



FIRST STAR KVC WEST VIRGINIA ACADEMY

2025 IMPACT REPORT



ABOUT FIRST STAR KVC W.V ACADEMY



FIRST STAR MISSION

To provide high school youth and young adults who have experienced foster care with the opportunity, tools, and support to successfully transition to self-sufficiency through higher education or other viable pathways.

KVC WEST VIRGINIA

KVC West Virginia is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect. Our team of caring experts delivers a range of essential services, including in-home family support, foster care, adoption, in-home mental health therapy, and youth educational support – all to fulfill our mission of enriching and enhancing the lives of children and families.

Academy Director: Tiffany Dixon

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<https://westvirginia.kvc.org/services/first-star-academy/>

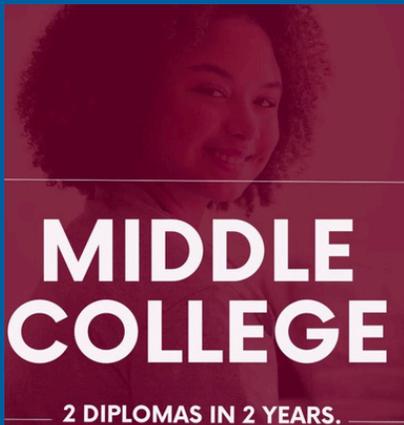


**HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION
COMPLETION**

COMPARED TO 50% NATIONALLY



FIRST STAR WV ACADEMY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MIDDLE COLLEGE

2 DIPLOMAS IN 2 YEARS.

Launch of Middle College



West Virginia Invests in Foster Youth

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.

SUMMER ACADEMY

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

CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

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

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.



100% of the 2025 graduating class enrolled in the Alumni Program

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

22% 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

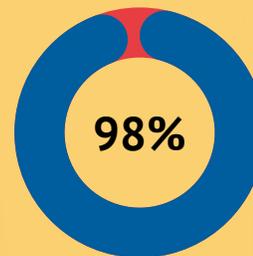
100% of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident taking on leadership roles

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



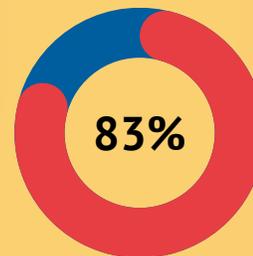
NATIONAL FIRST STAR CLASS OF 2025

National Graduating Class



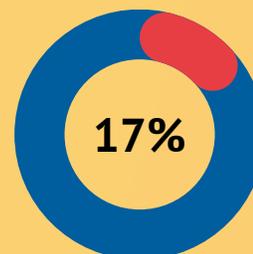
H.S Diploma: 98%
Credit Recovery: 2%

Post-Secondary Pathways



4-year: 46%
2-year CC: 29%
Vocation/Trade School: 8%

Workforce Pathways



Apprenticeship/ Union: 0%
Full-Time Employment: 17%
Military: 0%

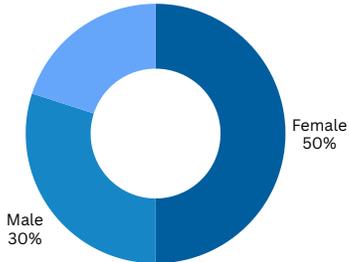


FIRST STAR KVC ACADEMY

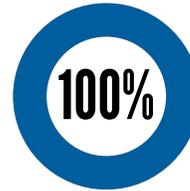
SCHOLAR PROFILE

GENDER

Non-binary/Transgender
20%

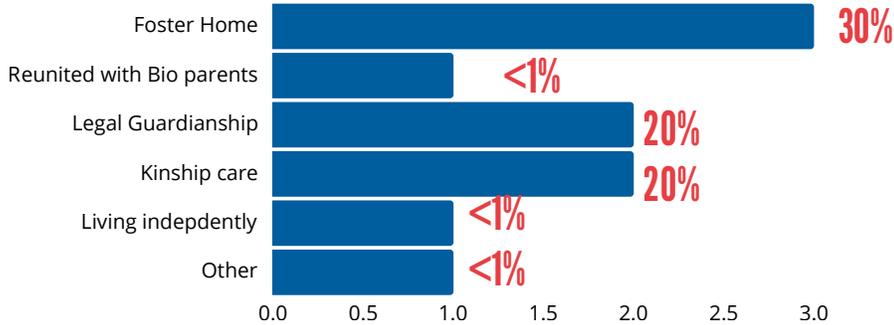


RACE AND ETHNICITY

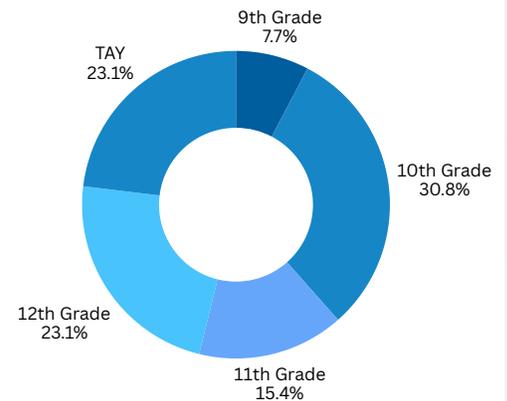


of First Star KVC scholars identify as White

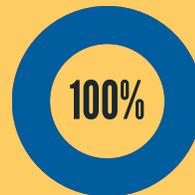
PLACEMENT STATUS



GRADE LEVEL



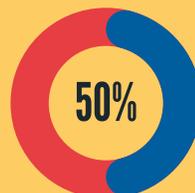
Celebrating Class of 2025



of First Star KVC scholars graduated High School on time!



of First Star KVC graduates are pursuing post-secondary opportunities.



of First Star ASU high school graduates will continue as Peer Mentors

FIRST STAR KVC W.V. IMPACT

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



SELF DISCOVERY

During Summer Academy, scholars were encouraged to embrace the power of storytelling. They explored stories through music, fine arts, and poetry, and engaged with metaphor using picture books and artwork. By the end of the first week, each scholar selected their own medium to craft and share a personal story. The result was a one-of-a-kind storytelling “slam” that reflected their individuality and creativity.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Through a new partnership with Libera, scholars engaged in powerful experiences of meditation, self-reflection, and personal exploration. While Libera traditionally empowers girls through listening sessions and mentorship, they piloted a groundbreaking program for First Star scholars—broadening their reach and giving our students tools to build confidence, resilience, and self-awareness.



CAREER EXPLORATION

Scholars shared their career interests, and the Academy provided tailored immersion experiences to match their aspirations. One student explored costume design with Fairmont State University’s Academy for the Arts, another met with a game developer to learn about video game design, and another toured an outdoor children’s school to pursue their passion for outdoor education. In addition, all scholars completed a food handler’s safety course through the local health department and earned their certification—equipping them with a credential for immediate employment.

LIFE SKILLS

Our final First Star KVC West Virginia Academy brought scholars together for a weekend of connection and growth. Through outdoor challenges like a rigorous hike, knot-tying, and camping in the woods, they built communication, problem-solving, perseverance, and positive thinking—pushing past their comfort zones and supporting one another every step of the way.



COLLEGE READINESS

Scholars were immersed in the on-campus community at Fairmont State University. They had the opportunity to explore the campus, stay in a residence hall, and get to know campus faculty and staff.

FIRST STAR KVC W.V 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

The Summer Residential Program, held May 31–June 1, 2025, gave scholars a transformative weekend of growth, connection, and new experiences that built skills to support their future success.



Confidence & Community



Creativity & Mindfulness



Self-Exploration & Advocacy

FIRST STAR KVC W.V ACADEMY

COMMUNITY IMPACT



PEER MENTOR RECOGNITION

First Star recognizes the positive impact peer mentors have on our scholars. Each year, First Star recognizes outstanding peer mentors for their years of service and unwavering support of their local academy.

62% are current students or alumni of host university

53% identify as first generation

27% identify as current or former foster youth

11% identify as former First Star scholars

CREATION CONFERENCE

The Creation Conference was a one-day event for high school and young adult scholars with foster care experience, providing inspiration, resources, and connections. Hosted with all First Star Academies and live-streamed nationwide, the conference empowered youth to envision and pursue their futures while building community and access to opportunities.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

As part of their community service, scholars spent a day at a local senior center, building meaningful connections across generations. Together with senior citizens, they played BINGO, created origami stars to brighten the center, and shared stories through a lively speed “dating” activity. The experience bridged the generation gap, fostering joy, understanding, and a sense of belonging for everyone involved.



The CASA Programs of Harrison and Marion Counties advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in foster care through dedicated volunteers. This event supported both programs by raising funds to recruit, screen, and train new advocates, while also helping meet children’s basic needs. Our scholars played a special role as race day cheerleaders and medal presenters—bringing energy, encouragement, and celebration to the day.



FIRST STAR KVC W.V. ACADEMY

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Community Stakeholder Acknowledgments

Academy Programming Partners

Libera

Experience Learning

LIFE UMC

228 Gallery

Shine Consulting

Redefining Normal

Homestead Farm Center

Good News Mountaineer Garage + Ball Toyota

Scholar Recruitment Partners

CASA of Marion County

West Virginia Department of Human Services



HOW TO GET INVOLVED



REFER A STUDENT.



VOLUNTEER.



DONATE.