



White-Williams Scholars

To Inspire and support high achieving Philadelphia public high school students of limited financial means to fulfill their potential

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHILADELPHIA NON-PROFIT GRADUATES COLLEGE-BOUND SENIORS DESPITE CITY'S HIGH DROP-OUT RATES

White-Williams Scholars, a 209 year old Philadelphia non-profit organization, will honor the achievements of graduating Philadelphia public high school seniors who have maintained straight A & B grades, at the annual White-Williams Scholars Graduation ceremony, held at World Café Live on Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 5:30pm-8:00pm. WPVI anchorman, Rick Williams will emcee the event. White-Williams Scholars provides monthly stipends and academic support to high achieving Philadelphia public high school students living in poverty. Although 50% of Philadelphia high school students drop out, White-Williams Scholars works to provide its 1,400 students the support they need to succeed in high school, college and beyond. 96% of White-Williams Scholars seniors will attend college.

Tazhe Cooper, a White-Williams Scholars senior at Furness High School will share a reflection of his White-Williams Scholars experience at the annual White-Williams Scholars Graduation ceremony. Tazhe recently received the President's Volunteer Service Award for completing over 250 hours of community service. He is president of the National Honor Society at his school and will attend West Chester University in the fall. He plans to be the first in his family to graduate from college. Tazhe believes his participation in the White-Williams Scholars program has motivated him to succeed. "The stipend I receive from White-Williams Scholars made me focus on my academics. The support and attention I get whenever I go into the office is the best. I always get what I need from the staff."

When White-Williams Scholars senior, Nyidera Edwards didn't feel "academically challenged" she transferred high schools. She now takes AP classes at Bartram high school and participates in a dual enrollment program at Eastern University. She receives tutoring for AP English in the White-Williams Scholars Student Lounge from a White-Williams Scholars alumna. As a White-Williams Scholar, Nyidera was eligible to apply for the Brook J. Lenfest Scholarship, a last dollar scholarship for students attending either Temple University or Penn State University. In the fall, she will attend Temple University without a financial concern as a Lenfest Scholarship recipient. "Being a White-Williams Scholar has been a blessing. The stipend helps make up for things my mother cannot afford. The staff is always there to listen and provide insightful advice. And if it wasn't for the Lenfest Scholarship, Temple wouldn't be an option. We simply can't afford it." Nyidera will perform a spoken word piece during the annual White-Williams Scholars Graduation ceremony.

(more)

Tazhe Cooper and Nyidera Edwards are just two White-Williams Scholars seniors who have succeeded in spite of the city's grim odds. On Thursday, May 14, 2009, 5:30pm-8:00pm at World Café Live graduating scholars, White-Williams Scholars alumni, school officials, board members, and donors will come together to celebrate the perseverance and accomplishments of our youth with a night of student performances, awards and honors at the annual White-Williams Scholars Graduation ceremony. Two scholars will receive the Reverend Olivia Stuard Henry Book Scholarship in honor of White-Williams Scholars' oldest living alumna. Reverend Henry is 102 years old. Maria de Los Angeles Cruz will be awarded the Alumni Valedictorian Award for her dedication to the success of White-Williams Scholars and its students. WPVI anchorman, Rick Williams will serve as emcee for the event. Sponsors of the annual White-Williams Scholars Graduation ceremony include Comcast Family of Companies, U.S. Airways and The Glenmede Trust Company.

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White-Williams Scholars three-pronged approach:

1. **Stipends:** range from \$50 to \$75 for meals, school supplies, etc.
2. **Scholar Services:** Back On Track tutoring, Wharton College Exploration Workshop, Brook J. Lenfest Scholarship eligibility, college prep workshops, etc.
3. **College Connection:** 4-year, after school college prep focused on enhanced academics, leadership development, individualized college and career guidance and civic engagement.