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#HappyBdayHeadStart

Pennsylvania Head Start Staff are Recognized and Pennsylvania Head Start Graduates Win Scholarships

Head Start staff receive the Francine Bunch Award and Head Start alumni win the Jeff Koppel Memorial Scholarship.

Harrisburg, PA - (May 22, 2024) The Pennsylvania Head Start Association congratulates Head Start staff and Head Start alumni as we celebrate the 59th birthday of Head Start this month.

Current Head Start Staff, Jacqueline Lapping (Pocono Services for Families and Children) and Gail Bethea (Community Services for Children, Inc.) were each recognized with the Francine Bunch Award. Together they have been part of the Head Start community for more than 79 years!

Francine Bunch was a parent and Head Start agency staff member in Lancaster. She motivated parents to engage in their child's early childhood experiences, continue their own education and promote advocacy through organizing state and regional Associations.

The Jeff Koppel Memorial Head Start Scholarship Fund named Bara'a Kamal (Kingston, PA), Emily Jacien (West Wyoming, PA) and Sabina Hoffower (Emporium, PA) recipients of the fourth and final Jeff Koppel Memorial Head Start Scholarships. The scholarships recognize Head Start graduates, with outstanding academic and personal achievement, along with strong leadership and initiative.

The Jeff Koppel Memorial Head Start Scholarship Fund honors the life and valuable contributions Jeff Koppel made to the Head Start community. Over the last four years, the Fund has awarded nine scholarships totaling \$22,000 to Pennsylvania Head Start alumni. As Sharon Koppel, Jeff's wife and best friend says to the scholarship recipients, "It matters the kind of person you become. Jeff lived a life that mattered. With this scholarship we hope we can pass on a bit of Jeff's spirit and legacy to you."

Scholarship recipient Bara'a Kamal wrote in response to receiving her scholarship: 'As an Arab woman who plans to work in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics I expect to challenge myself and societal stereotypes while increasing representation for others like her. Ultimately I want to become a voice for young women in marginalized communities. These ambitions originated from the foundation I gained in Head Start. This chance introduced my four year old self to academic and social skills, both of which are crucial for success. It assisted in developing my cognitive and emotional abilities, as well as, fostering creativity and critical thinking. Being able to interact with my peers at such an early age allowed for strong socialization principles to be established. My accomplishments throughout primary and secondary school can only be attributed to the smooth transition that was cultivated in Head Start.'

We enthusiastically announce the winners of the Francine Bunch Award and the Jeff Koppel Memorial Head Start Scholarship in acknowledgement of their stellar achievements.

About Pennsylvania Head Start Association

The Pennsylvania Head Start Association improves the future for children, families, and communities who are economically challenged, www.paheadstart.org.



Francine Bunch Award Recipient Gail Bethea with Community Services for Children, Inc.