

**Step Up For Students
December 2006 Student Spotlight:**



**Hassani Perkins
North Florida Christian School
Tallahassee, FL**

Hassani Perkins is a fifth-grader attending North Florida Christian School in Tallahassee on a Step Up For Students Scholarship. The scholarship has enabled him to reach his full potential and work towards a promising future. Hassani's mother, Sharonda Perkins, a former teacher in both the public and private school environments, is pleased with the opportunities the scholarship program has given her child.

From the time Hassani was a toddler, Sharonda, a single mother, worked continuously with him to prepare him for school. However, when Sharonda learned that her son was zoned for a public school in Tallahassee that had a poor reputation, she was devastated. She feared that instead of being the stellar student she thought he had the potential to be, that he would instead migrate toward the average achievement of his school environment. Sharonda feared the worse for her son because the public school Hassani was zoned for had low academic achievement, attendance and effort. Sharonda chose to send Hassani to a local private school for Kindergarten and worked multiple jobs to pay for the tuition herself. That year, Sharonda learned about the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program from her son's teacher and, after proceeding with the application process, Hassani received a scholarship.

Hassani is now enrolled at North Florida Christian School, where he maintains A's and B's in his classes and participates in the after-school program. Hassani's teachers have encouraged him to do his best in anything he attempts. He has developed an interest in music and even tested in the top 10 percent of his class for musical aptitude. He also enjoys playing sports through the City of Tallahassee leagues, including soccer and baseball. He has also developed a keen interest in business and often talks about pursuing a career as a businessman and working with his community. Thanks to the encouragement, he has received at home and in school, Hassani believes that he can do anything he sets out to accomplish.

His teachers and administrators have been active in his development above and beyond his academics. Hassani is short for his age, and although it wasn't much of a problem for him when he was younger, as he grew older he began to notice the other children growing taller than him and it became an issue. When he began having trouble with his height, his teachers encouraged him at school and made him feel special for his own abilities, regardless of his height. As a result of their efforts, he has not become shy or withdrawn, as many boys who deal with height issues tend to do.

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An additional benefit of Hassani receiving a scholarship is that Sharonda was able to work only one job or at maximum two, allowing her to be a more active parent and participate more her child's education.

Sharonda is proud of her son's accomplishments and looks forward to seeing him grow into a successful young man. She thanks Step Up For Students and its donors for making a difference in her son's life and giving him the opportunity for a bright future.

About North Florida Christian School

Founded in 1966, North Florida Christian (NFC) is located in Tallahassee and currently serves 1,150 students. The 2006-07 school year marks NFC's 40th year of serving the families of the North Florida region, including multiple Florida counties and extending into South Georgia. The school serves children from preschool through 12th grade, and is committed to providing a program of academic excellence, spiritual values for successful living, and activities that provide opportunities for students to reach their maximum potential.

As a university preparatory school, NFC prepares its students for post-secondary education and for the challenges of living in a rapidly changing world. NFC students are also given the opportunity to participate in dual-enrollment with local colleges in their junior and senior years. Students can expand their creativity through NFC's fine arts programs, such as art, band, choral and drama. The school also offers after-school sports teams, including cheerleading, golf, football, basketball, softball/baseball, cross country/track, volleyball and tennis.

NFC administers the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), 10th edition. NFC's SAT scores are consistently above the national average with 90 to 95 percent on its graduates attending four-year or community colleges. Honors courses are offered in many major disciplines throughout the core curriculum. The Guidance Department enhances the efforts of the teachers by monitoring student academic progress, consulting with parents, promoting college and career counseling, providing support and peer mediation programs, implementing testing obligations and establishing mentoring opportunities.

The annual cost of tuition at NFC is \$4,327 for Kindergarten through 5th grade, and \$4,868 for middle and high school (grades 6-12). NFC currently serves 41 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 \$23,000 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 1-800 782-9140 for more information.

