

GRASP News

NOVEMBER 2016

GRASP REACH FOR THE STARS GALA

More than 180 guests celebrated GRASP's successes at this year's Reach for the Stars Gala on October 7 at the Bolling Haxall House in Richmond. The evening began with delicious food/beverages and a silent auction that raised more than \$7,000 for GRASP programs. The program which followed was emceed by GRASP Board Member, Andrea McDaniel, and included comments from GRASP Advisor, Rebertha Pope-Matthews, as well as four GRASP students who are either still in college or recently graduated from college. The final speaker for the evening was Glen DuBois, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System.

Here are highlights about our GRASP student speakers:

- **Morsal** - She is a first generation college student who graduated from VCU in May and is continuing her studies there for a Master's of Teaching. She said, "I am where I am and who I am because of GRASP."
- **Jay** - He is from China and in his third year studying Computer Science at VCU. While in high school, the school's GRASP advisor helped him file his FAFSA, and he also received a GRASP Last Dollar Scholarship. He said, "I am so glad that organizations like GRASP can help students to reduce their burden."
- **Diamond** - She graduated from JMU in May and stayed involved with GRASP through the College Success program throughout her college years. Her comments about GRASP were, "I felt very grateful not only to have scholarship opportunities but also to have an organization as a resource for financial aid navigation and tips, resume help, and career advice."
- **Tatiana** - Five months before she graduated from high school, her mother abandoned her, and she was forced to provide for herself. During that time, she met with her school's GRASP advisor who helped her with the FAFSA She also received a GRASP Last Dollar Scholarship. She graduated from VCU in May 2016 and ended up being hired by the Richmond City Sheriff's office working for Dr. Sarah Scarbrough, a GRASP Board Member. Tatiana commented, "Thank you GRASP and everyone who supports this organization because without them, kids who should be statistics, like me, wouldn't have the chance to defy the odds."



Advisor and student speakers
at the gala.



Gala guests.



Happy silent auction
supporters.

GRASP ADVISORS MANNED THE "CALL-12" PHONE LINES AT NBC 12 ON NOVEMBER 2.

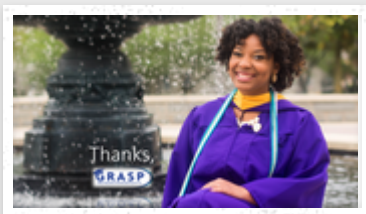


FAFSA FILINGS FOR 2017-2018 WELL UNDERWAY

With the new date change of October 1 for FAFSA availability for seniors and the ability, in most cases, to use the IRS Retrieval Tool for financial data in the FAFSA, GRASP has seen a big increase in the number of FAFSA completions for its students. Since the FAFSA is the basis that school's use to determine a student's financial aid package, many students are ensuring that the first step in the financial aid process is complete. Besides encouraging students to complete the FAFSA, GRASP advisors continue to emphasize the importance of applying for scholarships and looking for other means of keeping educational debt low.





GRASP is thankful for YOU and YOUR SUPPORT!





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