



Greetings Friends of Empowerment Resources Inc.,



Welcome to the 21st Journey Into Womanhood Awards Celebration Where Sweet Success Blooms! Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate 21 years with Journey Into Womanhood (JIW), a program of Empowerment Resources Inc. We are delighted to welcome you to this cherished event, where we honor the remarkable journey of growth, sisterhood, and leadership among our JIW girls.






This year, our theme is "Empowering Girls One Sweet Success at a Time"—a celebration of the triumphs, big and small, that shape confident, compassionate, and powerful young women. Like a glittering candy path through a magical land, every step of their journey is sprinkled with courage, resilience, and the sweet moments of self-discovery. Here, each girl's success is like a candy-colored jewel—unique, vibrant, and sweetened by the love and support of mentors, families, and community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to each one of you for joining us on this extraordinary adventure today as we gather to celebrate the JIW girls and the remarkable impact of our organization and programs such as:

*JIW Highlights:*

-  300 girls have been served since the program's inception
-  50 graduates from the program
-  94% alumnae attended college or enlisted in the military
-  Six is the average number of years girls participate in the program
-  \$35,000 in college scholarships awarded
-  75% of alumnae give back with their talent, time and treasure

*Our Organization's Points of Pride:*

-  88% of families from our Parenting Education program report increase in knowledge
-  385 parents and caregivers served in 2024 with our Parenting Education program
-  87% of students from Life Skills workshops report an increase in use of life skills for everyday life
-  17,500 volunteer hours donated annually
-  3,000 plus youth and families have been served to date with our three programs

As we reflect on over two decades of empowerment, we are reminded that success doesn't always arrive in grand, dramatic moments—it comes in quiet milestones, hard-earned victories, and the courage to keep going. Today we honor not only the accomplishments of our two graduating seniors and the JIW participants, but also the village that surrounds them and the sweet and bright future they are creating.

To our families, mentors, supporters, and community partners: your unwavering belief in our mission is the magic that makes all of this possible.

So let's raise our voices, lift our hearts, and continue to build a future where every girl knows her worth, believes in her dreams, and savors the sweetness of her limitless potential.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Elexia Coleman-Moss



# OUR HISTORY

Empowerment Resources Inc. (ERI) is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, established in 2002. Our mission is to make children and their families stronger and empower them to become successful leaders in the community today, for a better tomorrow. We rely on volunteers to run the organization. Our signature programs include Journey Into Womanhood<sup>SM</sup>, Life Skills Workshops for teen boys and girls, and Parenting Education Seminars. Life Skills Workshops empower students to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their wellbeing and equips them with the necessary tools to make positive life decisions. ERI teaches evidence-based Nurturing Parenting Programs<sup>®</sup>, a family centered initiative designed to cultivate nurturing parenting skills. ERI has served more than 3,000 youth and families with programs and services that positively impact the whole family.

Since 2003, the Journey Into Womanhood (JIW)<sup>SM</sup> program has impacted the lives of more than 300 young ladies and families and has awarded youth more than \$35,000 in scholarships. A unique and inspiring program, this 25-week "rites-of-passage" initiative for girls ages 9-17 focuses on their healthy transition from girl to young woman. It addresses the real issues youth are faced with today. JIW is facilitated by experienced leaders and volunteers, who help participants cultivate their self-awareness, develop leadership skills, and put them on the path to positively impact the communities in which they live. The young ladies engage in journal writing, community service projects and enrichment trips. To date, 50 girls have graduated from the program and high school, with 94% of alumnae attending college.

The Journey Into Womanhood program focuses on gaining the understanding of twelve vital aspects of life including:

## **The Value of SELF**

Understanding the need to love oneself

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

Preventing the effects of drug and alcohol abuse

## **Concepts of Beauty**

Caring for self, defining beauty, and personal hygiene

## **A is for Academics**

Learning proper study habits, college preparation, and public speaking

## **Health and Fitness**

The importance of exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle

## **Relationships and Social Skills**

Respecting elders, understanding friendships, and developing social skills

## **Our Society and Social Constructs**

Understanding racism and prejudice, and learning to respect other cultures

## **Food and Nutrition**

Learning healthy eating habits and selecting nutritious foods

## **Employment and Career Skills**

Preparing a resume and learning how to get the career you want

## **Community Building**

Hands-on learning is the importance of volunteering

## **Abstinence Plus and STD Prevention**

Learning the pros of waiting, and how to avoid risky behavior

## **Investments and Savings**

Understanding the difference and importance between the two

## 2024 - 2025 LEADERSHIP

### **Board of Directors**

Iana Benjamin  
Penelope Knox  
Chad Smith  
Veronica Ward

### **Advisory Council**

Carla Flowers  
Marsha Grant  
Tyra Malloy  
Amakeda Ponds  
Nemiah Rutledge  
LaTonya Lipscomb Smith  
Walette Stanford  
Kaila White, JIW Alumna

### **Memoriam Member**

Jacquelyn Lowe



# 2024-2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2024

September 14

*JIW Kick Off /  
Game Day*

September 28

*A: is for  
Academics*

October 6

*Jaguars Honor  
Rows Game*

October 12

*Value of Self*

October 26

*Fitness*

November 2

*Healthy Food and  
Nutrition*

November 15

*Cardboard City*

November 16

*Drug and Alcohol*

December 7

*Community  
Service Project*

December 14

*JIW Holiday  
Celebration*

## 2025

January 11

*Vision Boards*

January 25

*Word of the Year  
on Canvas*

February 3

*Curls and Convo*

February 22

*College and  
Career Readiness*

March 8

*Hygiene and  
Abstinence Plus*

March 29

*JIW & Junior  
Achievement  
Career Panel*

April 12

*STEM Field Trips  
- Think Bold and  
Jacksonville  
Science Festival*

April 26

*Financial Literacy*

April 27

*Local Broadway -  
MJ the Musical*

May 3

*Etiquette*



# MEET THE JOURNEY INTO WOMANHOOD GIRLS

<i>Akilah Ponds</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>Tocoi Creek High</i>
<i>Amariah Alexis</i>	<i>10 years old</i>	<i>5th grade</i>	<i>Lake Lucina Elementary</i>
<i>Arianna Sands</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>10th grade</i>	<i>Bartram Trail High</i>
<i>Avery McKenzie</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>Bartram Trail High</i>
<i>Corryn Adams</i>	<i>16 years old</i>	<i>10th grade</i>	<i>Bartram Trail High</i>
<i>Edrianna Robinson</i>	<i>12 years old</i>	<i>6th grade</i>	<i>Darnell Cookman School of Medical Arts</i>
<i>Harmony Emanuel</i>	<i>13 years old</i>	<i>7th grade</i>	<i>Lavilla School of the Arts</i>
<i>Harmony McKinney</i>	<i>12 years old</i>	<i>5th grade</i>	<i>Lake Lucina Elementary</i>
<i>Jayda Manning</i>	<i>14 years old</i>	<i>8th grade</i>	<i>Fort Caroline Middle School of Performing Arts</i>
<i>Jazara Moss</i>	<i>12 years old</i>	<i>6th grade</i>	<i>Fort Caroline Middle School of Performing Arts</i>
<i>Kennedi Armstrong</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>8th grade</i>	<i>Twin Lakes Academy Middle School</i>
<i>Khloe Dorset</i>	<i>14 years old</i>	<i>8th grade</i>	<i>Fort Caroline Middle School of Performing Arts</i>
<i>Kymani Gardner</i>	<i>14 years old</i>	<i>8th grade</i>	<i>Mandarin Middle School</i>
<i>Madison Murray</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>Atlantic Coast High</i>
<i>Maleah Barnes</i>	<i>13 years old</i>	<i>8th grade</i>	<i>Fort Caroline Middle School of Performing Arts</i>
<i>Marae Barnes</i>	<i>13 years old</i>	<i>8th grade</i>	<i>Fort Caroline Middle School of Performing Arts</i>
<i>Naomi McKinney</i>	<i>11 years old</i>	<i>5th grade</i>	<i>Lake Lucina Elementary</i>
<i>Nevaeh Ross</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>Atlantic Coast High</i>
<i>Nina Johnson</i>	<i>11 years old</i>	<i>6th grade</i>	<i>Cecil Early College</i>
<i>Nylah Simon</i>	<i>11 years old</i>	<i>5th grade</i>	<i>Thomas Jefferson Elementary</i>
<i>Samalah Brown</i>	<i>14 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>PACE</i>
<i>Selimah Brown</i>	<i>14 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>Bridge to Success</i>
<i>Shannel Brown-Campbell</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>William M. Raines Senior High</i>
<i>Skylar Carney</i>	<i>8 years old</i>	<i>3rd grade</i>	<i>Oakleaf Village Elementary</i>
<i>Vicky Pass</i>	<i>15 years old</i>	<i>9th grade</i>	<i>Tocoi Creek High</i>

## **JW Youth Advisory Council**

*Vice Presidents: Vicky Pass and Selimah Brown*

*Outreach Specialist: Akilah Ponds*

*Secretary: Samalah Brown*

*Communications Specialist: Jazara Moss*

*Parliamentarian: Kennedi Armstrong*



# MEET OUR SENIORS



**Skylar Davis**  
18 years old  
Paxon School for  
Advanced Studies

### Activities and Honors:

Varsity Beach and Indoor Volleyball, Travel Volleyball, JROTC Platoon leader, Senior Class Officer, National Honor Society Officer, Science Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Society), Freshman Mentor

### Plans after High School and Goals:

Skylar plans to attend Louisiana State University (LSU) in the fall, where she will pursue a pre-med track. Her goals include graduating from college with honors and attending medical school to become an anesthesiologist.

### Favorite JIW Moment:

Skylar stated that some of her most cherished memories from the JIW program come from her time attending Curls and Convo. Each year brought new experiences — from learning different ways to care for her hair to discovering new products. However, what truly made the JIW program special was the sense of sisterhood. These conversations and connections made her feel seen, supported, and proud of who she is.

### Empowering the Community:

Skylar aspires to empower her community by becoming an anesthesiologist — a field where Black women are still underrepresented. For her, this career path is not just about practicing medicine, but about fulfilling a greater purpose. She aims to be a skilled medical professional and a visible presence in operating rooms and healthcare settings, serving as a reminder that Black women belong in every space.

7 years in the Journey Into Womanhood program



**Zion Stanford**  
18 years old  
Oakleaf High School

### Activities and Honors:

During high school, Zion has been actively involved in several leadership and academic organizations, including Link Crew, the National Art Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society, and Teen Leaders of America. In addition to her school involvement, she has also gained work experience through her job at Panda Express.

### Plans after High School and Goals:

Zion plans to attend Tuskegee University, where she looks forward to beginning her college journey. Her goal is to start college with a strong academic foundation, aiming for good grades and hoping to secure an internship during her freshman year.

### Favorite JIW Moment:

Zion's most memorable moments from her time in the JIW program came from the meaningful conversations she shared with mentors. The opportunity to connect with them left a lasting impression and offered encouragement throughout her journey.

### Empowering the Community:

Zion is passionate about giving back to her community and hopes to use her knowledge and resources to support and uplift those around her, particularly young Black girls. She wants to offer guidance and support to girls who are still navigating their paths and looking for ways to afford college. Through mentorship and outreach, she aims to be a positive and empowering force for the next generation.

9 years in the Journey Into Womanhood program



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## FOLLOW EMPOWERMENT RESOURCES, INC.



Twitter and Instagram:  
@EmpowermentJax

Facebook:  
Empowerment Resources Inc.

Hashtags:  
Use #EmpowermentJax #JIW  
and #EmpowermentResources

Congratulations  
to all of our  
Journey Into  
Womanhood Girls!



# SUPPORT OUR WORK

## Our Programs



### Journey Into Womanhood

*This is a 25-week rites of passage program for girls ages 9-17 that focuses on their healthy transition from girls to young women.*

*Applications open every Fall and Spring. Journey Into Womanhood begins September through May.*



### LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

*ERI empowers students, 3rd through 12th grade, to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their well-being and equips them with the necessary tools to make positive life decisions.*

*Interactive gender neutral workshops can be customized for after school or summer programs in a wide range of settings.*



### PARENTING EDUCATION

*ERI teaches evidence-based Nurturing Parenting Programs, a family centered initiative designed to cultivate nurturing parenting skills.*

*Virtual Seminars are held every Thursday from 6-7:15 p.m. in partnership with Kids Hope Alliance, and Partnership of Child Health.*



**We encourage you to support our work by volunteering your time, talent or treasure!**

*To fulfill our mission we rely on the generosity of community business, organizations, individuals and private donors. Your donation will further enhance the quality of service we provide to youth and families. Donations are tax-deductible. You can submit volunteer applications and make donations online at [www.EmpowermentResourcesInc.org](http://www.EmpowermentResourcesInc.org)*

## Make A Donation

- 🌀 \$500 Sponsors a JIW Girl for a year
- 🌀 \$250 Sponsors 5 families in Parenting Sessions
- 🌀 \$150 Sponsors a group of youth for Life Skills
- 🌀 Gifts of all sizes make an impact

**Text JIW21 to 44-321 to give a gift!**

## Volunteer

- 🌀 JIW Mentors
- 🌀 Leadership Team
- 🌀 Guest Speaker
- 🌀 Fundraising
- 🌀 Administrative Support
- 🌀 Marketing/PR

# PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Welcome  
Entrance of Young Ladies  
Meal  
Keynote Address  
Awards  
Closing Remarks



**Brianna Andrews**  
Emcee

**Brianna Andrews** joined the News4Jax team in July 2021. The New York City native comes to the Sunshine State after working as the Weekend Morning Anchor in Erie, Pennsylvania. Prior to that, she worked in production for Fox News Channel in the Big Apple. Brianna is a Quinnipiac University graduate with a degree in broadcast journalism and a minor in computer information systems.

During her time at Quinnipiac, she interned at six different news stations and media companies. Some of the most memorable experiences include interning in Washington D.C., and serving as a Young Journalist during the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize Summit in Bogota, Colombia.

Outside of work she enjoys traveling, spending time with family and taking on new adventures.



**Kennedy Hill**  
Keynote Speaker

**Kennedy Hill** is a senior Mathematics major and student-athlete at Florida A&M University, originally from Stockbridge, Georgia by way of Jacksonville, Florida. A proud 2021 graduate of William M. Raines High School, Kennedy was class Salutatorian, Senior Class President, and a member of the National Honor Society, while excelling as a four-year multi-sport athlete.

At FAMU, Kennedy has continued to shine—earning a 2024 SWAC Championship Gold Medal in Discus and contributing as a Statistics Inputter Intern for five collegiate sports teams. She has been recognized through honors such as the Kent Cooke & Robinson Mathematics Scholarship, the Athletic Director's Honor Roll, and a nomination for Freshman of the Year at the 2022 Venom Awards. Inspired by the legacy of NASA pioneers like Katherine Johnson, Kennedy aspires to become a Sports Data Analyst or Statistician in the NFL, merging her passions for math, athletics, and storytelling through data. As a first-generation college student raised by a strong single mother and grandmother, she is driven by a deep sense of purpose, representation, and legacy. But Kennedy's talents don't stop there. When she's not studying or sprinting, she finds joy in baking — her favorite creative outlet and a way to unwind. It's in the kitchen where she's reminded that success doesn't always have to be loud or flashy; sometimes it's sweet, quiet, and deeply personal. In her spare time, she enjoys baking, attending concerts, traveling, and spending time with friends—all while continuing to write her story, one data point at a time.

# OUR SUPPORTERS

**Empowerment Resources Inc. would like to acknowledge and thank the following people and companies for their ongoing support. Without your support, our program would not be as successful.**

## **Supporters and Friends**

Abdullah-Bolden Family  
Alex Lowe  
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Veronica Ward  
Walette Stanford  
Willie Mae Sheffield

## **ERI Volunteers / \*JW Mentors**

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Gail Patterson  
Juanita Forman-Lee\*  
Iana Benjamin  
Jakey Moss  
Kaila White  
Katrina Harris\* (Celebration Co-Chair)  
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Marsha Grant  
Madison Beckford  
Mackenzie Farrell  
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Nemiah Rutledge  
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Penelope Knox (Celebration Co-Chair)  
Shameeka Clark\*  
Tyra Mallory  
Veronica Ward

Whitney Johnson\* (Celebration Co-Chair)  
Walette Stanford  
Yvelis Rivera\*

## **In-Kind Donations**

Arlington Congregational Church ( meeting space)  
Built to Rock (design of program booklet and event planning)  
Clinton Paris (legal)  
Dr. Jevetta Stanford (data)  
Family Promise (office space)

**And to all other friends, volunteers and supporters... thank you!**

# Special Thank You To

## Organizational Supporters



## Program Supporters



The Jacquelyn Rae Lowe JIW Scholarship Fund

The Fruscione Foundation



Anonymous Donor

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In Memory of Shirley Jones

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