

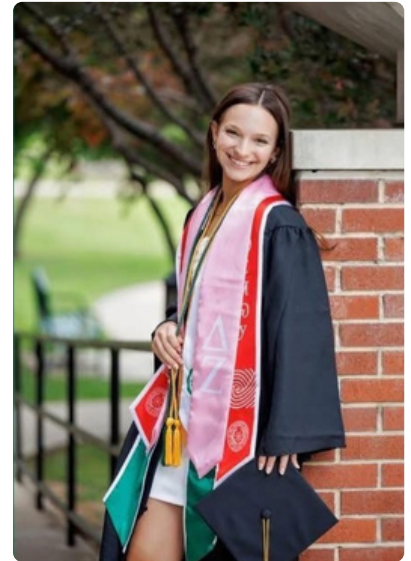
Sharing Our Stories



AmeriCorps VISTA Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Lauren Y.

Lauren's journey is one defined by service, resilience, and a deep commitment to building a better future. As a dedicated AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with the Boys & Girls Club of Tahlequah in Oklahoma, Lauren has spent the past two years continuing to grow into a leader who truly embodies what it means to be Future Ready.

While completing her degree at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Lauren devoted her time and energy to strengthening programs that support youth development. Working closely with after-school character and leadership programs, including those centered on Native communities, she helped create meaningful opportunities for young people to learn and envision their own futures. Her work focused on outreach, engagement, and increasing program capacity ensuring that more youth could benefit from these vital resources.



Throughout her service, Lauren demonstrated remarkable personal and professional growth. What began as a commitment to serve quickly evolved into a transformative experience. She gained confidence in her voice and abilities, sharpened her communication and outreach skills, and embraced new tools to enhance visibility and engagement for her site. These experiences not only strengthened her technical skill set but also equipped her with the adaptability and problem-solving mindset essential for today's workforce.

Lauren's journey, however, was not without its challenges. During her two years of service, she balanced multiple life roles becoming a wife and a mother while continuing her education and fulfilling her responsibilities as a VISTA volunteer. Through it all, she remained steadfast in her dedication to service and personal development. Her resilience and ability to navigate these responsibilities with grace reflect the strength of her character and her unwavering commitment to growth.

Her passion for helping others extends far beyond her AmeriCorps service. Lauren's long-term goal is to attend Physician Assistant school, where she can continue to make a meaningful impact on the health and well-being of others. This next step is a natural progression of her dedication to service combining her compassion and knowledge.

Lauren's story is one of purpose and perseverance. Whether supporting youth programs, building connections within her community, or pursuing her own education, she approaches every opportunity with intention and heart. As she graduates and prepares to enter the workforce, Lauren stands as a shining example of a Future Ready leader and represents the powerful impact of AmeriCorps VISTA service.



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AmeriCorps VISTA Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Kyle S.

Kyle's journey as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer is a powerful example of leadership, dedication, and a commitment to community. Serving for two years with the Boys & Girls Club of Adair County Schools in Oklahoma, Kyle has turned service into impact, leaving a lasting mark on the community he calls home. As he graduates from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Kyle is not stepping away from service instead, he is choosing to continue his AmeriCorps VISTA journey.

Throughout his time as a VISTA volunteer, Kyle has demonstrated the skills and mindset that define a Future Ready graduate. His involvement in after-school character and leadership programs, particularly those supporting Native youth, helped him develop strong communication and collaboration abilities. These experiences not only prepared him for academic success but also shaped his understanding of how meaningful programs can transform lives.



Kyle's impact is most visible in his remarkable success in fundraising and community engagement. Through grant writing, organizing fundraising auctions, and building partnerships with local organizations, he has helped raise more than \$50,000 to support critical community initiatives. His work has directly contributed to expanding opportunities and resources for youth and families, showcasing his ability to turn ideas into tangible results. Kyle approaches every project with determination and a solutions-oriented mindset, exceeding expectations and demonstrating professionalism in all he does.

Beyond resource development, Kyle has taken on leadership roles that amplify his voice and the voices of others. He has served as a speaker on two panels, including one where he was the sole Native representative. In these spaces, he advocated for Indigenous communities, ensuring their perspectives and experiences were heard and valued. His willingness to step forward, represent his culture, and speak with purpose highlights both his courage and his commitment to his community.

Kyle actively seeks feedback, values collaboration, and is always eager to learn from others to improve his work. Whether organizing events, applying for grants, or connecting with community partners, he brings passion and intention to every effort. His ability to build relationships and inspire those around him is a key part of his success. Giving back is at the heart of Kyle's story. Through volunteerism, advocacy, and hands-on service, he has consistently worked to strengthen his community. As he looks ahead, Kyle is not only prepared for the future, he is actively shaping it.



Sharing Our Stories



A Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Chellena 'Chen'

For Chellena “Chen,” the journey to graduation has been shaped by purpose, perseverance, and the steady guidance of a community that believed in her. A proud member of the T’iisyaakin Residential Dorm Extension Site at Boys & Girls Club of Flagstaff for the past three years, Chen stands today as a graduate of Holbrook High School in Holbrook, Arizona, a milestone that reflects not only academic achievement, but a deeper story of hope.

When Chen first joined the Club, she not only found a place where she could safely explore who she was and who she wanted to become through after-school programming, she found a foundation. Through the Club’s Native Services programs, Chen grew her voice and strengthened the life and work readiness skills that would shape her future.

Her participation in the Youth of the Year program became a defining chapter of her journey where she built essential skills. Through programming, Chen immersed herself in opportunities to build a strong resume, refine her interview skills, and engage in meaningful dialogue about issues that mattered to her and her peers. She spoke confidently with local and state leaders, advocating for the importance of community spaces like the Boys & Girls Club. She recognized the power of her story and used it to amplify the voices of those around her, reminding others that every story deserves to be heard.



These experiences helped her realize that leadership is not just about standing out but about standing up for others. Outside of advocacy, Chen remained deeply committed to giving back. Whether supporting Club fundraising events, contributing her perspective on current events as a young leader, or participating in community service across Northern Arizona, she showed up with compassion and purpose. Her efforts were not just about service they were about connection, about strengthening the bonds between people and place.

One of Chen’s greatest strengths is her ability to lift others as she climbs. As a thoughtful peer and mentor, she has guided underclassmen with patience and encouragement, helping them navigate their own paths with confidence. She understands that leadership is a continuous journey with shared experiences and mutual support.

Now, as Chen looks toward the next chapter, she carries with her the lessons, confidence, and resilience she has built. In Fall 2026, she will attend Eastern Arizona College to pursue a degree in Music a passion that has allowed her to express herself and dream beyond boundaries. Chen is more than a graduate, she is a future-ready young leader, prepared to make meaningful contributions wherever life takes her. Her story is a reminder that with the right support, determination, and belief, every young person can find their path and light the way for others. For Chen, this is only the beginning.



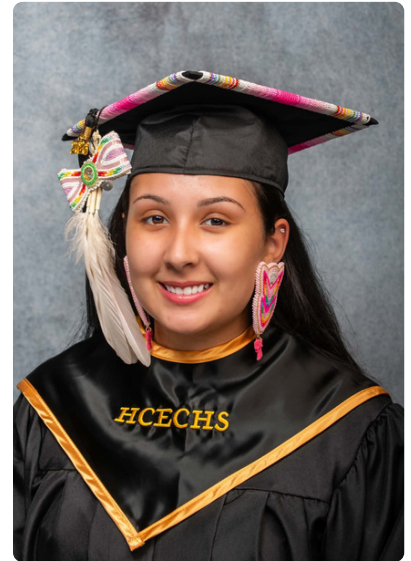
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A Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Brandy F.

For four years, Brandy has grown into a strong and compassionate leader through her involvement with Boys & Girls Club of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe in Halifax County, North Carolina. What began as a place for after-school support became a foundation for her future, shaping her character, strengthening her voice, and preparing her for life beyond graduation. Through Native youth and leadership programs, Brandy has become a true example of a Future Ready Native American leader.

At Halifax County Early College, Brandy demonstrated both academic excellence and determination. She balanced challenging coursework while actively serving her community, showing discipline, focus, and strong time management skills. She understands that education is not just a pathway to success, but a tool to empower herself and uplift others. Her commitment to growth is evident not only in her achievements, but in the way she approaches every opportunity with purpose and integrity.



Through her participation in Native leadership programs, Brandy developed essential life and work readiness skills, including communication, teamwork, responsibility, and cultural awareness. These experiences deepened her connection to her heritage and instilled a strong desire to serve her community. She leads by example, demonstrating kindness, dependability, and a genuine commitment to helping others succeed.

As Miss Haliwa-Saponi (2025–2026), Brandy transformed leadership into meaningful action. She created a Kindness Campaign to promote positivity, organized a pencil drive to support local students, and hosted events honoring elders and celebrating cultural traditions. Her Coronation Ball and all-girls empowerment gatherings inspired confidence, unity, and cultural pride among her peers. Her leadership journey is especially remarkable, as she is the first in her Tribe's history to hold all four princess titles, from Tiny Miss to Miss, reflecting years of dedication and growth.

Brandy's service extends far beyond cultural leadership. As a junior firefighter, she demonstrates courage and readiness in times of need. As a Girl Scout and "Big Sister," she mentors younger youth, guiding them with encouragement and support. In her church, she shares her voice through song and helps inspire younger girls to grow in faith and confidence.

Brandy has shown resilience and strength and meets adversity with grace and determination, proving that true leadership is built through perseverance. Brandy embodies what it means to be Future Ready, prepared academically, professionally and personally. Grounded in her culture and driven by purpose, she is ready to lead, serve, and create lasting change.



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A Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Josh D.

As graduation day arrives at Halifax County Early College, Josh stands proudly among his classmates, a symbol of perseverance, compassion and true leadership. A dedicated member of the Boys & Girls Club of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe for the past two years, Josh has grown into a young man who exemplifies what it means to be Future Ready.

Through his involvement in after-school Native character and leadership programs, Josh has developed essential life and work readiness skills that prepared him for academic and personal success. He has learned the value of responsibility, respect, and service lessons that are reflected in everything he does. Known for his friendly and outgoing personality, Josh communicates easily with others, demonstrates patience, and works well as part of a team, making him a positive influence among his peers.



What makes Josh's journey especially inspiring is his determination. Despite living with a disability, he refuses to let it define him. Instead, he consistently challenges himself to grow, pushing past obstacles with strength and resilience. His mindset shows that success is not about limitations, but about effort, courage and persistence.

Josh's commitment to serving others is one of his strongest qualities. As a volunteer firefighter, he steps forward in moments of need with bravery and dedication. During power outages, snowstorms and water shortages, he worked alongside others to distribute water and assist community members. Whether helping with church events, food drives, school activities or local outreach efforts, Josh always looks for ways to serve. He doesn't wait to be asked, he simply shows up.

In addition to his service, Josh has demonstrated a strong work ethic through his job at Food Lion, where he works as a cart attendant and roadside delivery associate. His reliability and dedication on the job show that he understands the importance of responsibility and accountability. He has also taken initiative in his education, earning his First Aid and CPR certification, skills that reflect both preparedness and a desire to help others in critical moments.

At the Boys & Girls Club of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe, Josh is known for his kindness. He makes sure every member feels included and supported, always offering encouragement and treating others with respect. His actions show that leadership is not about recognition, but about making others feel valued. Josh is truly Future Ready. He is prepared for college, the workforce, and life because he has built a strong foundation of perseverance, service, and integrity. As he moves forward, he carries with him the lessons of his community and culture ready not only to succeed, but to uplift others along the way.



Sharing Our Stories



A Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Aiyana “KiBo” T.

In the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, success is not measured by individual achievement alone, but by how we uplift one another. A young leader who embodies that spirit is Aiyana “KiBo” Throssell. For over a decade, KiBo has been part of the Boys & Girls Club of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, growing alongside her peers and learning the importance of culture, leadership and responsibility. From a young member to a respected leader, her journey reflects the values instilled through Native youth programming: connection, service and strength.

As a student at Royal Valley High School in Hoyt, Kansas, KiBo balanced her academic responsibilities with a deep commitment to her community. Her dedication did not go unnoticed. During her senior year, she was chosen by her peers to serve as President of the Firekeeper Youth Council, a role that speaks to her integrity, leadership, and the trust others place in her voice.



In this position, KiBo led youth initiatives and organized community events, helping guide the next generation while strengthening bonds across the nation. Her leadership reflects what it means to be not only prepared for academic success but grounded in purpose and guided by service.

KiBo’s impact extends far beyond titles. She has spent countless hours giving back, clearing snow, gathering firewood for elders, cleaning up community spaces, and helping bring people together through events like color runs and trunk-or-treat celebrations. These acts of service honor a long-standing cultural value: caring for elders, supporting community, and giving freely of one’s time and energy.

As KiBo follows her path toward college, she carries with her the teachings of her community and the experiences that shaped her into the young woman she is today. Her path forward is bright, grounded in both education and identity. KiBo’s story is more than a graduation milestone, it is a reminder of what is possible when young people are nurtured by culture, guided by mentors, and empowered to lead. She represents the strength of her nation, the promise of her generation, and the enduring impact of community-centered programs.

Stepping into her future with not only academic accomplishments, but the values of service, resilience, and cultural pride that have guided her journey, KiBo’s story is a powerful example of what it means to be truly Future Ready.



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A Future Ready Graduate: The Story of Payton D.

As Payton prepares to graduate from Presque Isle High School, her journey reflects the true meaning of being Future Ready, a balance of knowledge, compassion, cultural grounding, and a commitment to uplifting others. For 13 years, Payton has been an active and dedicated member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Border Towns, where she has grown into a confident leader who understands that success is not measured alone but shared.

Payton's experiences have shaped her into a young woman who leads with both purpose and humility. Her involvement spans across academics, leadership, and service, but what truly defines her is the intention behind her actions. Whether mentoring younger students in the Club's Summer Reading Program or offering guidance through tutoring in the Education Department, Payton has consistently demonstrated patience, responsibility, and a genuine desire to see others succeed. Her ability to connect with younger youth reflects her understanding that knowledge is meant to be passed on, not kept.



Beyond the Club, Payton has expanded her leadership through organizations such as National Honor Society, SkillsUSA, and the Mi'kmaq Nation Community Youth Council. In each of these roles, she has carried forward the values of service and community responsibility. She shows up, contributes, and ensures that every effort makes a difference for those around her.

Rooted deeply in Mi'kmaq teachings, Payton embodies the cultural values that guide her path. She honors elders, respects the wisdom of those who came before her, and understands the responsibility to support the generations that follow. These teachings have shaped her worldview, reminding her that being Future Ready means carrying the past with care while building a stronger tomorrow. Payton's journey highlights that preparedness for the future goes beyond academics. It is about character, adaptability, and the willingness to give back. She has shown that leadership is built on kindness, that strength is rooted in community, and that true success is measured by how we uplift others along the way.

As she takes the next step toward college, Payton carries with her not only the skills she has developed, but also the values that define her. She is ready to learn, grow, and continue contributing in meaningful ways. More importantly, she is ready to lead with integrity and compassion, qualities that will guide her wherever her path leads.

Her story reminds us all that when young people are supported, grounded in culture, and given opportunities to lead, they don't just continue to pave the path, they create new ones.

