

Women in Focus: Bios of 2010 Scholars

Myeshia Allen

Myeshia Allen, a senior at Verona Area High School, has a goal to work in the field of Criminal Justice.

She is currently a group leader in a program called “Extreme Faith” at her church, Tabernacle of Praise. The group works with young children in many ways to give them grounding, structure and support. She is also a hip-hop dancer with Krucial Impact on Madison’s South Side. She also does child care at her church. She received The Martin Luther King Jr. Outstanding Young Achievement Award from the Urban League in her junior year.

One of her teachers writes that she is resilient, compassionate, determined, hardworking, resourceful and likeable. The teacher describes the many obstacles that Myeshia has had to confront and overcome. “An example is that she has low frequency hearing loss, but is able to function well in a hearing world.”

In her teacher’s words: “Myeshia never blames, never wallows in self pity and continues to apply herself in the face of overwhelming odds stacked against her; she is an inspiration.

Alejandra Canchola

Alejandra is a senior at Verona Area High School; she has a strong interest in Journalism.

She has participated in many school activities including: the Multicultural Leadership Council, French Club, the Bridges discussion group, Math Meet, Latino Nation; she serves as the Captain/choreographer for the group for 3 years. She received the Urban League’s Martin Luther King Jr. Outstanding Young Achievement Award from the Urban League in her junior year. For three years, she had an Honors grade point average (over 3.5 in 4 quarters of a school year).

She has performed volunteer community service at the Catholic Multicultural Center by doing child-care in relation to programs and serving as English as a Second Language teacher for adults just starting to learn English. She also volunteered at Angel’s Wish, an animal rescue program. She also interned at Wisconsin Public Radio and Television as part of her involvement with the UW-Madison PEOPLE Program.

One of Alejandra’s high school counselors writes: “It has been a pleasure working with Alejandra over the last 4 years. She has definitely left her mark on this school in the cultural work to which she has contributed. I have no doubt that she will continue to grow into a strong leader with the capacity to hear and give voice to multiple points of view.

Marcus Cannon

Marcus is a senior at Sun Prairie High School. He has many future interests and goals; they include: law, business, and police science.

He received the Outstanding Young Person award 4 times from the Urban League. Marcus has done a great deal of community service; that work includes home maintenance jobs for elderly persons, working at a local food pantry as well as tutoring elementary and middle school students. His interests are sports and video games (“when my homework is done”). He is currently employed at Prairie Lanes Bowling Alley at about 25 hours per week.

At school, he belongs to S3, a group of high-achieving African American students whose goal is to connect other students to programs and opportunities that will result in academic success. He also sings in the High School Choir.

One of his high school counselors notes that Marcus’ ability to maintain a high grade point average is especially significant in that he has recently had to care for his mother who has had serious health issues. She also writes: “when asked about Marcus Cannon, you will only hear that he is the best at whatever he endeavors to do, whether it is academics, extra-curricular activities or community related affairs. It is truly rare to meet a student of Marcus’ caliber. I wish we had more students like him.”

Marquesha Fane

Marquesha, a senior at LaFollette High School, wants to help people in need as a nurse. She is taking health occupations classes in order to reach the first step- becoming a certified nursing assistant.

Marquesha has had to face many challenges in her life such as homelessness and the incarceration of her father, all the while maintaining a 3.13 grade point average in a strong college prep curriculum.. She has done volunteer work at a nursing home while holding down 2 part time jobs as a cashier. She also participates in the Scholar Society at her school.

Her high school counselor wrote: “Marquesha’s path has not been without bumps. She has demonstrated great resiliency and integrity in response to challenges. She has shown great maturity at school. In spite of the challenges she has overcome, she is optimistic and cheerful.

Another of her references said: “What most notably sets Marquesha apart from others is her integrity, grit, politeness and the respect of adults and peers. She has a work ethic second to none along with a strong system of personal values, a willingness to listed and an absolute desire to succeed.

Nancy Gomez

Nancy is a senior at LaFollette High School. Her future interests lie in the fields of Business and Law.

She has been on the honor roll for 3 years in high school where she also participates in Key Club as President and also serves as Co-President of the Student Support Foundation. She received the Outstanding Volunteer Tutor Award. In addition to participating in the PEOPLE program at UW-Madison, Nancy does extensive community service work. She created and ran a food drive at her school. She's planned and organized two highway clean-ups.

Nancy has also served as a Peer Tutor, worked at the Wil-Mar Soup Kitchen and volunteered at the Pinney Branch Library. She has also worked as an Elementary School Carnival helper in addition to organizing fundraisers: Trick or Treat for UNICEF and Koins 4 Kancer. She also worked as a Summer Intern at the Wisconsin Office of Employment Relations.

One of Nancy's references, a Coordinator at the PEOPLE program, has written: "Nancy's dedication and drive reach far beyond the scope of her PEOPLE responsibilities. She has proven herself to be a fabulous student and citizen, pursuing myriad extracurricular activities and making time for community service, all while juggling her academics. Nancy has always seized opportunities to help her peers, providing tutoring and encouragement whenever possible and attending to others' needs before her own. Nancy has shown that she has much to offer not only her school but the larger community.

Kira Hogan

Kira is a senior at LaFollette High School. Her goals include attending UW-Madison majoring in the fields of English and Psychology, with a Dance minor with eventual enrollment in Law School with a focus on Family Law and Entertainment Law.

She has earned a number of awards including: Outstanding Young Person from the Urban League, and Lancer Pride award. She also attended a National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. in August, 2008. UMOJA magazine also printed a picture and story about her. She has set up food stands for at Allied Community Center and has bagged food at Second Harvest.

Kira has participated in the PEOPLE program at UW-Madison since 6th grade. She is also involved with Youth Ministry at Fountain of Life Church as well as the Dance Ministry and helps at Vacation Bible School. She has taken classes in French and Spanish. She currently does child care work for East Madison Community Center and has a position at DEB shops at East Towne Mall.

One of Kira's references writes: "In an age of many misguided and rebellious youth, Ms. Hogan stands out as an example of someone who has made a choice to blaze her own

trail that will lead to a bright and successful future. Kira has shown tremendous forethought and responsibility.... she will contribute to any college or university that she attends.

Hamp Johnson

Hamp is a senior at LaFollette High School. His goal is to become a Physician with a focus on Forensic Science and research. He has hopes of finding a cure for diseases such as sickle cell, cancer and lupus.

As a ninth grader, he spent 4 weeks in Jamaica, helping to build an orphanage in connection with the Youth With a Mission program. It reaffirmed his intent to help others.

Last summer, he participated in UW-Madison's School of Medicine and Public Health Research Apprentice Program; that experience confirmed his love of science. At school, Hamp has participated in Youth Court, DECA Club, football, basketball and the Finance Bowl at Grainger Hall. He is also a Youth Group Leader at his church and is a member of the Praise Team.

Hamp is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars and has been the subject of a Teen Spotlight article in UMOJA Magazine.

LaFollette's Principal writes: "Hamp has received many community awards for his performance as a student and his overall positive impact on our community. I have observed him as a leader by example. Students look up to him and are inspired by his courteous manner and non-nonsense approach to school. Hamp exhibits a maturity this is many years ahead of his age. It is without reservation that I give him my highest recommendation.

Brittany McNeil

Brittany is a senior at LaFollette High School. Her interests are in Physical Therapy, Social Work and Criminal Justice; these are professions in which she can see herself helping others.

Currently in high school, Brittany participates in Key Club, Vibe 2 Dance Crew and Student Senate as well as Track and Field sports. She has been recognized as an Outstanding Student by the Madison Urban League as well as by the Mann Scholar Program, National Society of High School Scholars, and National Young Leaders.

She has done community service at a nursing home and as an elementary school tour guide. She also has a job at Babies R Us.

One of Brittany's references writes: "I see a vibrant young woman as she walks with confidence through the halls of LaFollette. She has worked part time during all four

years of high school. Brittany wants to go to college to help others. She recognizes her good fortune in the help she has received and would now like to return that goodwill by finding a profession that will help others. Her combination of hard work, kind heart and determination will surely result in a dedicated professional one day.”

Jarrel-Brannon Montgomery

Jarrel-Brannon is a senior at James Madison Memorial High School. His goal is to become a lawyer. He will begin with Pre-Law courses as a Political Science Major with a concentration on World Politics. He is also interested in Theater, Music, Philosophy, History and Economics.

In high school, he has participated in French Club, Pep Band, Black Student Union, Newspaper, Jazz Band, National Beta Club, Varsity Track and Field and Varsity Basketball. He has also served as Captain of Lyrikally Xplicit (the Poetry Team).

In the larger community, he has participated in Gospel Choir and United Way's By Youth for Youth, the YWCA Christmas Present Drive and Spoken Word activities while also working at Pizza Hut.

Jarrel-Brannon has received the Presidential Community Service Award (after completion of 300 hours of community service), the Links Outstanding Student Award, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award and Young Author's Award.

His school Counselor writes: “It amazes me how Jarrel is able to balance school, work, service and extracurricular activities while maintaining each with high levels of success. He is an individual that is highly motivated in his school community and is able to do so while achieving in the classroom. However, these things don't define him as I believe his biggest contribution is his willingness to help others and provide service where needed. It is my pleasure to write him a recommendation.”

Stephanie Munoz

Stephanie is a senior at Verona Area High School. She is interested in the medical field (veterinary medicine or anesthesiology) or in education.

In her high school, she has been involved in the Bridges program (race relations), Conzemius Scholars, Latino Nation, Chorale Chorus and the Multicultural Leadership Program. She works at Panera Bread and also does occasional childcare and pet care jobs.

Stephanie's community volunteer work includes service on the Dane County Youth Board, Ronald McDonald charities, Wisconsin Educational Fair, World Dairy Expo and the Youth Service Day Committee.

One of her references writes: “I’ve watched her grow from a young lady who fit into virtually any crowd into an individual who has made choices so she was able to focus on her abilities. Stephanie is someone who can be counted on to keep the class on a positive track. Stephanie has many varied abilities and likely as man dreams. I have no doubt that she will continue to grow, make good choices and be a leader in any group.”

Laurene George-Pratt

Laurene is a senior at LaFollette High School. Her goal is to become a dentist to serve the under-privileged.

At her high school, she has served as Student Council President and Class president. She has also participated in the Gospel Choir, Girls’ Soccer Team, the High School Musical (The Boyfriend), Key Club, Homework Club, Lunch Readers Club and Health Occupations Students of America. She has tutored other students in geometry and biology.

In the larger community, she has served as a Sunday School Teacher, Blood Donor and Volunteer. She has also volunteered with Rhythm and Booms, Book bag Giveaway, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Salvation Army as well as in doing childcare. She has collected funds for Haiti Relief.

She has received many awards that include a Community Service award, Lancer Pride award and an Academic Achievement award upon of completion of an advanced placement class.

An Urban League staff person writes with regard to Laurene’s work as a tutor. “She understood that it was more important to help and guide students than to offer them the answer. She is a great role model for students because she approaches problems with a positive attitude, respecting herself and others. She really takes pride in her work and accomplishments. Laurene is a responsible, mature and intelligent young woman. I give her my highest recommendation.”

LaQuita Redus

LaQuita is senior at La Follette High School. Her interest is in studying Psychology with a goal of becoming a Counselor at a juvenile facility.

In school, she has participated in the Dance Team, Track and dance activities. She has been on the Honor Roll, received the Links Achievement Award and placed first in a Girls Track and Field event. She has worked a variety of jobs through high school and is currently a cashier at Wal Mart.

LaQuita has done volunteer community service work at both the Lussier Teen Community Center (tutoring) and at Attic Angels helping elderly persons.

Her current work Supervisor writes: She is a bright, articulate and incisive individual. She is constantly looking for new challenges and has already accomplished the old. LaQuita possesses excellent communication skills; her spunk keeps us smiling. She expresses every day her eagerness to learn new things and continue her education. Her enthusiasm will result in success in her next levels of education and beyond.

Xai Xiong

Xai is a senior at Madison East High School. His academic interests are in the fields of Business and Engineering.

In school, he has been President and Vice President of the United Asian Club. He has also served as a Senior Teacher's Assistant in Math.

Xai's Math Teacher writes: "Over the years, Xai has shown himself to be a strong and capable student in all disciplines. His strengths as a student are clear in his transcript, but what doesn't necessarily stand out is the grace with which he carries himself as a student. Xai has mastered the ability to blend academics with communication; this makes him an invaluable asset in the classroom. He is a truly talented and diligent student.

Miss Annie Mae Scholar Diane Mitchell/Small

Diane is currently a student at Madison College (formerly known as Madison Area Technical College). Her goal is to become a Social Worker.

She has a work-study placement at Bridge Lake Point Waunona Community Center. Her duties include helping with the Food Pantry and the meal program. She takes senior citizens on field trips and organizes community clean-up activities. She has directed the St. Paul A.M.E. Vacation Bible School for 15 years.

Diane has also worked at Glendale Elementary School as an Educational Assistant, Family Liaison and Noon Lunch Supervisor. She has also worked at Monona Shores Apartments as a Leasing Consultant/Assistant Manager.

The Youth Programs Coordinator at the Community Center writes of Diane: "She is an individual who is dedicated to her community and studies; she is passionate about her commitments. She has the proven ability to multi-task and overcome challenges that are thrown her way. Diane is a great model of respect and good character for all adults and children that she encounters.

She carries with her a wisdom and personal character that brightens any day and overcomes even the most derogatory circumstances."