



**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY**

**FIRST STAR ACADEMY**

**2024**

**IMPACT REPORT**

**KENT STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

# ABOUT FIRST STAR KSU ACADEMY



## KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

**University Outreach & Engagement** connects the mission of the university to our surrounding communities through strong relationships with our meaningful pipeline to college initiatives and impactful community engagement.

The First Star Kent State Academy partners with child welfare agencies and other community partners to provide an immersive, specialized academic, college preparatory, mentorship, and drug education program for high school youth in foster care.

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Phone Number: 330-672-3039



Website: <https://www.kent.edu/first-star/about>

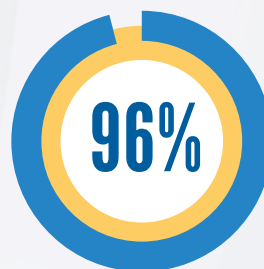


Instagram: @firststarksu



## FIRST STAR 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



**HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATION  
COMPLETION**

**COMPARED TO 50% NATIONALLY**



## FIRST STAR KSU ACADEMY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



# The Academy Model

ACADEMY PROGRAMMING INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:



### 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.

### 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.



### STEAM ACADEMY

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



### SCHOLAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

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



### ALUMNI PROGRAM

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



# BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

## CELEBRATING SCHOLAR SUCCESS



### FIRST STAR ALUMNI PROGRAM

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.



**81%** of the 2024 graduating class enrolled in the Alumni Program

**79%** of enrolled Alumni engage with the program via resources, newsletters and events

**18%** of peer mentors are First Star Alumni

### FIRST STAR STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

First Star encourages advocacy and engagement in social justice through the Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC). SAC is composed of current scholars from across the First Star Academy network and from the Alumni Program. SAC allows scholars to build community, freely share their ideas and opinions, and dialogue about important issues!



**80%** of SAC scholars were returners from last year

**100%** of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident taking on leadership roles.

**100%** of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident in advocating for themselves

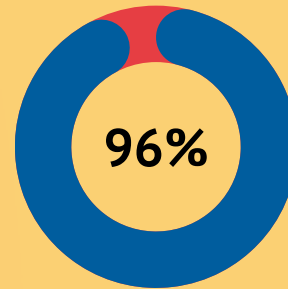
 **REFER A STUDENT**



## NATIONAL FIRST STAR CLASS OF 2024

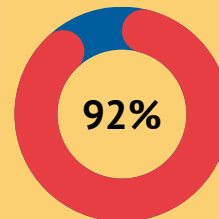


### National Graduating Class



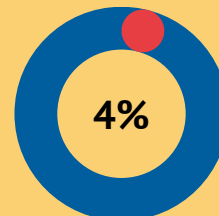
**H.S Diploma: 96%**  
**Credit Recovery: 4%**

### Post-Secondary Pathways



**4-year: 55%**  
**2-year CC: 33%**  
**Vocation/Trade School: 4%**

### Workforce Pathways



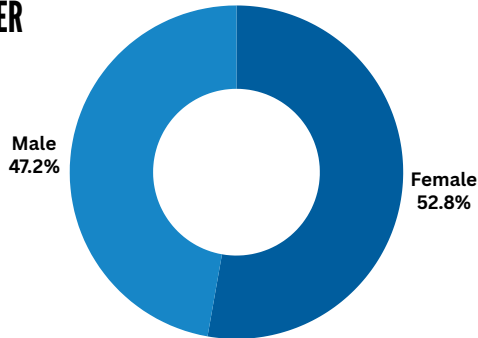
**Apprenticeship/Union: 0%**  
**Full-Time Employment: 4%**  
**Military: 0%**



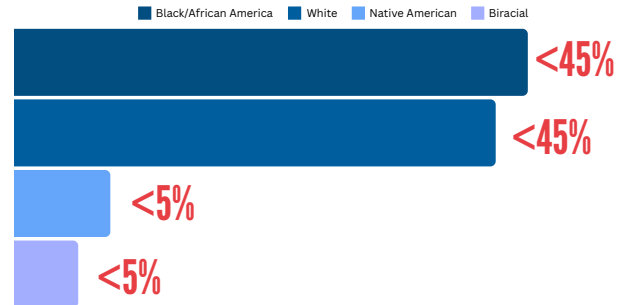
# FIRST STAR KSU ACADEMY

## SCHOLAR PROFILE

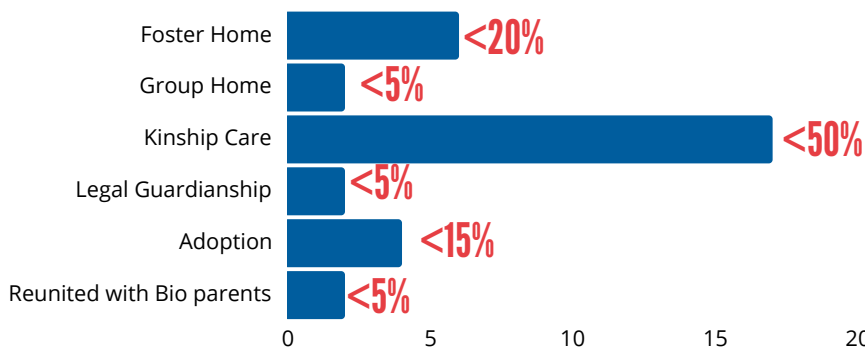
### GENDER



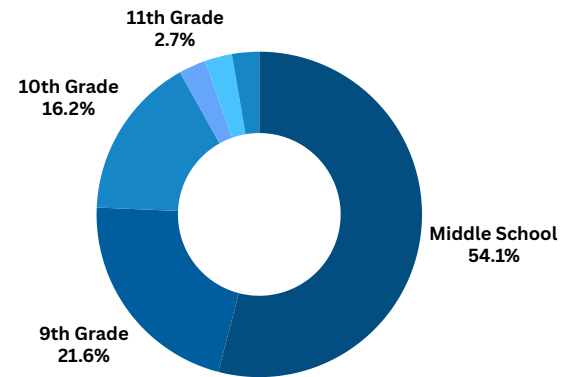
### RACE AND ETHNICITY



### PLACEMENT STATUS



### GRADE LEVEL



### Celebrating Class of 2024

100%

of First Star KSU scholars graduated High School on time!

100%

of First Star KSU graduating scholars will be pursuing workforce pathways!

# FIRST STAR KSU IMPACT

## 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR



### LIFE SKILLS AND SELF DISCOVERY

- Scholars engaged in participated in a financial planning and wellness seminar; worked with youth navigators on time management and planning for academic success.

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Scholars participated in participated in an experiential learning projects focused on physical, financial and physical wellness; participated in a cooking demonstration and made vegetable and fruit salsa; yoga and mindfulness sessions; 1-day Purple Project conference with art expression sessions and work with the Refresh Collective- where scholars wrote hip hop lyrics about their emotions and feelings of self-doubt and how to turn those negative feelings into empowering thoughts.

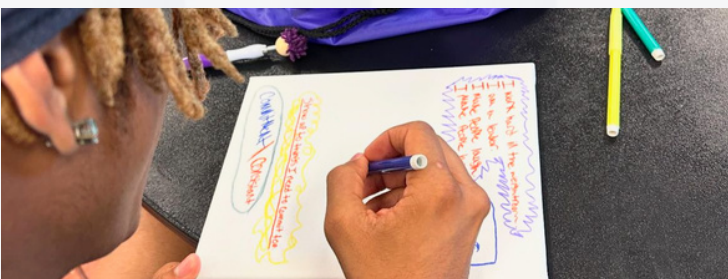


### CAREER EXPLORATION

- Scholars engaged in a workshops from professionals in the finance and professional development industries.
- Scholars worked on video creation.

### LEADERSHIP AND SELF ADVOCACY

- Scholars participated in a 1-day film school with a focus on creating shorts that demonstrated what they learned about restorative justice and conflict management in their communities.
- Scholars engaged in a workshop from "Da GoalGetta" Jamar Blackmon on self-advocacy and being the change they want to see.



### COLLEGE READINESS

- Scholars participated in summer residential experience; collaborations with the College of the Arts and tour of the supportive resource departments on campus.

# FIRST STAR KSU ACADEMY

## BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

The National Bright Futures Survey was developed in partnership with Dr. Philip Hong from the University of Georgia to better understand our scholars' hopes and aspirations as it relates to their academic and future goals. In creating this survey and collecting feedback from scholars, we are embracing the challenge young people face and how we can be better stewards of their emotions and feelings as we support their growth in our Academies!

80%

of First Star scholars are feeling hopeful about the future and expect to complete further education after high school!



70%

of scholars feel a sense of belonging and connection since joining First Star!



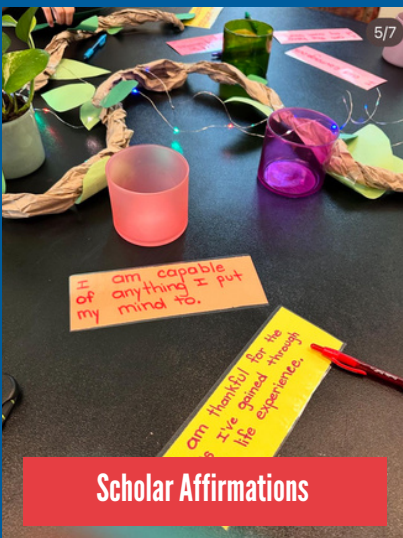
70%

of scholars are confident that they have the necessary skills to succeed in college since joining First Star!

## SUMMER ACADEMY

Summer Residential Program Dates: Monday June 10th to Friday June 28th, 2024

Summer Academy Showcase: Friday June 28th, 2024



Scholar Affirmations



Outstanding Community Partner Award



CvIDJ'ing Workshop

# FIRST STAR KSU ACADEMY

## COMMUNITY IMPACT



### Peer Mentor Recognition

First Star recognizes the positive impact peer mentors have on our scholars. The First Star KSU Academy awarded peer mentors for their years of service and unwavering support of the academy.

**83%** are current students or alumni of host university

**65%** identify as first generation

**32%** identify has current or former foster youth

**18%** identify has former First Star scholars



### Caregiver Engagement

During the end of 2024 Summer Showcase, the first "Outstanding Caregiver" award was given to a caregiver who has been an active caregiver engaging in workshops and supporting the growth and advancement of their scholar(s).



### Foster Care Awareness Month Advocacy



First Star Kent State Academy celebrates scholars and their caregivers during the month of May with various enrichment and self-advocacy events and activities that promote the brilliance and potential of youth in care!



# FIRST STAR KSU ACADEMY

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Dave Thomas  
Foundation  
for Adoption®  
Forever Families for Children in Foster Care



### Community Stakeholder Acknowledgments

#### Academy Programming Partners

The Purple Project  
Purple Umbrella Project  
Refresh Collective  
Kent State SRVSS Office  
Pride Among Daughters & Sisters Inc.  
Bessie's Angels  
KSU Wick Poetry Center  
Jewish Wemon's Society  
Vernon Ministries

#### Scholar Recruitment Partners

City of Akron & City of Cleveland Public Schools  
Ohio CASA  
Ohio Department of Children & Youth

#### Funding Acknowledgements

Dave Thomas Foundation  
City of Akron, Violence Intervention and Prevention Program  
LeBron James Family Foundation  
OHIO Reach Designation

*Thank you to our First Star board member and Kent State Alum, Judy Hackett for her continued support in uplifting the KSU Academy.*



## HOW TO GET INVOLVED



REFER A STUDENT.



VOLUNTEER.



DONATE.