



Step Up For Students July 2006 Student Spotlight:



Jonathan Adkins

Cross-Walk Center for Youth and Community Development, Starke

While enjoying his summer break, Step Up For Students scholarship recipient Jonathan Adkins is looking forward to the fall when he will be a ninth-grader at Cross-Walk Center for Youth and Community Development. He just completed his eighth-grade year with all A's and B's, and he is eager to continue to on his path to success this coming school year. However, he has overcome many academic and personal struggles to get to where he is today.

Jonathan's struggles began at the young age of five, following the untimely death of his father. Losing his father at such a young age caused tremendous heartache and led to a decline in his grades at school. As a result, he was held back a year and had to repeat first grade. Jonathan's struggles continued to worsen over the next few years, and, as a result of failing grades, he had to also repeat the fourth grade. His mother, Brenda Adkins, tried to home school Jonathan, but it did not seem to help, so she put him back in public school. Although he was not having behavior problems in school, he continued to receive low grades and was barely passing his classes.

The breaking point came at the end of Jonathan's seventh-grade year. The school wanted to hold him back once again and told his mother that he would have to repeat the seventh grade. Concerned for her son's future, Brenda met with the school principal and counselor to see if there were any other options left for her son. However, she discovered she had very few options if she kept him at the school. Distraught and desperate to help her son, Brenda confided in her boss about Jonathan's struggles. Her boss told her about the private school that her child attended – Cross-Walk Center for Youth and Community Development. Brenda knew she could not afford private school tuition, but she decided to approach Cross-Walk to see if there were any options for financial aid.

The secretary at Cross-Walk was extremely helpful, and told her about the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program that would enable Jonathan to attend the school. The secretary gave Brenda all the information she needed and even guided her through the application process. About two months after applying, Brenda was overjoyed to find out that Jonathan had been approved to receive a Step Up For Students Scholarship.

Jonathan began attending Cross-Walk in August 2005. Partially through the school year, he was given an assessment test and, as a result, he was promoted to the eighth grade, enabling him to catch up on his academic career.

-MORE-



At Cross-Walk, the individualized attention from teachers and a curriculum pace that accommodates each student's learning ability has enabled Jonathan to excel in his classes. Jonathan is now earning A's and B's – a drastic improvement from the D's and F's he was receiving at his previous school. Brenda is extremely pleased with the improvements her son has experienced since attending Cross-Walk. "The difference in Jonathan is like night and day," she says. "He has really picked up on the academics and now understands his school work."

Brenda also reports that Jonathan's motivation at school and home has significantly improved. He is now very eager to go to school and is even in the process of looking for a job to earn some money during his summer break. Brenda attributes his successes to the teachers at Cross-Walk who really help the children with understanding the subjects presented and provide individualized attention to each student. Additionally, her utmost appreciation goes to the corporate donors who make it possible for her son to attend a school that accommodates his educational needs.

About Cross-Walk Center

Cross-Walk Center for Youth and Community Development is located at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center in Starke, four miles west of Keystone Heights. Cross-Walk's K-12 "learning community" consists of continuous development programs offering guidance and individualized educational goals that are age appropriate and foster positive assets in youth. Cross-Walk assists students with obtaining his or her own goals by providing small class sizes, constructing individualized instruction and learning plans, and cooperating with parents. Students develop and expand upon their own interests and goals through project-based learning. Cross-Walk is the first private school in the South to be funded by EdVisions – a grant program of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Tuition at Cross-Walk is \$3,000 per academic school year (or \$300 monthly). The school currently uses the KTEA evaluation, which is done when a student enters Cross-Walk and then every spring. Cross-Walk is also using the Hope Study for High School. This study approaches educational environments from a developmental psychology perspective and evaluates the degree to which the school context supports the students' core developmental needs. The school currently has 61 students, four of which are Step Up For Students scholarship recipients.

About the Step Up For Students Scholarship Recipients

The typical Step Up For Students scholarship family has an average income of \$22,074 for a family of four, and more than half of the scholarship families are single-parent homes. The typical scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. They are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and care about their future, look for viable options. Parents apply for Step Up For Students Scholarships so their children can attend the school best suited for their special needs, beliefs, and abilities, and to address negative trends in their child's learning skills and/or environment.

Step Up For Students Scholarships are funded by corporations that redirect up to 75 percent of their corporate state income tax liability to a qualified Scholarship Funding Organization in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. For more information or to learn how your corporation can participate in the program, visit www.StepUpForStudents.com, or call 1-877-677-KIDS for more information.