

**Step Up For Students
September 2007 Student Spotlight:**



**Israel Mitchell
Potter's House Christian Academy
Jacksonville, FL**

A few years ago, 14-year-old Israel Mitchell struggled at his public school and even failed sixth grade because he was not in an environment that could address his learning needs. However, through a second chance provided by the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program, Israel was able to attend Potter's House Christian Academy in Jacksonville, where he has been able to overcome his academic challenges and rise as an honor student.

Israel attended private school for the first half of his elementary school years. However, when his single mother, Annette Mitchell, fell ill she was unable to work and could no longer afford the private school tuition. Israel began attending public school in fourth grade, but the new environment proved to be a difficult adjustment and his grades began to decline. By the time Israel entered the sixth grade at the local public middle school, his grades had dropped from A's, B's and C's to D's and F's. His attitude about school also changed, as he went from a cheerful and outgoing student to a discouraged and withdrawn student. His struggles in school continued and he eventually failed sixth grade.

Concerned about her son's future, Annette Mitchell sought advice from local resources. That is when she heard about the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program from one of her friends who served on the local school board. Thrilled to find a solution, Annette applied for a scholarship for Israel immediately. After Israel was accepted on the scholarship program, Annette chose to send him to Potter's House Christian Academy because she felt the academic programs and structured environment would be able to help him get back on track. She was right. After only a few months at Potter's House, Israel began to show improvements in every way. His attitude about school changed and he was once again eager to go to school. As a result of being placed in an educational environment tailored to his individual learning needs, his grades improved and he became more involved in his classes and extracurricular activities.

Israel is now entering the eighth grade at Potter's House. Since attending the school for the past two years on the scholarship program, Israel has consistently made the A/B honor roll and even received awards for outstanding character citizenship. He has also become actively involved in the many programs his parent-selected school offers, including chorus and the Virtuous Male program.

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Aside from his school's activities, Israel is also involved in The Hicks Prep Club, an enrichment program for students in grades 7 through 12 who reside in the Jacksonville Housing Authority, Section 8 or HabiJax (Habitat for Humanity) properties. The Prep Club utilizes monthly meetings, an after-school Program, a book club, test prep and other programs to assist students in reaching their full academic potential. The Prep Club also offers an incentives program that rewards students for their hard work and achievements en-route to applying for and becoming Hicks Scholars. Through his involvement in the program, Israel has been selected by the Hicks Prep Club as a candidate to receive a college scholarship at the University of North Florida.

Annette Mitchell is thankful to the scholarship program and corporate donors for enabling her to afford a quality education for her son. Through the scholarship program and Potter's House Christian Academy, Israel is building the educational foundation for success in school and life and developing the skills necessary to become a positive and productive citizen in his community.

About Potter's House Christian Academy

The Potter's House Christian Academy in Jacksonville, Fla., is the educational institution of choice for more than 600 students, of which more than 300 are Step Up For Students scholarship recipients. The school serves students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Tuition is \$3,200 for Kindergarten through fourth grade and \$3,500 for fifth through 12th grade. The school annually administers the Stanford Achievement Test.

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.

Other ways you can support Step Up For Students. Monetary donations and grants from individuals, foundations and other organizations are vital to the scholarship program. Because 100 percent of the CTC funds must be used for scholarships, there is no allowance in the law to cover program costs associated with administering and distributing the scholarships. Program costs are funded by generous individuals and foundations that believe in equipping all of Florida's children with the educational tools for a successful future. It only costs the Step Up For Students scholarship funding organizations \$50 to administer each scholarship. Because each donation is matched 100 percent by the Walton Family Foundation, a donation of only \$25 will provide \$3,750 scholarship to a low-income child. For more information, call 1 (866) 344-9553 or visit www.stepupforstudents.com/donors.htm.

