



IMPORTANT UPDATES ON SCHOOL CHOICE IN FLORIDA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Ketsia Charleston
Heritage Preparatory School,
Orlando

Ketsia Charleston, 12, is a seventh grader at Heritage Preparatory School in Orlando. Ketsia has always been a good student, but her parents wanted a school environment for her that would help her grow into a responsible adult. A Step Up For Students Scholarship allowed her to transfer from her assigned public school to a private school and finally to Heritage Preparatory, where she has truly found an environment in which she can thrive.

Since then, Ketsia has become very involved in her church and her spiritual growth has helped her become a giving, happy and successful student. She participates in Bible Quiz, Puppet Ministry and even sings solos.

"I was angry, disrespectful and didn't care about anything. It took time and a change [of] environment. God slowly but surely took away the hurt and an-

ger and replaced it with a calmness and a purpose for living," Ketsia said.

In addition to her church activities, Ketsia is also a recipient of the President's Award for Educational Excellence, captain-elect of her school's junior varsity volleyball team and has been chosen to represent the seventh grade as a class marshal at graduation, an honor she earned by having one of the highest grade point averages in her class.

Ketsia has an excellent role model; her older sister Tabitha is a Step Up For Students and Heritage Preparatory graduate who attends the University of South Florida on a pre-med track with the hopes of becoming a pediatrician.

Step Up For Students congratulates Ketsia Charleston on her strong academic success and personal growth. Keep up the good work!

Want to nominate your student for our Student Spotlight?
Visit www.stepupforstudents.com/parents.htm to send us your story.

HIGH MARKS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



OF STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

THOUSANDS OF NEW SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

New Income Limits For Renewal Families

This coming school year there will be 7,000 new scholarships available! The increase in available scholarships is the result of generous support by our corporate partners. We are also excited to announce that income limits have been raised for all RENEWAL families. New applicants must still meet the original income limits.

If you know of someone who may qualify for the scholarship now is the time to encourage him or her to apply.

New applicants must still meet initial income qualifications AND students must be entering kindergarten or first grade OR must have spent the entire previous school year in a Florida public school when entering second grade or higher.

During the legislative session this spring, Florida lawmakers also approved the transfer of Opportunity Scholarship students to the Step Up For Students program. That means students who have been attending the school of their choice will not have to return to their assigned public school in order to qualify. Former Opportunity Scholarship students also enjoy priority processing. Please spread the word!

For more information about Step Up For Students Scholarships, visit the website of your local scholarship funding organization.

NEW INCOME GUIDELINES ALLOW RENEWAL FAMILIES TO EARN MORE

Household Size	New Applicant Income Limit	Renewal Applicant Income Limit
2	\$ 24,420.00	\$ 26,400.00
3	\$ 30,710.00	\$ 33,200.00
4	\$ 37,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
5	\$ 43,290.00	\$ 46,800.00
6	\$ 49,580.00	\$ 53,600.00

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS



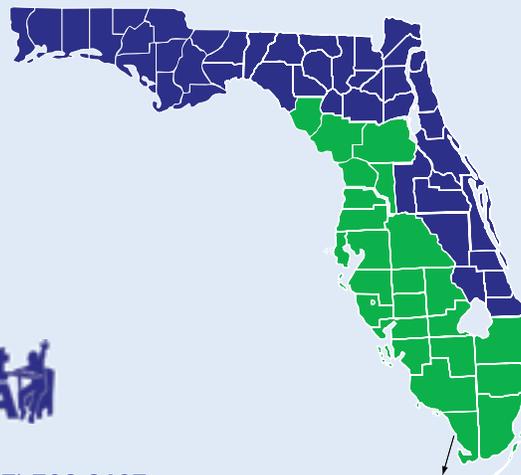
Florida P.R.I.D.E.

Parental Rights in Deciding Education

Florida PRIDE
 (866) 590-5364
www.floridapride.org



Children First Florida
 (904) 247-6033 or (407) 702-2607
www.scholarshipfunding.org





LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

After three years of working with elected officials in Tallahassee, Step Up For Students is pleased to announce that the Florida Legislature passed and Governor Bush signed into law a strong scholarship accountability bill this year. Public support for scholarship programs increases when accountability measures are in place, so this is a tremendous victory for the strength and support of our program. The bill also allows income eligible former Opportunity Scholarship students to receive a Step Up For Students Scholarship. If you know any Opportunity Scholarship students, please encourage them to contact Children First Florida or Florida PRIDE for information and an application.



Students who receive a Step Up For Students Scholarship must now take an approved standardized norm-referenced test each school year, which many of you already do. You also now have the option of taking the FCAT and should contact your local public school next school year if you are interested.

Unfortunately, Senate Joint Resolution 2170, the bill that would have placed on the November ballot the issue of protecting scholarships from future legal challenges, lost by one vote in the Senate. Although the loss of this important piece of legislation leaves McKay and Step Up For Students Scholarships potentially at risk for a legal challenge like the one brought against Opportunity Scholarships, we will continue to work toward stronger legal protection for the program to ensure we are able to provide your family with educational options for many years to come.

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WELLSTUDENT

A new school year is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of the Healthy Kids program. As a Step Up For Students scholarship recipient, you may qualify for the Healthy Kids program, which offers quality medical benefits for children ages 5-18 who are uninsured and do not qualify for Medicaid. Healthy Kids allows you to reach a family doctor to call on instead of relying on strangers in the emergency room when your child is sick.



Now it's easier than ever to get health care benefits through Healthy Kids. Qualified families can enroll their children in Healthy Kids by simply completing a one-page application, attaching the income verification documents, and mailing, faxing or e-mailing it back to Healthy Kids anytime during the year.

Children enrolled in the program receive:

- ▶ Preventative medical care, including regular doctor visits
- ▶ Immunizations
- ▶ Routine vision and hearing screenings

There's also a re-designed website, www.healthykids.org, where families can apply online. Since the launch of the online application in February 2006, over 20,000 applications have been submitted through the Healthy Kids website. The online application is fast and easy. At the end of the application, a checklist of required documents will be printed for you. These documents can then be emailed, faxed, or mailed to:

Florida KidCare

Mail:
Post Office Box 980, Tallahassee, Florida 32302-0980

Overnight:
661 East Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Fax:
(850) 681-2131

Email it to:
apply@healthykids.org

Remember to submit your documents immediately because applications cannot be processed without them. If you have additional questions or need help completing the application, call the Florida KidCare Hotline at 1-888-540-5437.





DONOR CORNER:

MARRIOTT SUPPORTS STRONG BEGINNINGS

When the Step Up For Students program was presented to Marriott International, Inc., it was an immediate fit. Since their enrollment in 2003, Marriott has contributed \$5 million, which has helped over 1,500 lower-income families find better educational options for their children.

Marriott, which is now a leading worldwide hospitality company, began when J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott opened a root beer stand in 1927. Today, Marriott International has nearly 2,800 lodging properties in 67 countries worldwide, with almost 200 properties in Florida. It is the Company's humble beginnings that laid the groundwork



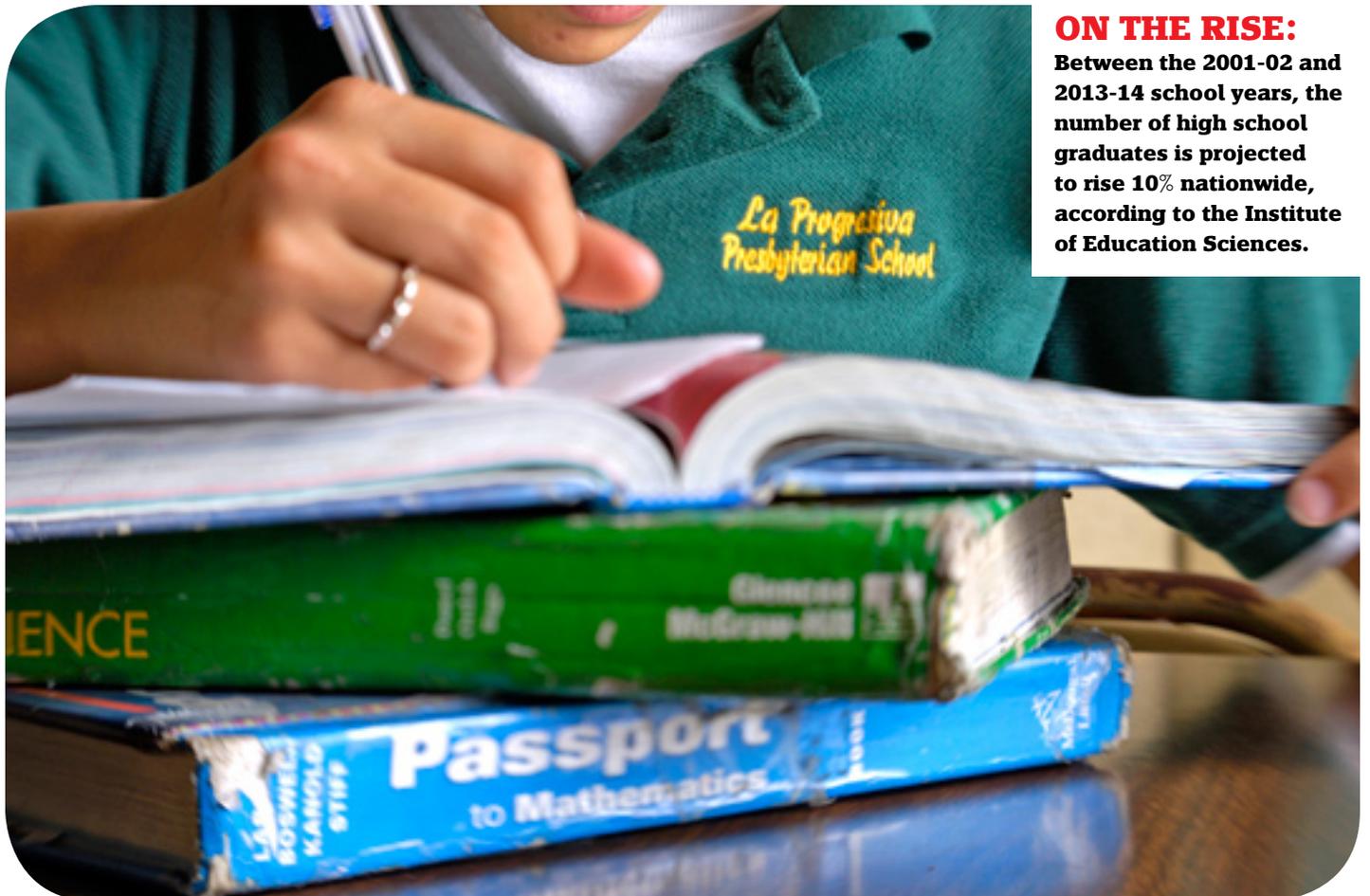
and established the culture that has led them to great success.

The decision to get involved and remain involved in Step Up For Students was prompted by the hope that some of their own associates could take advantage of the program. Once Marriott got on board, the Step Up For Students staff worked with Marriott's Human Resources department to educate Marriott associates on the availability of the program. Because of that outreach, 35 Marriott associates' children currently have scholarships for the 2005/06 school year.

Tom Ladd, the Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at Marriott has served

on the Step Up For Students Advisory Board since its inception. Tom has said "We love being involved in Step Up For Students and wish more states had a program like Florida's." Additionally, Marriott is so enthusiastic about the program, that they approached Step Up For Students and requested a "Student of the Month" spotlight so they could learn more about the children who are benefiting from the program.

The Company's heritage taught them an important lesson: beginnings matter. Investing in the educational beginnings for Florida's lower income families has made Marriott a proud and committed corporate donor to the Step Up For Students program.



ON THE RISE:

Between the 2001-02 and 2013-14 school years, the number of high school graduates is projected to rise 10% nationwide, according to the Institute of Education Sciences.