



**ScholarCHIPS, Inc.**  
**2026 Scholar Bios – Cohort 15**

**Daniya Allison – Washington, DC**

Daniya Allison is a Washington, DC native who was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved to the District at the age of six. Raised in Northeast DC's Ward 7, she is a proud graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts, where she served as class representative during her sophomore and junior years, participated in the Screenwriting Club, worked as an events usher, and consistently earned High Honor Roll recognition.

Throughout high school, Daniya gained valuable professional experience through internships with Arena Stage, where she supported theater sales, and DC Arts Center, where she served as a gallery assistant.

This fall, Daniya will attend Clark Atlanta University to major in Mass Media Arts. She aspires to become a journalist dedicated to sharing authentic, unbiased stories that amplify the voices and experiences of others.

Outside of academics, Daniya enjoys reading, writing, exploring a wide variety of music genres, and proudly embraces being an Aries.



**Sierra Blackshear – Kips Bay, New York**

Sierra Blackshear is originally from Kips Bay, New York, and is currently pursuing a degree in Business with concentrations in Finance and Marketing at the University at Albany.

A graduate of the High School of Art and Design, Sierra serves as the Public Relations Chair for FinLit, where she helps educate students on the importance of financial literacy.

She aspires to launch her own creative agency, helping brands develop distinctive identities through innovative branding and marketing strategies.

In her free time, Sierra enjoys photography, one of her favorite creative outlets.



### **Alexis Bowling – Greenup, Kentucky**

Alexis Bowling is from Greenup, Kentucky, and will attend Eastern Kentucky University, where she plans to continue pursuing her passion for music. A dedicated musician and accomplished bassist, Alexis has distinguished herself through her commitment to musical excellence. For a period of time, she was the only bass player in her district—an achievement that reflects both her talent and her willingness to pursue a path less traveled.

Her musicianship and dedication earned her admission to the Eastern Kentucky University School of Music, along with a Music Merit Scholarship recognizing her artistic accomplishments.



As she begins her college journey, Alexis looks forward to further developing her craft while preparing for a career as a professional musician. She aspires to perform with orchestras, continue growing as a bassist, and use the power of music to inspire and connect with audiences through her artistry.



### **Dari Bynum – Washington, DC**

Dari Bynum is a dedicated scholar, servant leader, and proud Washington, DC native from Ward 6. She recently graduated from Bard High School Early College DC, earning both her high school diploma and an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts while maintaining a GPA above 4.4.

Throughout high school, Dari served as student body president and held leadership roles in Medical Ascension, the National Honor Society, and the Peer Mentor Program. She is known for leading with empathy, accountability, and a deep commitment to serving others.

Her passion for healthcare was strengthened through volunteer work with older adults throughout Washington, DC, where she built meaningful relationships that inspired her desire to pursue a career in medicine. She believes empathy, communication, and cultural understanding are essential qualities of both effective leaders and compassionate healthcare professionals.

This fall, Dari will attend Xavier University of Louisiana, where she will continue pursuing her goal of a career in healthcare.

Outside the classroom, Dari enjoys reading, running, exploring art, and learning about medicine, history, and culture. She especially cherishes spending time with her younger sister, encouraging her curiosity and love of learning. She is also an enthusiastic fan of Grey's Anatomy.

### **Torreon Cherry – Houston, Texas**

Torreon Cherry is a graduate of Sam Houston Math, Science, and Technology Center High School in Houston, Texas. This fall, he will attend the University of Michigan, where he plans to major in Secondary Education with a concentration in Social Studies, minor in Political Science, and pursue a pre-law pathway.

Throughout high school, Torreon challenged himself academically by completing every Advanced Placement course offered at his school while also earning dual-credit coursework through The University of Texas at Austin and Houston Community College. He was recognized as the highest-ranked Black student in his school's history and received the Houston ISD Board Award.

A committed leader, Torreon served as Vice President of the National Honor Society, Senior Class President, Editor-in-Chief of the Yearbook, and a member of the Campus Culture Committee. He also worked as a Team Lead at Whataburger and completed a legal internship with the Harris County Attorney's Office, where he further developed his passion for law, advocacy, and public service.

Outside of academics, Torreon enjoys sewing custom garments from thrifted clothing, cooking, and experimenting with new recipes. He looks forward to making a lasting impact through education, civic engagement, and community leadership.



### **Derrin Counts – Washington, DC**

Derrin Counts is a Washington, DC native from Southeast DC and a recent graduate of KIPP DC College Preparatory. This fall, she will attend Morgan State University to major in Computer Science with aspirations of becoming a software engineer who develops technology that positively impacts people's lives.

During high school, Derrin was inducted into the National Honor Society and participated in the Tumaini DC Sankofa Global Leadership Program, experiences that strengthened her leadership abilities and broadened her global perspective.

An entrepreneur, Derrin owns and operates her own hair business, where he has developed valuable skills in customer service, communication, and business management.

One of the experiences she looks forward to most is traveling to Ghana through the Tumaini DC program, where she will further explore leadership, culture, and global citizenship.



### **Daeton Fitzpatrick – St. Joseph, Missouri**

Daeton Fitzpatrick is from St. Joseph, Missouri, and is a graduate of Central High School.

This fall, he will attend the University of Missouri–Kansas City, where he plans to major in Music Education and Jazz Studies. Daeton plays the saxophone.

Daeton aspires to build a career as an educator, professional musician, and band leader, combining his passion for music with his commitment to inspiring future generations of musicians.



### **Monica Garcia – Phoenix, Arizona**

Monica Garcia is from Phoenix, Arizona, and graduated summa cum laude from the Academies at South Mountain. This fall, she will attend Arizona State University, where she plans to major in Nursing. Her long-term goal is to become a registered nurse in an emergency department before pursuing her dream of becoming a pediatric surgeon.

Throughout high school, Monica earned numerous academic honors, including three diploma seals of proficiency. She was actively involved in Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), the National Honor Society, marching band, Academic Decathlon, Link Crew, TRIO, Be A Leader, TND (Towards No Drugs), the Office of Accountability and Transparency, MEChA, and indoor percussion.

As HOSA chapter vice president, Monica was recognized with the Barbara James Bronze Award, Pulse Bronze Award, and the HOSA Excellence Award. She also served as treasurer of the National Honor Society, completed more than 200 hours of community service, and earned multiple first-place awards in marching band. Outside of school, Monica enjoys ceramics, baking, and writing poetry.

### **Promise Gillespie – Anchorage, Alaska & Arizona**

Promise Gillespie is originally from Anchorage, Alaska, and graduated from Maricopa High School. This fall, she will attend Grand Canyon University, where she plans to major in Environmental Science with the long-term goal of becoming a marine biologist.

Throughout high school, Promise balanced academic achievement with leadership and service. She served as a teacher's assistant for kindergarten and first-grade students at



Polaris K–12 School, volunteered as a church greeter and leader, and enjoyed tutoring younger students to help them build confidence in the classroom.

Passionate about marine life and environmental conservation, Promise hopes to develop educational programs that provide children with hands-on opportunities to learn about marine ecosystems and environmental stewardship.

Outside of academics, she enjoys painting and sketching and looks forward to using her education to make a positive impact on both the environment and her community.



### **Rand Girard – Goodyear, Arizona**

Rand Girard is from Goodyear, Arizona, and will attend Northern Arizona University, where he plans to major in Immersive Media Design.

An artist and aspiring game designer, Rand previously worked in aviation maintenance repairing helicopters before deciding to pursue a career that better aligns with his creativity and passion for design.

He looks forward to combining technology, storytelling, and innovation to create immersive digital experiences.

### **T' Keyah Graham – Charlotte, North Carolina**

T'Keyah Graham is originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, and was raised in upstate New York. She graduated from Union-Endicott High School, where she received the Teacher Recognition Award, Art Award, and the Dick's Sporting Goods Local Community Scholarship.

A Registered Medical Assistant, T'Keyah has earned her associate degree and is currently attending Central Piedmont Community College. She plans to transfer to a four-year university to earn a bachelor's degree in social work with a minor in Criminal Justice before pursuing her Master of Social Work.

T'Keyah aspires to become a social worker within the criminal justice system, where she hopes to advocate for individuals overcoming adversity and empower young people to recognize their potential. Her passion for service is rooted in her own life experiences and her belief that every person deserves to feel seen, heard, valued, and supported.



### **Lu'Miya Lindsay – Washington, DC**

Lu'Miya Lindsay recently graduated from Thurgood Marshall High School and is recognized for her determination, resilience, and commitment to personal growth.

During high school, she was a dedicated member of the cheerleading team for four years and served as captain, developing strong leadership, teamwork, and communication skills.

This fall, Lu'Miya will attend Elizabeth City State University, where she plans to major in Biology. She hopes to build a career that allows her to inspire others while making a meaningful difference in their lives.



### **Isabel Llanas – Navasota, Texas**

Isabel Llanas is originally from Navasota, Texas, and recently relocated to Bryan, Texas. She graduated from Navasota High School in 2026 and will attend Sam Houston State University this fall to major in Nursing. Her goal is to become a labor and delivery nurse.

Throughout high school, Isabel maintained Honor Roll status for four years, participated in HOSA and Student Council, became CPR certified, earned her Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) credential, completed early college coursework, and donated blood on four occasions.

Outside the classroom, Isabel enjoys mathematics, competing in track and field, and playing sports. She is especially proud that she has never broken a bone.

### **Boaz Maldonado – Phoenix, Arizona**

Boaz Maldonado is from Phoenix, Arizona, and graduated in the top six percent of his class from Millennium High School. He is currently entering his sophomore year at Arizona State University, where he is majoring in Business with a concentration in Sports Business.

Boaz plans to join the United States Air Force after graduation and aspires to become a fighter pilot. As a member of Air Force ROTC Detachment 25, he currently ranks among the top third of the detachment and first within his flight.

During high school, Boaz served as captain of both the track and cross-



country teams while participating in the National Honor Society and the International Baccalaureate Program. Outside of academics, he enjoys running, mountain biking, and gaming.



### **Luc Pierre-Charles III – Tampa, Florida**

Luc Pierre-Charles III is a proud graduate of Wharton High School in Tampa, Florida. After graduating with honors in just three years and earning a 4.5 GPA, he will attend the University of Central Florida, where he plans to major in Health Sciences.

Luc aspires to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing before becoming a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), allowing him to make a meaningful impact in the healthcare profession.

Throughout high school, he served as vice president of his freshman, sophomore, and junior class councils while participating in the National Honor Society, National English Honor Society, the American Red Cross, and varsity basketball.

Among his proudest accomplishments was being recognized by the Florida Sentinel Bulletin as one of the top five African American students at his school. As a first-generation college student, Luc looks forward to continuing his education while building a career dedicated to serving others through healthcare.

### **Ciara Rivera – Manhattan, New York**

Ciara Rivera is from Manhattan, New York, and is currently a full-time student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she is majoring in Criminal Justice.

Her interest in technology began during her freshman year of high school when she discovered software engineering. She continued to build her technical skills by completing Software Engineering I and II, followed by an AP Computer Science course during her junior year.

In 2024, Ciara completed the CUNY Career Launch Program while interning with Sadie Nash at Brooklyn College, earning a Certificate of Completion. She enjoys exploring technology, software development, and the ways innovation can create opportunities for communities.



### **Journi Robinson – Anne Arundel County, Maryland**

Journi Robinson is a rising junior at Spelman College, where she is majoring in Sociology. Originally from Anne Arundel County, Maryland, she graduated from Crofton High School, where she participated in cheerleading, track and field, and served as a student sports manager.

Journi is passionate about understanding people, strengthening communities, and supporting the healthy development of young people. Her academic interests include sociology, psychology, emotional intelligence, and cognitive development, with aspirations of building a career focused on youth development, mentoring, and community engagement.



For more than two years, Journi has worked with College Tribe, facilitating after-school programs, summer camps, and youth enrichment activities. She has also supported the Visionary Youth Collective by coordinating programs and leading workshops centered on wellness, self-care, and personal development.

At Spelman College, Journi serves as Membership Service Director for Bliss Mentorship and is actively involved with Project CROWN and the Spelman Women's Hip Hop Collective. Known for her outgoing personality and love of connecting with others, Journi enjoys all things beauty, hair care, mentorship, and creating spaces where people feel seen, valued, and supported.

### **Carter Sayers – Severn, Maryland**

Carter Sayers is from Severn, Maryland, in the Fort Meade community and is a graduate of Meade Senior High School, where he completed Anne Arundel County Public Schools' Homeland Security Signature Program and the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program.

Throughout high school, Carter competed in varsity football and track and field while also participating in community basketball.

Dedicated to serving others, Carter has volunteered with the Meade High School PTSA, Food 4 Thought Community Outreach, and is a Youth Life Member of the NAACP. He has also worked part-time at Food Lion for the past two years.



This fall, Carter will attend the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, where he plans to major in Exercise Science/Kinesiology with aspirations of becoming a physical therapist.

An only child, Carter credits his mother and the unwavering support of four generations of family for encouraging him to pursue his goals.

### **Fintan Sherlock – Oak Lawn, Illinois**

Fintan Sherlock was born in Oak Lawn, Illinois, and spent much of his childhood in Canterbury, England, where he attended St. Anselm's Catholic School.

This fall, he will attend Bowling Green State University, majoring in Sports Management with a minor in International Business. He hopes to build a career in professional sports, particularly with the NBA or FIFA.

During his final year of school, Fintan received awards in photography, Design Technology, and Geography. He also earned the prestigious Chief Scout's Gold Award and successfully completed the National Citizen Service Program.

Having lived in England for 13 years before returning to the United States for college, Fintan brings a unique global perspective to his academic and professional aspirations.



### **Zion Shire – Washington, DC**

Zion Shire is a lifelong Washington, DC resident who was born and raised in Southeast DC. A graduate of Digital Pioneers Academy Charter School, he has been actively involved in leadership and service throughout middle and high school.

Zion served as Vice President of Student Government and participated in numerous school organizations, including the Honors Club, Assistant Team Manager for Athletics, Dapper Posh Association, and School Spirit initiatives.

This fall, Zion will attend Bowie State University, where he plans to major in Sports Management with a concentration in Sports Therapy. Inspired by an early visit to the university, he has dreamed of attending Bowie State since elementary school.

Following graduation, Zion hopes to return to his alma mater to mentor students and support athletic programs.

Outside of school, Zion enjoys mentoring youth through the Marshall Heights Bison football program and serving in children's and youth ministry at National Community Church, where he also volunteers with the production and audiovisual team.

### **Amira Walker – Washington, DC**

Amira Walker is a proud Washington, DC native and graduate of McKinley Technology High School.

During high school, she was an active member of the cheerleading team and participated in several leadership and mentorship programs, including the Girl Boss Mentorship Program, Student Ambassadors Program, and High School T.R.A.P., which prepares students for life after graduation.

This fall, Amira will attend Morgan State University, where she plans to major in English with a minor in Criminal Justice as she works toward her goal of becoming a lawyer.

A passionate writer, Amira enjoys using storytelling to express her ideas, share her experiences, and connect with others.



### **Chloe Walker – Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

Chloe Walker is from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and is a rising sophomore at Florida Gulf Coast University, where she is dual majoring in Communications and Journalism.

A graduate of Dillard High School, Chloe served as class president for the Class of 2025 and graduated seventh in her class with a 4.7 GPA. She earned more than \$60,000 in scholarships, including the prestigious Udonis Haslem Foundation BDJ40 Scholarship.

At Florida Gulf Coast University, Chloe is actively involved in campus leadership and serves as a freelance journalist for WGCU, Southwest Florida's NPR and PBS affiliate.

Passionate about storytelling and philanthropy, Chloe hopes to build a career in broadcast journalism that informs, inspires, and connects communities. Outside of school, she enjoys reading thriller novels, watching films, and developing creative story ideas of her own.

### **Ariel Warren – Washington, DC**

Ariel Warren is a first-year student at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where she is majoring in Agricultural Science. She chose this field because of her desire to build sustainable systems that strengthen communities and create lasting impact.

Ariel's resilience was shaped by her family's experience following her father's incarceration when she was five years old. Watching her



mother navigate the challenges of single parenthood inspired Ariel to remain focused on her education and pursue a future defined by purpose, perseverance, and opportunity.

She is honored to be a ScholarCHIPS scholar and values the organization's commitment to providing not only financial support but also a strong community for students impacted by parental incarceration. Ariel looks forward to connecting with fellow scholars while continuing to build a future rooted in service, stability, and meaningful change.

### **Lola Washington – Washington, DC**

Lola Love Washington is a Washington, DC native and graduate of Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. Throughout high school, she demonstrated exceptional leadership and service through her involvement in the Dance Team, Sports Management Club, WISE Club, the National Honor Society, and as a finalist in the Mikva Citywide Soapbox Competition.

Lola completed more than 330 hours of community service through the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the United Planning Organization, where she discovered her passion for serving youth and families. She also manages social media and technology operations at her church and serves as Chair of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

This fall, Lola will attend Fayetteville State University, where she plans to major in Nursing. She aspires to provide compassionate healthcare while improving access to quality care in underserved communities.



### **Michael “Cruz” Wolfe – Tulsa, Oklahoma**

Michael "Cruz" Wolfe was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and raised in McAlester within District 11 of the Choctaw Nation Reservation. Proud of his Choctaw heritage, Cruz is committed to serving his community and honoring his culture through leadership and service.

For the past nine years, he has played stickball for Tushka Waya, developing discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills. He has also served on the CHAHTA Youth Advisory Board for six years, participating in numerous community service and outreach initiatives. In recognition of his achievements, Cruz was named the 2025 Oklahoma Native American Student of the Year and was selected as Native American Club Homecoming King at McAlester High School.

A graduate of McAlester High School's Class of 2026, Cruz will attend OSU Institute of Technology in Okmulgee to study



Commercial HVAC. He looks forward to building a successful career in the skilled trades while continuing to serve as a positive role model for future generations.

### **Kevin Zavala – Washington, DC**

Kevin Zavala is originally from Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and is currently pursuing a degree in Computer Science with a focus in Software Engineering at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

At IUP, Kevin is involved in Ubora, an organization dedicated to connecting Black and Brown men who are striving for success. He is also involved with the Rugby Club and Catholic Student Association, allowing him to stay connected with different communities across campus.

Kevin aspires to build a career in the technology industry, where he hopes to contribute to a software or technology company and use his skills to help develop meaningful solutions. In his free time, Kevin enjoys staying active and lifting weights, playing and watching sports, gaming, and watching movies.

