



◆ *Graduation Really Achieves Dreams*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR
11TH ANNUAL **March GRADness!**

★ ★ ★ **SAVE THE DATE** ★ ★ ★

ACHIEVING
DREAMS 
SEPTEMBER 6, 2025

**VISIT
US:**



Project GRAD Akron

10 N. Main Street, Suite 503, Akron, Ohio 44308-1958
Phone: 330-761-3113; Fax: 330-761-3246
www.projectgradakron.org

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★ *Where Purpose Meets the Party* ★

#MarchGRADness2025 • #ProjectGRADakron

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2025
4:00 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.**

GREYSTONE HALL
103 S. HIGH STREET, AKRON, OHIO

★ ★ ★

DELICIOUS FOOD STATIONS,
MUSIC BY DJ TASHBEATZ,
BEVERAGES, RAFFLES,
KARAOKE, GAMES, GREAT
FUN, AND MUCH MORE!

★ ★ **THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 MARCH GRADNESS** ★ ★

★ ★ **ULTIMATE
CHAMPIONSHIP
SPONSOR:** ★ ★

The
University
of Akron

*Proceeds from the 11th annual March GRADness event support
Project GRAD Akron's programs, services, and scholarship fund.*



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.

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 for Excellence;
Lifelong Learning Culture; Commitment to Community;
Entrepreneurial & Innovative.*

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The proceeds from the 11th Annual March GRADness will support Project GRAD Akron's programs, services, and scholarships for students in the Akron Public Schools!



The Everyday Leaders is one of Project GRAD Akron's programs. It is a leadership group for students who have been committed to Project GRAD Akron's Bridge to GRADuation since 8th grade at Buchtel and East CLCs. The group began last year as a way for select students exhibiting leadership skills to hone and strengthen those skills and have opportunities to apply the skills in leadership activities.

Voices of a few students in Project GRAD Akron's Everyday Leaders Program:

Aminah said, "My communication and leadership skills have improved. I have better body language, tone and facial expressions when I talk to people. I've learned to be honest and I have confidence in being a leader."

Donovan credits the Everyday Leaders program with improving his leadership skills and giving him confidence to stand in front of his class, listen to peers and help solve problems.

Blade said about his time in the program, "It gives you a head start at achieving what you want. Leaders know how to push forward and use those skills to reach your goals."

Join us. Together, we will make a difference!



A K R O N

Staff and Team Members

(2024-2025)

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Laurie Curfman ~ Director of Programs

Tiffany Haddon ~ Program Manager

Matthew Futch ~ College and Career Advisor

LaShonna Johnson ~ College and Career Advisor

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Wynter Mason ~ College and Career Advisor

Isabella South ~ College and Career Advisor

Theresa Manzell ~ Community Engagement Coordinator

Dr. Naomi White ~ Program Support Specialist

Kathyrn Vajda ~ Parent Engagement Coordinator

Laura Farris-Daugherty ~ Executive Administrative Assistant

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To All: Thank you for your support as we invest in the lives of the young people we serve in the Akron Public Schools. Your contributions will make a positive difference in their lives; giving us the opportunity to fulfill our mission of providing services for our students to achieve success from kindergarten through college!

What you can expect TODAY, at the 11th Annual March GRADness party!

Great Food Stations

Cold Hors d'oeuvres Display

Imported and Domestic Cheese Display with flatbreads, baguettes & breadsticks; Crudit  of vegetables with a Sun-Dried Tomato & Artichoke Dip

Hot Hors d'oeuvres Display

Spanakopita; Tandoori Chicken Satay; Brie and Raspberry Puffed Pastry; and Petite Maryland Crab Cakes

Thin Crust Pizza Display

Goat Cheese, Mozzarella, Red Onion, Oregano and Basil Thin Crust Pizza; Garlic Shrimp, Ricotta, Mozzarella and Parmesan Thin Crust Pizza; and Pepperoni, Mozzarella and Oregano Thin Crust Pizza

Slider Station

Beef Slider with White Cheddar, Dill Pickle and Fried Onion; Beer Battered Whitefish Slider with a Savoy Cabbage Slaw; and Nashville Hot Chicken Slider with Sour Pickles

Italian Pasta Display

Penne with Italian Sausage, Fennel, Rosa Sauce and Parmesan; and Penne with Asparagus, Peas, Mushroom and Reggiano Cream Sauce

Dessert Display

Assorted fresh baked cookies, brownies, and cannoli
Coffee and Tea Service with Flavoring Syrups & Topping Accoutrements

50/50 Raffle

Raffle tickets are on sale for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00,

Arms Length - \$10.00, or Wingspan - \$20.00

The selected recipient will win 50% of the entire amount collected for the raffle. *You do not have to be present to win!*

Kahoot, Selfie Scavenger Hunt, & Fun Activities!

Games for individuals and teams. Great Prizes!

Karaoke, Music by DJ TashBeatz, Networking with incredible people, Photo Booth, Door Prizes, and so much more!

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Executive Director, Project GRAD Akron

PROJECT GRAD AKRON

2024-2025 – Our 22nd school year!

Since its inception in September 2002, Project GRAD Akron has formed a transformative partnership with Akron Public Schools, **impacting the lives of thousands of students and families.** What began in the fall of 2002 with six schools in the Buchtel Cluster has since expanded significantly. In the 2017-18 school year, we piloted an expansion to North High School, and by the 2018-19 school year, we extended our services to the East Cluster.

In the summer of 2021, Project GRAD Akron co-authored a federal GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant in collaboration with Akron Public Schools. This grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Education, secured more than \$7 million over seven years to further support the district's students and families. As the lead partner and one of the contractors for the grant, Project GRAD Akron has expanded its programs to include the Garfield Cluster (formerly Kenmore-Garfield) and the North Cluster. Today, we serve students and families across the Buchtel, East, Garfield, and North Clusters, positively impacting thousands of young lives each year.

At the core of our mission is guiding students toward successful futures. We support their journeys through a variety of innovative programs, including our Bridge to Kindergarten program in collaboration with Kent State University, the Kids2College program, College and Career Central classes, Summer Institutes with the University of Akron and Kent State University, the GRAD Mentors program, the GRAD Helping Hub, scholarships, and the GRAD Persists initiative for college students.

With supporters like you, since 2006, Project GRAD Akron has awarded over \$2.5 million in scholarships, empowering high school graduates to pursue diverse post-secondary paths. Additionally, we have helped students secure thousands of dollars in additional scholarships, further enhancing their educational opportunities and ensuring their continued success.

Supporting Project GRAD Akron makes a difference!

Meet Project GRAD Akron Scholar & College Graduate London Green



London Green, a recent graduate of Kent State University, earned her Bachelor of Arts and Science in Journalism. She is now a freelance writer with Signal Akron, a media associate, blogger, and founder of The Orlando Green Foundation. Inspired by the support she once received, she mentors students through Project GRAD Akron's GRAD Mentors program at Buchtel High School, hoping to pay it forward.

At Kent State, Green minored in fashion media and gained hands-on experience through student media organizations and prestigious internships, including in New

York. She credits Project GRAD Akron with guiding her through college prep, from FAFSA applications to scholarships, and continues to benefit from its support.

Her advice to students: *“Take your time navigating college. Explore new opportunities, enroll in interesting courses, and embrace change. You’ll learn so much about yourself—one semester at a time. What you invest in your education is what you’ll gain from it. Never take for granted the privilege of learning; not everyone has the opportunity.”*

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11th Annual MARCH GRADness

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