

IMPACT REPORT

**FIRST STAR
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMY
2023- 2024**

ACADEMY DIRECTOR: DANIELLE GREEN-WELCH





KENT STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT:

We transform lives and communities through the power of discovery, learning, and creative expression in an inclusive environment.

Established to support the university's mission-based K-12 to college pipeline work and build a holistic student success strategy for all pipeline engagement experiences, the Academy is situated within the University Outreach & Engagement Office.

The Academy Model

ACADEMY PROGRAMMING INCLUDES...



MONTHLY ACADEMIES

Monthly programming over four years for youth in foster care focused on academics and life skills while they are in high school.

CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

Seminars and workshops that provide tools to caregivers to become advocates for their youth.

STEAM ACADEMY

Virtual Tech Talks and access to labs that focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.

ALUMNI PROGRAM

Offered to scholars who graduate the Academy as a resource during their transition to adulthood.

SCHOLAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Leadership opportunity for scholars focused on becoming civically engaged and enacting change in their local communities.

SUMMER ACADEMY

Intensive 2-4 week residential enrichment program on a university campus.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Weekly mentoring and tutoring sessions, as well as an open environment to connect and build community through virtual hangouts.



First Star's Mission:

First Star provides high school youth in foster care with the opportunity, tools, and support to successfully transition to self-sufficiency through higher education or other viable pathways.

First Star's Vision:

We envision a world where youth in foster care have equitable opportunities to acquire education and skills to achieve fulfilling and productive adult lives.

First Star's Academies are a long-term college-prep program for high school foster youth. We keep our scholars on track for high school graduation and prepare them for higher education and adulthood by providing specialized programming that addresses the academics, life skills, and adult supports unique to students in foster care.



Want to get involved or become a partner? Please reach out to the Academy Director using the contact information below!

ACADEMY DIRECTOR

Danielle Green- Welch

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WEBSITE:

[HTTPS://WWW.KENT.EDU/FIRST-STAR](https://www.kent.edu/first-star)

Media Handles



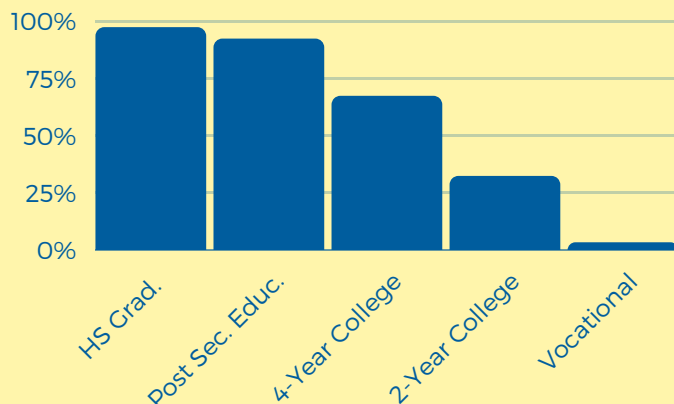
Please follow our social media and stay connected with our academies and alumni programs



FIRST STAR SCHOLARS ARE BEATING THE ODDS

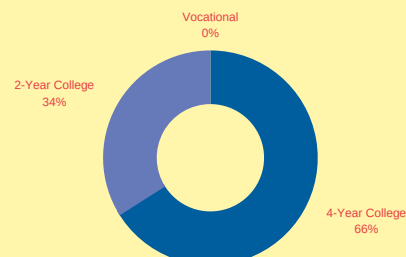
NATIONAL GRADUATING CLASS

2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

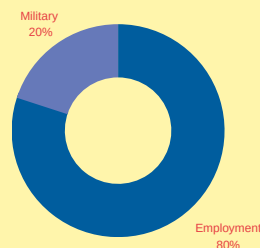


All data above and to the right is representative of internal data collected by First Star National and all data is self-reported by Academy Directors.

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION



NON POST SECONDARY EDUCATION



2023 STEAM

This summer First Star hosted the summer campaign First Star "STEAM in the Summer" Day, a fun, collaborative, interactive day of scholarly engagement in science, engineering, technology, arts, and mathematics. 100 % of our participating academies accessed the grant funding to support scholar participation in STEAM programming for Spring or Summer of this year. KSU created slime using shaving cream and glue!



CELEBRATING SCHOLAR VOICE



The First Star Scholar Advisory Committee created a podcast series titled the Scholar Voice Podcast where they engaged in dialogue around advocacy and leadership development to build community with foster youth across the network.

The podcast is housed on our Youtube page, check it out!

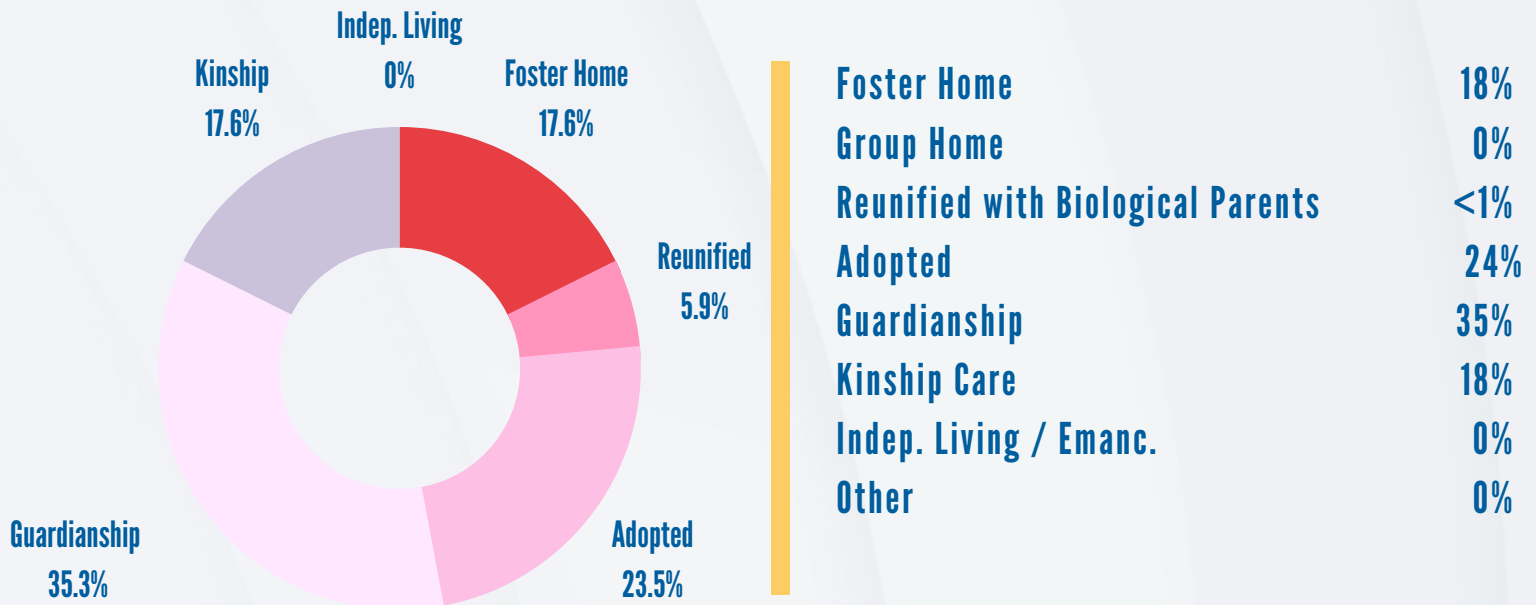


The First Star Alumni Program's goal is to remain connected and ensure Alumni have access to resources and the First Star network as they transition into adulthood, career, and advanced education.

- 63% of the 2023 graduating class enrolled in the Alumni Program
- The 2023 Alumni Awards Show awarded our largest graduating senior class and almost 30 Alumni during our annual community celebration in June 2023

FIRST STAR KENT STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMY DATA

Scholar Data



GENDER IDENTIFICATION



RACE/ETHNICITY



GRADE LEVEL



CLASS OF 2023

100% of First Star KSU Academy Seniors Graduated from High School in 2023!

100% of FS KSU graduates are pursuing higher education opportunities and 100% are attending Kent State University in the fall!



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Academics - Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and SAT Prep classes

Teambuilding Activities - Led by Youth Coach mentor staff

Lifeskills - Social Emotional Learning, Dance, Financial Literacy, Power Chats, Art, and Career Exploration workshop



Summer Transitions



The Kent state first star academy had one graduating senior graduate from Summer Academy. After completion of the program she enrolled at Kent State University. During the program, she participated in a five-week academic bridge program and took two classes. She was able to transition into living on campus once graduating from the First Star Summer Academy. She lives on campus, with her older sister, as our inaugural First Star Summer Academy graduate! She plans to further participate with the First Star Academy by returning as a Peer Mentor. We are very excited for and proud of her, and wish her the best on her future endeavors!

ACADEMY SPOTLIGHT



ACADEMY STAFF SPOTLIGHT

"As we round out the summer and move into a new academic year, the momentum from our spring and summer programming continues. We look forward to new in-school programming for our Akron scholars, through the VIPP Grant. We are excited to resume our caregiver engagement this semester, focusing on permanency, thanks to a grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation. And our commitment to serving Kent State students impacted by out-of-home placement has never been stronger! We are First Star, and we are continuing to put students first."

- Ms. Danielle Green-Welch

SCHOLAR TESTIMONIALS



"Yes, they cared very much about my health and learning experience"

"I didn't originally have any plans or thoughts on going to college, but after asking many questions to the staff I started gaining an interest in the idea of going to college."



"I had so much fun, I made new friends and new memories, everyone there was so nice and so respectful, but the best part was the memories with my friends, they really made me happy when I was sad, they were there for me."

"They showed me opportunities all over campus."

SUMMER ACADEMY HIGHLIGHTS

KSU Dates

Session 1: June 19th - June 30th
Session 2: July 2nd - July 14th



The Purple Umbrella Network



The Purple Umbrella Network is First Star KSU's newest support resource for youth transitioning out of foster care. The objectives for the Purple Umbrella are structured around promoting academic success, encouraging college graduation, and securing professional employment. Additionally, Purple Umbrella programming aims to support the personal well-being of the student, develop career aspirations, and build leadership capabilities.



First Star KSU Awarded Akron VIPP Grant

The First Star KSU Academy received a grant from the City of Akron, Violence Intervention and Prevention Program. This grant allows First Star to focus on direct recruitment and engagement with students who reside in Akron and/or who attend Akron Public Schools.

Creative Expression to Heal from Trauma



KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY

Wick Poetry Center
College of Arts and Sciences



This year's Summer Academy had a very special and meaningful theme, as scholars embarked on a journey exploring creative ways to heal from trauma. During their 4-week experience, scholars participated in a variety of activities focused on different forms of expression and storytelling. They also had the unique opportunity to explore careers associated with these special programs. Summer Academy featured a 1-Day Film School, in which scholars had an opportunity to explore the art of video production in front of and behind the camera. They participated in two days of dance therapy, exploring how to use movement as expression. During the residential component, scholars participated in a workshops hosted by the Wicks Poetry Center, the College of Communication & Information, the Pan-African Studies Department and the College of the Arts.

Closing Ceremony

Our CEO, Lyndsey, visited KSU this summer!



The summer academy experience provided staff an opportunity to model teambuilding and prosocial behaviors. Scholars built community, while experiencing some of the independence of being on a college campus.