

Subject: Surry Youth and Adult Leaders to travel to Washington, DC for Grad Nation's Summit

The Building a Grad Nation Summit is the premier event of Grad Nation, a growing movement of dedicated organizations, individuals and communities working to end the high school dropout crisis and prepare young people for college and the 21st century workforce. Addressing these critical issues requires all sectors of our communities working together in new, more coordinated ways. The Summit brings together community groups, educators, local and state leaders, nonprofit organizations, businesses, youth and others to share progress and inspire action.

The Grad Nation campaign has two specific goals are to increase the national graduation rate to 90 percent by 2020 with no school graduating less than 80 percent and to regain America's standing as first in the world in college completion.

Surry's group will include representation from the county's governing boards, the Office on Youth staff, Youth Services Citizens Board, and most importantly, students from Surry County High School and L. P. Jackson Middle School. These young leaders are: Raven Knightnor, Brian Clarke, Tamera Edler, Antoinette Edler, William Watkins, Kandace Pierce, and Jessica Randolph. Each of these youth hold leadership positions in their schools and within the community.

This is a great opportunity for these young leaders to meet other individuals like themselves from across the country as well as other participants working to rally for awareness and change in education. A committee of 13 young people, responsible for planning pre-conference sessions for youth, selected 54 youth to receive scholarships to attend the summit. Learn more about these outstanding youth. Sopenia Pierce, Office on Youth Director, said, "we are all excited to attend this event and to bring back a wealth of information to share because preparing students for college, work, and life is a top priority for Surry County. Two of Surry's young leaders will play a major role in the Grad Nation Summit because they were awarded scholarships to attend the event. They are:

Brian Clarke Age: 18



Brian Clarke is a junior at Surry County High School and participates in the Drama Club and Band. He is a member of the Surry County Youth Council and Workforce Investment Board's P.O.W.E.R. Program. Clarke's goal is to attend Virginia Commonwealth University to major in Biology. He enjoys drawing and playing soccer.

Raven Knightnor Age: 17



As a junior at Surry County High School, Raven Knightnor is a member of FCCLA, Drama, the Softball team, Surry Youth Council and the WIA's P.O.W.E.R program. Upon graduation she plans to attend Virginia Commonwealth University and major in Psychology. Knightnor enjoys reading Jodi Picoult books, playing basketball with her son and singing.

For more information on the Summit, Grad Nations, or to learn how to get other youth involved in leadership and civic engagement opportunities in their community, please contact the Surry County Office on Youth by calling 757-294-5278 or visiting <http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation>