



# SUCCESS **can't wait.** CELEBRATION

Celebrating our 2026 STRIVE Awardees,  
Future-Ready Scholars, and  
Scholarship Recipients.

**May 5, 2026**



# **THANK YOU TO** **OUR PARTNERS**

**Lela D. Jackson Foundation**

**The Jean J. and Laurence S.  
DeLynn Foundation**

**H. Jack Hunkele Charitable  
Foundation**



**Evalyn Sadlier  
Jones Foundation**

**Harold C. and Jacqueline F.  
Bladel Foundation**

**Anonymous**

**McSweeney Family Foundation, Inc.**

**THANK YOU TO**  
**SARASOTA**  
**COUNTY**  
**SCHOOLS**



# EVENT PROGRAM

5:30 Registration and light bites

6:00 Awards Program

STRIVE Awards

Suncoast Credit Union Scholarships

Retsy Lauer Visual Art Scholarship

Jump Start Scholarship

Future-Ready Scholarships

7:00 Closing

This evening, we come together to celebrate the promise of our students and the community that stands beside them. This inaugural Success Can't Wait Celebration brings together our STRIVE Awardees, Future-Ready Scholars and notable scholarship recipients — remarkable students whose dedication, resilience, and vision inspire us all.

Behind every milestone is a network of families, teachers, counselors, and champions who have believed in these students from the beginning. Each student's success is a reflection of what's possible when a community unites around them.

Tonight, we celebrate their journey—and all that lies ahead.



*Jennifer Vigne,  
President & CEO,  
Education Foundation  
of Sarasota County*



# CONGRATULATIONS TO



## BOOKER HIGH SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Juana Juarez Vasquez, Nyla Pitts, Michelle Roman, Chloe Truewell

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Judeah Deveau, Hunter Gipson, Khmarious Phelps, Oliver S., Ashton Turner



## NORTH PORT HIGH SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Emilia Hussey, Dejah Sandford-Holmes, Bella Scott, Alexis Sanchez, Laela Rosa

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Mya Mitchell, Violet Pearson-Shaver, Keytlin Sanchez Roman, Taylor Steadman, Karla Valentin-Martinez



## PINE VIEW SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Zhendi Ma, Amanda Martin-Nunes, Emma Morris, Ariston Spanos, Henry Yemofio

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Lucianna Carney, Barrett Covert, Elina Goncalves, Spencer Treadway, Julia Zhao



## RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Christopher Boisvert, Lacey Dent, Luana Ibarra-Morales, Braydon Larusso, Reid Mitchell

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Cristian Cortes, Kha Mai, Emalynn Roberts, Titus Roughton, Logan Schaub

# STRIVE AWARD

## RECIPIENTS



### SARASOTA HIGH SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Zander Ley, Amanda Myerston, Addison Rudolph, Chloe Timmons, Emmanuel Vargas

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Cassidy Forrar, Tripp Isaacson, Jerimiah Mendoza, Lola Prody, Hallei Rhoden



### SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Noah Hamilton, Mahayla Roden, Albert Roeterdink, Daniel Salitre

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Aseel Jallard, Anthony Molina-Carrasco, Ruth Pierre, Carrah Ponson, Jackie Salomon



### SUNCOAST POLYTECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Alli Chase, Finnegan Congdon, Delvin Evans, Peter Graber Luz, Kayla Lancellotti

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Remy Avis, Lucas Carpenter, Maya Crawford, Maxwell Dertouzos, Rock Esposito



### VENICE HIGH SCHOOL

**JUNIOR STRIVERS:** Sean Ballentine, Michelle Bettis, Stevie Huyck, Roman Khactaturov

**SENIOR STRIVERS:** Abigail Crawford, Ashley Green, Madelyn Harroun, Preston Rowland, Valery Vasquez-Carmona

# SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to the STRIVE liaisons at each school for their incredible support championing STRIVE students



Khea Davis, Booker High School STRIVE liaison  
Dr. Rachel Shelley, Booker High School Principal



Jennica Thomas North Port High School STRIVE liaison  
Ryan Shurley, North Port High School Principal



Drew Grissell and Allen Regar, Pine View School  
STRIVE liaisons  
Dr. Stephen Covert, Pine View School Principal



Cara Mueller, Riverview High School STRIVE liaison  
Erin Haughey, Riverview High School Principal



Kim Dwyer, Sarasota High School STRIVE liaison  
Ryan Chase, Sarasota High School Principal



SMA-CPT Marsha Seagrave, Sarasota Military Academy  
STRIVE liaison  
SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Sarasota Military  
Academy Provost



Jan Marques, Suncoast Polytechnical High School  
STRIVE liaison  
Jack Turgeon, Suncoast Polytechnical High School  
Assistant Director



Mia Slaton, Venice High School STRIVE liaison  
Zoltan Kerestely, Venice High School Principal

# HUNKELE LEGACY

The STRIVE Awards were born out of H. Jack Hunkele's vision to recognize students who have overcome tremendous challenges to succeed in life. Hunkele had a deep appreciation for education, founding the Most Improved Student Program with Northern Trust in 1988. He was committed to acknowledging and rewarding students within Sarasota County Schools whose perseverance, grit, and courage serve as an inspiration to us all.

In 2017, the Education Foundation began guiding this program, and in 2018, it expanded from five high schools to seven and was renamed the STRIVE Awards. Today, it recognizes five high school juniors and five seniors at eight high schools across the county.

Each year, Senior STRIVE Award recipients receive a \$1,000 cash gift, and one senior from each school is also recognized as a Super STRIVER, receiving an additional \$1,500. These financial contributions assist students in addressing expenses that may not be covered by scholarships, including housing, transportation, and clothing.

Junior STRIVE Award recipients receive a \$100 cash gift to recognize their accomplishments and to validate their work and the importance of continuing to plan and prepare for life after high school.

Beyond the financial assistance the awards provide, they offer invaluable affirmation that comes when a community unites to honor students who have overcome so much to succeed. Such affirmation can provide the confidence many students need as they embark on their next journey after graduating high school.



## **SUNCOAST CREDIT UNION SCHOLARS** **SCHOLARSHIP**

Saige Higdon  
Bailey Poe

## **RETSY LAUER VISUAL ART** **SCHOLARSHIP**

Hana Mullen  
Liana Schlabach

## **JUMP START** **SCHOLARSHIP**

Sebastian Andrade-Rondon  
Nattalie Anis  
Yaru Cao  
Kendall Flach  
Sophie Fleming  
Adam Madkour

Madison McCague  
Sebastian Menendez  
Nancy Pena-Jaimes  
Santiago Sanabria González  
Brian Stephens

## **ARTHUR D. VANDROFF** **SCHOLARSHIP**

Maggie Tejada

## **FUTURE-READY** SCHOLARS

Ixelt Amezcua  
Remy Avis  
Saphirah Barbosa  
Valerie Betancourt  
Jacqueline Bricker

Sloan Cox  
McKenzie Geary  
Alvin Luu  
Michael Mahadeo  
Jaiyda Mitchell  
Gabriel Naguib

Samara Nascimento  
Alicia Pritchett  
Ryder Slack  
Maja Targonski  
Rachel Vo

## **DELYNN** SCHOLARS

Estephany De Luna-Aguinaga  
Ruth Pierre  
Emalynn Roberts  
Keytlin Sanchez Roman  
Lyric Willis

## **RESILIENT** SCHOLAR

Genesis Blanchard Carrasquero

## **FUTURE-READY** SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR

Miranda Moreta-Carrasco

# STRIVE STORIES



"It was hard to adjust to a new culture, new food, new language," Ruth said, admitting she struggled in school to gain the foundational learning she needed. Though behind, she worked tirelessly to understand her new world, and slowly, things improved.

***Read Ruth's and Max's stories in the Herald-Tribune:***



"It's going to be okay. I know it's cliché. You'll grow as a person — not in a negative way. You'll mature and learn from the pain and grief. As bad as it is, you'll come out a better person."

***Read Preston's and Lola's stories in the Herald-Tribune:***



"I decided I wanted to be a Marine, and when I looked at myself, I realized I wasn't going to make it. I wanted people to be proud of me, and I wanted to earn it through respect, not fear. So I changed."



"The biggest thing is don't be afraid to reach out for help," she said. "There's so much shame and embarrassment with this but take one small step. Kind people are out there to help."



# OF SUCCESS



"The desire is in my heart to just help," he said, giving words of encouragement to other students facing struggles of their own: "It's okay not to be okay. Don't try to bury it. Let it out in a way that's comfortable to you. Don't let it define you."

***Read Titus' and Mya's stories in the Herald-Tribune:***



"She has helped me with my ups and downs since I was little," Mya said. "She could always put a smile on my face."

***Read Ashton's and Spencer's stories in the Herald-Tribune:***



"When you are at your darkest moments, you can really see who cares about you and supports you, and it gives you a different perspective," Ashton said.



"My dad was always there to help me study and stay on task," Spencer said. "But even more than that, he was my inspiration and role model."





## Future-Ready Support for You!

Future-Ready programming provides support for every student, at every stage: from finding resources to fund their future, boosting ACT or SAT scores, to exploring career paths with personalized coaching.

If you're a Sarasota County high school student ready for free, comprehensive, tailored support to help you plan for graduation and beyond, we invite you to consider becoming a Future-Ready Scholar.

Because success can't wait.



## Stay Connected

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 Education Foundation of Sarasota County

 [Edfoundationsrq.org/students/](https://edfoundationsrq.org/students/)