

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*Evening of Excellence*

CELEBRATING THE

**2024**

SCHOLARS

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**MAY 15, 2024**

**The Music Center at Strathmore**

5301 Tuckerman Ln, North Bethesda, MD 20852

To our distinguished guests,

Welcome to tonight's Evening of Excellence as we celebrate Montgomery County Public Schools Educational Foundation's (MCPSEF) amazing Class of 2024 Scholars at the beautiful Music Center at Strathmore.

To our generous supporters, tonight would not be possible without your ongoing commitment to supporting the post-secondary education of Montgomery County Public Schools' finest students. I would like to extend a special recognition to the Driesman family, Lamphier and Castelli families, and CSIOS Corporation for the gifts yielding your first scholarships awarded tonight, as well as our largest donor, the Norman R. Rales and Ruth Rales Foundation.

To our MCPS colleagues, thank you for the strong leadership, engaging teaching, care, coaching, and cheering you have poured into the students.

We also thank those of you who supported the MCPS Educational Foundation's scholarships by providing input and partnership. We cannot do our work without you.

To our families and all the key adults in our scholars' lives, you deserve the lion's share of their success. We are honored to recognize and celebrate your wonderful children.

To our scholars, Eleanor Roosevelt once famously said,

The future belongs to those who believe in  
the beauty of their dreams.

We believe in you and the beauty of your future. Soar on the winds of all our well wishes.

Please enjoy tonight,



Kristen Wong Callisto, Ed.LD.  
Executive Director

# ABOUT THE MCPS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Montgomery County Public Schools Educational Foundation, Inc. (MCPSEF) is a nonprofit established in 1988 by the Montgomery County Board of Education to support student educational success in Montgomery County. In addition to student scholarships and awards, MCPSEF supports a range of areas including providing small grants to educators, assisting with students basic needs from school supplies to school meals, and facilitating philanthropic support to MCPS all in partnership with others in Montgomery County.

## ABOUT THE EVENING OF EXCELLENCE

This year, MCPSEF will award 18 scholarships and awards, totaling over \$2.3M, to more than 225 MCPS seniors representing every high school in MCPS from the class of 2024. The Evening of Excellence not only celebrates our amazing scholars but also our supporters and collaborating organizations in the county who assist with the scholarships.

Scholarships awarded include the:  
Ruth and Norman Rales-Patricia Baier O'Neill Scholarship  
Recognizing Academic Excellence, MCPSEF Paul Vance  
Scholarship, and others in partnership with supporters and  
organizations in Montgomery County.

2024 is the inaugural awarding of the: Gilles Driesman,  
Cesar Pie Cyber Defender, and Lamphier-Castelli  
New American Dream for the Future Scholarship.

To tag the event use **#EveningofExcellence24**

# 2024 EVENING OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

## Welcome

Melvyn Leshinsky, Board Chair, MCPS Educational Foundation  
Dr. Kristen Wong Callisto, Executive Director, MCPS Educational Foundation

## Scholars' Processional

Accompanied by the James Hubert Blake High School Drumline

## Video Presentation

"Welcome from Dr. Monique T. Felder, Interim Superintendent of Schools"

## Opening

Andrew Friedson, President, Montgomery County Council

## Keynote Address

Tameka Montgomery, Founder & CEO, Core Strategy Partners

## Remarks

Joshua B. Rales, President and Trustee, Norman R. and Ruth Rales Foundation  
James R. O'Neill, Counsel, Blankrome & Husband of Patricia Baier O'Neill

## Scholar Address

Dewanga Mayarata, Rockville High School  
Rales-O'Neill Scholar

## Video Presentation

Introduced by Debbie Driesman, Daughter of Gilles Driesman

## Closing

Aimee Cho, Emcee, NBC4 News Reporter  
Dr. Kristen Wong Callisto, Executive Director, MCPS Educational Foundation

## Scholars' Recessional

## EMCEE



Aimee Cho has been a general assignment reporter at NBC4 for 8 years, covering breaking news, crime, courts, health, education, and everything else in between. During her time at NBC4, she has won several Emmys and Associated Press awards for her reporting. One of her Emmys was for her profile of a beloved Bethesda football coach with Down syndrome.

She grew up in Great Falls, Virginia where she wanted to be a journalist from a young age. She studied English at Cornell University, where she wrote for the Cornell Daily Sun and worked for Ithaca College's student-run TV station.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Tameka Montgomery is a mission-driven leader who combines her entrepreneurial spirit with a deep commitment to making a positive social impact. As the founder of Core Strategy Partners, a social good research and strategy firm, Tameka helps leaders uncover insights that drive decision-making and improve programs and policies for the greater good. She is also the visionary behind the Montgomery County Children's Business Fair and the creator and host of the podcast "Raising Entrepreneurs: A Parent's Guide to Fostering an Entrepreneurial Mindset." Her TED Talk on raising resilient children has garnered over 1.5 million views.

Prior to establishing her firm, Tameka was appointed by President Barack Obama as a senior executive at the U.S. Small Business Administration, where she oversaw entrepreneurial development programs for the nation's 28 million small businesses.

Tameka is the proud mother of three teenage boys, one of whom is a graduating senior at Springbrook High School. She believes that being entrepreneurial is both a skill and a mindset that all kids can develop. As a parent, she has seen firsthand the benefits of giving children experiences that nurture their entrepreneurial spirit, helping them discover and explore their interests, develop their talents, and tackle problems that matter most to them.

A graduate of Spelman College and Columbia University, Tameka also holds an honorary doctorate in Entrepreneurship from Johnson and Wales University.

## SCHOLAR SPEAKER



Dewanga Mayarata is a member of the class of 2024 from Rockville High School. Throughout high school, she has spent time taking classes and taking part in extracurricular activities that spark her curiosity. She has taken AP classes, Dual Enrollment classes at Montgomery College, and is part of a 4-year Biomedical Pathway Course. Dewanga's extracurricular activities include Forensic Public Speaking, Debate, Minorities Scholars Program, and Science National Honor Society. Outside of school, she enjoys doing art, reading, and crocheting. Dewanga is very passionate about education and medicine. She looks forward to going to university and attending medical school to become a physician and medical school professor.



# MCPS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION'S SCHOLAR CLASS OF 2024

## **Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School**

Abigail Lakew, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Caitlin Reynaldo, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Akiru Udawattagee, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **Montgomery Blair High School**

Ibsa Abadiga, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Phan Bao An Tran, *Bratt Scholar for Language*  
Ram Attaway, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Savannah Brown, *Bratt Scholar for Language*  
Shakib Chowdhury, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Franklin De la Loma, *Lamphier-Castelli Scholar*  
Sara Fournier, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Milena Habtom, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Linda Huang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alexander Liu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Kimberly Liu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Axel Perez Maravilla, *Smith Scholar*  
Zanii'yah Miner-Bradford, *Bryant-Hollins Scholar*  
Krish Wahi, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Andy Ying, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Lipeng Zhu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **James Hubert Blake High School**

Hamna Ali, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Urji Dhaba, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ava Goglia, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Miriam Isayas, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ngan Le, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Hana Mekonnen, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Amber Morales, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Arya Ormol, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Bongani Phiri, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Sidney Santana, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Miabonita Tebo, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **Winston Churchill High School**

Hannah Choi, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Angelica Hu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ha-Yeon Jeon, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Yanhang Liang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Siena Mezger, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ty Sun, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Eric Wen, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Caroline Zuba, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **Clarksburg High School**

Elina Bathaiaan, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Pablo Cadirola, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Samaira Khadka, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Aakankshya Koirala, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Aaron Lam, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Vincent Wong, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Naila Zidikheri, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **Damascus High School**

Zhenghong Li, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Sean Lim, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Christopher Yuan, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **Thomas Edison/Montgomery High School**

Rafael Amaya, *Gilles-Driesman Scholar*

## **Albert Einstein High School**

Zesun Hossain Orni, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Maya Pitch, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Manuel Sorto, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **Gaithersburg High School**

Aanika Arjumand, *Wilma Watkins Ulmer Scholar*  
Daniel Lemus, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Cristian Mendoza, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ishara Sainju, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Katherine Sanchez Recinos, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Tseday Solomon, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Fatoumata Touray, *Wilma Watkins Ulmer Scholar*

## **Walter Johnson High School**

Juan-Sebastian Acevedo-Tirado, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Charles Brenner, *Brawley Award Recipient*  
Claire Cain, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Sabrina Courtis, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Joseph Kang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Naomi Mensah-Brown, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Luna Mesfin, *Brawley Award Recipient*  
Myura Nimalan, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Mauricio Sanchez Toral, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## **John F. Kennedy High School**

Madeline Lopez-Zelaya, *Joy Odom Mathematics Scholar*

# MCPS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION'S SCHOLAR CLASS OF 2024

## Col. Zadok Magruder High School

Logan Green, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ayessa Obaldo, *O'Neill-Robbins Award Recipient*

## Richard Montgomery High School

Joseph Chen, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Daniel Chernyak, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Samwit Dangol, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nicholas George, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Aubree Herron, *Cyber Defender Scholar*  
Lewhat Kahsay, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Anastasia Kutselik, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Mark Li, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Christine Li, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Han Lin, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Emma McCarthy, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Elizabeth Noh, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Jason Parks, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ruby Rojas, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Anupa Wanigasekara, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Stanley Xu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Northwest High School

Tiffany Acheampong, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Dwarakesh Baraneetharan, *LEAAP Scholar*  
Andrea Bernuy, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Chih Shin Cheng, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Kaitlin Chill, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Tao Lin, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Victor Mathias, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ian Miao, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Lalrinfela Ralte, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Han Seo Ryoo, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ramya Sahu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Kyle Tice, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Northwood High School

Ryleigh Brown-Ekweonu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alanna Hart, *Frieda Lacey & Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Jeymi Hernandez Sosa, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Khadija Ndiaye, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ashley Ramos, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Jared Zurita, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Paint Branch High School

Faith Akinlami, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Dionysius Ansah, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Luwam Asfaha, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Bethany Atenidegbe, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Djenabou Bokoum, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Isis De Souza, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Emily Dinh, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Sandra Djayeola, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Charis Foster, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Jennifer Frimpong-Debrah, *Vance Scholar*  
Yeabsira Getachew, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Bethel Habtamu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Tom Hoang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Sarah Jiatz, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Deborah Kim, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nohamin Legesse, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Aaron Mengesha, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ezra Mengesha, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Amarachi Nwosu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Yesly Ventura Reyes, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Keuyrbel Zewedu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Poolesville High School

Arman Akdag, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Brianna Akuamoah-Boateng, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alison Chang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nathaniel Chen, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Yehun Cho, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Abigail Hoy, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Yeinn Kim, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Julie Kim, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Noah Lee, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Daniel Lee, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Madison Manning, *Byrd Scholar*  
Kyna Owusu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Gabriella Quito, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Isabella Quito, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
David Ruan, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Benjamin Savino, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Adriana Schulman, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Avyukth Selvadurai, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Kinley Stokes, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Zehra Syeda, *Byrd Scholar*  
James Tan, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Gabriella Winig, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Lydia Wong, *Byrd Scholar*  
Niky Zhuang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

# MCPS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION'S SCHOLAR CLASS OF 2024

## Quince Orchard High School

Natalie Figueira, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Adriana Hernandez Przylecki, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Sudul Kadawedduwa, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Isadora Liu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alexandra Soukhoveev, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Rockville High School

Elizabeth Carter, *Lavidor Book Award Recipient*  
Ziqian Chen, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Cadence Flaherty, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ayah Guedda, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Mirane Kayssy Kengne, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Dewanga Mayarata, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Isaac Padilla, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Seneca Valley High School

Nissi Akufongwe, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alyssa Choi, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nilgun Colak, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Camila Maita, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Camila Sanchez, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Tanisha Ullah, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Amare Wilcox, *Vance Educator Scholar*

## Sherwood High School

Amanda Dwin, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Abigail Gosaye, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Joseph Hartlove, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Lily Mosisa, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Marissa Petusky, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alice Yacubovich, *Marsh Scholar*

## Springbrook High School

Omotola Alaofin, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Joseph Bekele, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Matt Cho, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Lena Davis, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Melat Ghebreselassie, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Gabriel Gyaase, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Joshua John, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Guillaume Nanfack Kengni, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Vinh Nguyen, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Peter Palma, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Ruth Tadesse, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Areyam Yohannes, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Natna Zena, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Virtual Academy/Wootton High School

Ethan Huynh, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Watkins Mills High School

Asma Abbas, *LEAAP Scholar*  
Wesley Diaz Flores, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Obehi Eromosele, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Adanma Ezulike, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Aarju Karki, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Helen Nogales, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Adwoa Obeng, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nora Ogene, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Huswat Olajide, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Roseline Oshagbemi, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Muhammad Rahman, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nebi Tsarni, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Wheaton High School

Efrem Alabo, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Oscar Becerra, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Chanelle Boadu, *Vance Scholar*  
Emily Cleveland, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Jonathan Dawit, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Gabriel Diaz, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Kieu Huynh, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Hajrah Khan, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Hannah Komukyeya, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Besufekad Liyew, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Justin Logsdon, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Miranda Lopez Espinoza, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Jericho Gian Makasakit, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Adam Marchello, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Dakotta Palma, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Briana Roberts, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Bethany Samson, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Raei Tamiru, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Meklit Tesemaa, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Rahwa Tesfay, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Nicole Ye, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*  
Alvin Zou, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*



## Walt Whitman High School

Brian Mason, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

Leo Smith, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

## Thomas S. Wootton High School

Hongjin Fang, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

Yunkyeong Jung, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

Stacy Liu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

Waverly Nakashima, *LEAAP Scholar*

Pei Yu Tsai, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*

Miriam Zhu, *Rales-O'Neill Scholar*



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*Aprio*

# Special Acknowledgments for the Reception

James Hubert Blake High School Jazz Ensemble, Reception Entertainment

A Helping Horn, MCPS student nonprofit for music education

Alison Chang, Student Speaker for the Supporters' Reception, Poolesville High School,  
Rales-O'Neill Scholar

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### MCPSEF Staff

Katrina Queen, Administrative Services Manager

Shana Sabbath, Grant Manager

Tyler Walker, Accountant

### Event Support

Lauren Meltzer, Event Planner

Dr. Debra Munk, Scholars Coordinator

### Event Volunteers

### MCPS-MCPSEF Scholarship Committee

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Dr. Karen Crews, Director of Student Well-Being and Achievement

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Sarah Siddons, Communications Project Manager

### MCPS Partners

College and Career Information Coordinators

Scholarship Review Team

Office of Communications including Aisha Mbowe, Eleni Kretikos, and

Eric Van Ryzin with assistance from Dr. Dick Lipsky

Office of Shared Accountability including Dr. Kecia Addison

Department of Student and Data Systems including Darshini Shah

MCPS Mailroom

Equity Initiatives Unit

Language Assistance Services Unit

### Strathmore Staff

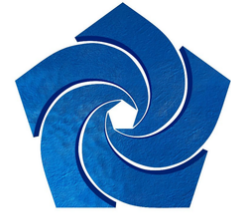
*Thank you to all our MCPS community supporters, staff, families, and all others who helped us this year to develop our programs, plan this event, and support our scholars as they continue on their journey to their academic and professional goals.*

# THANK YOU



THE  
NORMAN & RUTH RALES  
FOUNDATION

Gary & Pennie Abramson Charitable Foundation





Our mission is  
to support student success  
at MCPS

## To Support:

**Small Grants for Educators:** Each year MCPSEF provides grants of up to \$5,000 for educators

**Dine with Dignity:** This campaign helps ensure students can eat meals at school without financial hardship

**GIVE BACKpacks:** For just \$20, you can provide a student with a backpack filled with necessary school supplies

**General Fund:** Allow MCPSEF to use your gift towards the best cause

**Scholarships:** Support MCPS students' post-secondary success by contributing to MCPSEF scholarships



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