our six specialized dockets:  
ARCH Court, Recovery Court, RISE Court, Family Intervention Court, Mental Health Court and Valor Court.



**For every care  
in the community.**



We proudly support  
**Project GRAD Akron**  
and its commitment  
to help students  
achieve their dreams.

Visit [AkronGeneral.org](http://AkronGeneral.org)





# BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN (B2K) HIGHLIGHTS

## 2024 - 2025 Bridge to Kindergarten Summer Academy

*Students and their Families Transitioning from home or preschool to begin their formal educational journey in Kindergarten*

Since 2009, 601 students have successfully transitioned to an Akron Public School kindergarten classroom after completing Project GRAD Akron's **Bridge to Kindergarten Summer Academy**. We very much appreciate the



continued partnerships we have relied on over the years, including **Akron Public Schools, Kent State University's Early Childhood Education Department, Summit Education Initiative, and for two years, ArtSparks**. The 2024 - 2025 program began with the **Bridge to Kindergarten Summer Academy**, which was held this year July 22 through August 9, 2024. The **B2K Summer Academy** was held at **Schumacher CLC (Buchtel Cluster)**, with a total of 34 students in two classrooms. Students worked on building and strengthening their kindergarten readiness skills in literacy, math, social and emotional learning, and transitions.



**Parents as Partners:** During the summer program, parent and caregiver meetings each week provided community/school resources for family wellness. Also there was an opportunity for parents to support each other. Speakers: Christine Sullivan - Summit Education Initiative, Trish Rice - Molina Healthcare, and Adriana Plank - MedWorks.

**Our program continues during the school year with programming and wrap-around services for parents, caregivers, and students** to ensure our families and students have their needs met for a successful start to their beginning journey in their formal education.

Thank you to **Akron Public Schools, Akron Community Foundation, and Summit Education Initiative** for your continued generous support of **Bridge to Kindergarten**.



# PROJECT GRAD AKRON INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY PROGRAMS

**Overview of outcomes for the 2023 - 2024 School Year:**

**Student participants in College and Career Central Classes:** 1952 students at Buchtel, East, Innes, Jennings, and Garfield CLCs, and North High School. 98.7% of students agreed, "I learned valuable skills to succeed in college and career".

**GRAD Mentors Match Hours:** 1889.25 mentoring hours for 10th through 12 grade students at Buchtel and East CLCs.

**Bridge to GRADuation:** served 222 unduplicated students in school day and after-school programming to support Youth Violence Intervention and Prevention at Buchtel and East CLCs.



**Entrepreneurship Adventures Summer Program:** 55 students from Buchtel and East CLCs. Students worked in teams to address a need and create a product to fill that need. The product was created and manufactured by students with the support of area entrepreneurs. This program was funded by The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

**GEAR UP After-school Club:** served 581 duplicated students in after-school social emotional skill building programming at Buchtel, East, Innes, and Jennings CLCs, and North High School.

**GEAR UP Parent Academy:** hosted a Parent Academy for GEAR UP Parents from the GEAR UP Schools, a total of 44 guests for breakfast and workshop on Trauma and Student Wellness presented by Red Oak Behavioral Health. 100% of parents agreed, "Learning about the impact of trauma on students and how I can help my student was beneficial to me as a parent".



**Writing for Your Future:** In partnership with Kent State University, 38 Buchtel and East CLC Class of 2025 students participated in a campus residential summer program focused on preparing an essay for the Common Application.

**Class of 2024:** 110 seniors at Buchtel and East CLCs were served through our classes. Of these, 73 students planned to attend college and completed 214 scholarship applications and were awarded over \$676,000.00 in scholarships.

**GRADs Persist:** 34 Class of 2024 graduates joined 37 current college scholars to participate in GRADs Persist, receiving on-going support services, including navigated campus-based services, mental health services, and financial aid services. 94% of students in the cohort agreed, "I know I can reach out to Project GRAD and its staff for academic and financial aid support".

## Graduation Really Achieves Dreams

Our middle and high school programs have been generously supported by **United Way of Summit & Medina, The GAR Foundation, The City of Akron, The Ohio Department of Education and Workforces, ECMC Funding/NCAN (National College Attainment Network), and Akron Public Schools**



## Project GRAD Akron's Additional Scholarships

---



### Leon Harris Book Scholarships

The Leon Harris Book Scholarship was established in 2008. Mr. Harris, a Buchtel graduate, was the keynote speaker for the First Achieving Dreams Celebration Gala. He donated \$10,000 to fund the Project GRAD Akron Leon Harris Book Scholarships.



### Atha & Muriel Walker Scholarship

The Atha & Muriel Walker Scholarship was established independently in 1997 for the benefit of Buchtel graduating seniors. In 2011, the family began awarding scholarships through Project GRAD Akron for Buchtel High School seniors. For decades, the late Mr. and Mrs. Walker were local leaders who were active in many community projects. Mr. Walker made a mission of helping raise funds for Buchtel projects through his association with the service group Frontiers International. He also assisted high school and college students with job placement. The Walkers' five children are all graduates of Buchtel High School and they have all earned college degrees.



### The India Ola Douglas Memorial Book Scholarship

India Ola Douglas was a 2013 graduate of Buchtel CLC (High School) in Akron Public Schools. Active in school, she was a member of Project GRAD Akron. India was committed to pursuing her post-secondary education and she took classes at The University of Akron and Regency Beauty School. A hard worker, she was employed by JC Penney and as a consultant for Avon. Her ultimate goal was the pursue a career in fashion design. On May 6, 2015, India had just left home to attend classes. At 8:30am, while sitting in her car a red light, she and other cars were struck by a driver going twice the speed limit. On May 11, India tragically died as a result of injuries she sustained. The driver was later convicted of multiple offenses and sentenced to prison.

The India Ola Douglas Memorial Book Scholarship was established in 2016 by India's family and friends. The scholarship was the brainchild of India's brother, Donte Douglas, a 2008 Project GRAD Akron Scholar, 2008 Buchtel graduate, and a 2013 graduate of Muskingum College. He wants other students to "chase their dreams" as his sister was doing.

## Project GRAD Akron's Additional Scholarships

---



### The Ken Walker Book Scholarship

The Ken Walker Book Scholarship benefits a Buchtel alumnus pursuing a degree at the University of Akron. Ken Walker (1951-2019) Ken graduated from Buchtel (Class of 1969) and earned his B.A. from U of Akron (Class of 1973). He built his life in Akron, marrying (Gwen) and raising a family, all the while remaining active in the community and nurturing strong friendships. He was athletic and particularly enjoyed playing basketball and executing his perfectly arced, nothing-but-net fade away jump shot. He served as a long-time member of several civic boards. Intellectually curious, Ken was an avid reader with a keen interest in political and social justice issues, Old English literature and sports biographies.



### Project GRAD Akron Carolyn Stokes Reed Memorial Scholarship

Carolyn S. Reed was employed by the Akron Board of Education for 30 years, as a teacher at Robinson Elementary and principal of Rankin and Glover Elementary Schools. Mrs. Reed was the first African American to be elected president of the Ohio Association of Elementary School Principals and was a president of that Akron Elementary School Principals Association. Carolyn Stokes Reed knew she wanted to be a teacher since she was in the Second Grade. At the start of every school day for 16 years, as a principal Carolyn Reed would say, "This is the most important day of your life. Do your very best. Follow the directions of your teacher the first time they're given."

Mrs. Reed believed that whatever path you decide to follow, you make sure you do your best and be the best you can be. She believed if you had your education, you could write your own ticket in life. She was very involved in other numerous civic activities and achieved many honors. She is still remembered as a motivator, a lover of people and a lover of children.

### Contributions to benefit Project GRAD Akron's programs/scholarships:

---

Mail: 10 N. Main St., Suite 503, Akron, OH 44308

Website: [www.projectgradakron.org](http://www.projectgradakron.org)

Call: 330-761-3056

Email: [info@projectgradakron.org](mailto:info@projectgradakron.org)



# Staff and Team Members 2024-2025

**Jacqueline A. Silas-Butler, Esq.** ~ Executive Director

**Laurie Curfman** ~ Director of Programs

**Tiara Autry** ~ Program Manager

**Tiffany Haddon** ~ Program Manager

**Matthew Futch** ~ College and Career Advisor

**Wynter Mason** ~ College and Career Advisor

**Isabella South** ~ College and Career Advisor

**Frank G. LaGarde, Sr.** ~ College and Career Advisor

**Theresa Manzell** ~ Community Engagement Coordinator

**Dr. Naomi White** ~ Program Support Specialist

**Kathryn Vajda** ~ Parent Engagement Coordinator

**Laura Farris-Daugherty** ~ Executive Administrative Assistant

**James Breedlove & CLA** ~ Accounting Consultants

**AmpStrategy** ~ Marketing Consultants

**DotOrg Solutions** ~ Fundraising Consultants

## College Interns

**Axicali Bernal** - The University of Akron, School of Social Work

**Elizabeth Warren** - The University of Akron, School of Social Work

*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

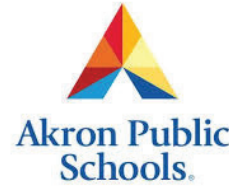
- Nelson Mandela



**Project GRAD Akron**  
10 North Main Street, Suite 503  
Akron, OH 44308-1958  
Phone: 330-761-3113; Fax: 330-761-3246  
Email: [info@projectgradakron.org](mailto:info@projectgradakron.org)  
Website: [www.projectgradakron.org](http://www.projectgradakron.org)  
Twitter: @GradAkron  
Instagram: @Grad\_Akron  
Facebook: Project GRAD Akron

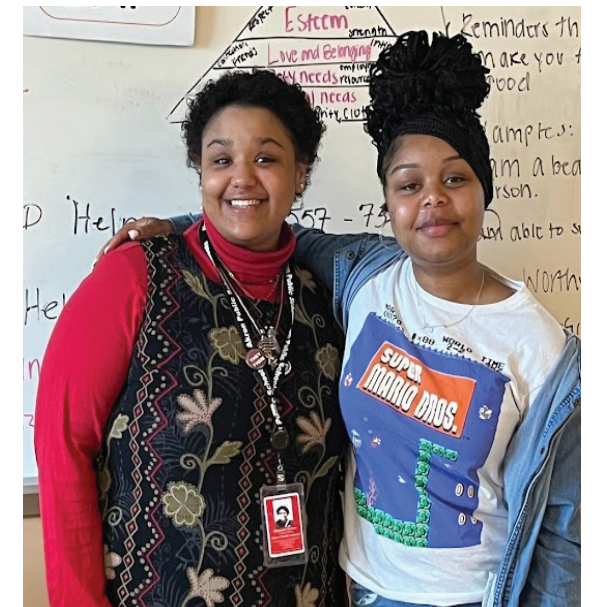


# BECOME A GRAD MENTOR! 2024 - 2025



Since 2015, **GRAD Mentors** proudly has:  
Recruited **382** Community Volunteer Mentors  
Provided **15,717** Total Mentor Match Hours  
Served **1,025** Total Student Mentees

- ★ GRAD Mentors work with Akron Public Schools high school students to **increase their personal motivation, develop their sense of resiliency, realize social and academic success, and actualize their plans for life after high school graduation.**
- ★ Traditional Mentoring, Team, and Small Group Mentoring opportunities



**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY TO BE A MENTOR:**  
To request more information about becoming a GRAD Mentor, visit our website, [www.projectgradakron.org](http://www.projectgradakron.org) click **GET INVOLVED** tab, click **Become a GRAD Mentor** tab and submit the requested information.  
**OR**  
Contact us by phone at **330-761-7952**



# Summit County Court of Common Pleas

## General Division Judges

# ***Congratulate***

*Project GRAD Akron on its 18th Annual  
Achieving Dreams Signature Fundraiser*



First Row from L to R: Administrative Judge Alison McCarty, Judge Jennifer Towell, Judge Christine Croce, Judge Alison Breaux and Judge Kathryn Michael.  
Second Row from L to R: Judge Joy Malek Oldfield, Presiding Judge Susan Baker Ross, Judge Kelly McLaughlin, Judge Tammy O'Brien and Judge Mary Margaret Rowlands.

***Summit County Court of Common Pleas is dedicated to dispensing equal justice in all matters under the Court's jurisdiction, preserving the rule of law, protecting the rights and liberties guaranteed under the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and providing the highest quality of professional support in a prompt, efficient and cost effective manner.***



Summit County Court of Common Pleas, 209 S. High St, Akron 44311  
[www.summitpcourt.net](http://www.summitpcourt.net)  
330.643.2162  
Hours of Operation:  
Monday thru Friday  
8:00am - 4:00 pm