

## The Future Shines Bright for HACF Students Headed to College after Graduation

Brunel Berrys is headed to Mount Saint Mary's in the fall, to study accounting. The 17-year-old senior at Thomas Johnson High School, says he's always been good at math.

Olivia Williams, also a TJHS senior, says she will attend Frostburg University. This will bring her one step closer to becoming a Neuropsychologist.

Both Berrys and Williams live in public housing. They have had obstacles for which to traverse, like most kids, but they kept their grades high and their focus sharp and soon they will be joining their peers – from small towns and big cities across America and the world – in pursuit of an undergraduate degree.

Berrys and Williams achieved this goal through their hard work, with the support of their families, and the backing of the College Prep program, which is run through the Housing Authority of the City of Frederick and spearheaded by Krisma Jackson, HACF's Youth Services Coordinator.

In 2018, HACF began its College Prep program, which is designed to get students from public housing into college – by hosting seminars, taking them on college tours, helping them find scholarships and then guiding students through the process of filling out the paperwork, and also offering SAT prep work to prepare them for the mandatory test needed for college approval. HACF works with students as young as middle school because Jackson says this is when students start to ponder their futures.

"I just think we have a lot of kids who are eligible for college who want to go" but that don't have "a lot of resources," Jackson explained.

HACF is here to help make things flow smoother and to take the worry and anxiety out of the college application process for students and their families.

Jackson wants kids to see themselves going to college.

"My thing is exposure and experiences. I really feel like if the kids are exposed to different things, it gives them a chance for the vision to grow," Jackson said. "It allows them to see themselves at the particular college."

Berrys, who is originally from the Central African Republic but moved to Frederick with his family eight years ago, helps out at HACF during the summers by tutoring younger students in math.

"I help out a lot around here," Berrys said.

Since he was much younger, he would attend basketball games at Mount St. Mary's and later decided this is where he wanted to go. Berrys will be receiving the four-year, \$88,000 partial Dean's scholarship – and he said he will be trying out for the basketball team.

Likewise, Williams was not new to Frostburg. She has attended the school's Science Camp the past three summers and always knew this is where she would attend.

Jackson is particularly happy that Williams is majoring in a STEM field.

"She is going into the science field, which is not a field that is predominantly black, brown or female. So I'm super excited about her interest in that," Jackson said.

Jackson describes both Williams and Berrys as being very smart and determined students.

HACF wants to congratulate Williams and Berrys and all of our college students for continuing their education and striving for excellence! A job well done.