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Hello Confluence Community,

May is filled with exciting milestones across Confluence Academies. From graduations to field days and field trips, there's a wonderful energy in our schools as we celebrate our scholars' achievements and growth.

Our Confluence network recently gathered to honor the incredible dedication of our teachers and staff. This annual awards celebration highlighted excellence across all of our schools. We encourage you to take a moment to see who was recognized below.

Dr. Carter-Oliver recently joined Michael V. Roberts, Sr. on Foxy 106.9 to share more about the incredible work happening at Confluence. Their conversation covered our mission, community partnerships, dual enrollment programs, and more. You can [listen to the interview here](#).

This month's Alumni Spotlight is extra special — we're proud to feature a CA graduate who has returned to our community as an educator at GCAA. It's a truly inspiring homegrown success story and a testament to the lasting bond between educators and their students.

And while summer break is near, learning continues in June through our [Summer Journey program](#). Families at Aspire, GCAA, Old North, and South City should have received information about this exciting opportunity for students to continue learning and growing over the summer.

the focus and effort they've shown.

Thank you for your continued support of our scholars. We are proud to serve our students and families!

Warm Regards,

Linda DeJoie-Anderson

*Student Recruitment & Community Outreach Coordinator*

Candice Carter-Oliver, Ph.D.

*CEO*

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## 2025 Teacher & Staff Awards



In April, Confluence Academies employees gathered at the Sun Theater to celebrate the outstanding dedication and contributions of all our teachers and staff. We are proud to recognize our network-wide award winners who exemplify excellence.

**Teacher of the Year:** Sarah Urch, South City Academy

**School Professional of the Year:** Kathy Cooper, Old North Academy

**Support Staff of the Year:** Karen Howe-Wince, Aspire Academy



Congratulations to all of our Teacher, School Professional, and Support Staff of the Year honorees!

**Teachers of the Year:** Destiny Bernard (Aspire), Dorvus Woods (CPA), Gina Noble (Old North), Sarah Keeling (GCAA), Sarah Urch (South City)

**School Professionals of the Year:** Stephany Smith (Aspire), Keisha Ducote (GCAA), Kathy Cooper (Old North), Maddie Marty (South City), Hannah Frey (CPA)

**Support Staff of the Year:** Karen Howze-Wince (Aspire), Meliza Garcia (CPA), Jermaine Crittenden (GCAA), Laketa Sharp (Old North), Madison Orlando (South City)



Congratulations to all Confluence Academies team members recognized for helping make our schools better every day!

**Rookie of the Year: (New staff making a big impact)**

Katie Linnemeyer (Aspire), Rachel Vickers (CPA), Heather Williford (GCAA), Erica Johnson (Old North), Maria Cullen and Madison Gentry (South City)

**Marigold Award: (Brightening every day)**

Karen Mackey-Moore (Aspire), Hannah Johnson (CPA), Tom Lawson (GCAA), Meagan Shannon (Old North), Ryan Logsdon (South City)

Clinton Wade (Old North), Nurse Victoria (South City)



**Duct Tape Award: (Fixing problems before they exist)**

Jerrilyn Morris (Aspire), Jennifer Huling (CPA), Michael Perkins (GCAA), Cassandra Ema (Old North), Linda Kraushaar (South City)

**Data Diva Award: (Solving tech challenges and making data work)**

Sheila Miller (Aspire), Sheila Green-Samuels (CPA), Jamie Scott (GCAA), Tonya Keys (Old North), Erica Threnn (South City)



Congratulations to our Years of Service Award Winners! Thank you for your dedication to our students and passion for excellence.

**20 Years of Service:** Principal Lacqweda Taylor, South City Academy

**15 Years of Service:** Kim Holmes, Carol Horton, Heather Headley, Deniece Kemp, Jeff Kuntze, Joleen Ploeger, and Candace Poindexter

**10 Years of Service:** Rita Adams, Carl Bland, Alicia Dunn, Michelle Hayes, Tonya Keys, Amanda Ruocco, Rusty Smith, and Katie Thomas.





Congratulations to the GPA team for bringing incredible energy and enthusiasm to the Awards Ceremony! They proudly took home the Spirit Stick this year. Way to go, team!

## Confluence Conversations Podcast



We are thrilled to share Confluence Academies new podcast with you. [Confluence Conversations](#) explores the key issues shaping our schools and society. Listen to our latest discussions:

[“Empowering Change: Inside the Urban League’s Save Our Sons Program”](#)

[“Breaking Barriers in Education: The Impact of STLCC’s TRIO Program”](#)

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## Register for Summer Journey



Confluence Academies' Summer Journey program is back from June 2–27, and it's filled with fun, hands-on learning, swimming lessons, classroom cooking, and more! Held at Old North, South City, and GCAA Middle School, this exciting opportunity is open to any student enrolled for the 2025–2026 school year, so [be sure to enroll early!](#)

Aspire families: Your students will transition to Old North Academy for Summer Journey and the new school year.

Free transportation, breakfast, and lunch are included daily. And don't forget, free Pre-K is available too! [Sign up today](#) and give your student a summer to remember!

## Confluence Academies Alumni Spotlight



## GCAA Graduate & 7th Grade ELA Teacher

Ms. Williford's journey with Confluence Academies shaped not only her education, but the very heart of who she is today. It began in second grade with Ms. Debra Bahr, whose unwavering belief in her students and passion for teaching first showed her the profound impact an educator can have. Mrs. Bahr planted a seed of inspiration that would stay with Ms. Williford forever.

She entered GCAA in 8th grade, where she was given the space to nurture both her love for the arts and her growing passion for education. Through the mentorship of dedicated teachers, administrators, and directors, her dreams began to take form. She is especially grateful for Ms. Casey Jagusch and Mr. Wes Smith, two educators who embodied compassion, excellence, and the transformative power of believing in a student's potential.

With their encouragement and example, she earned her Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with an emphasis in English at UMSL, carrying with her the lessons they so generously imparted.

Today, it is Ms. Williford's greatest honor to return to the halls of Grand Center Arts Academy as an educator. She is beyond grateful for the opportunity to pour into the next generation, just as so many once poured into her, and she cannot wait to see how her students grow, learn, and leave their own marks on the world.

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## Story 2 Stage Festival





Students from GCAA, Old North, and South City were selected to present their original plays at the [2025 Story 2 Stage Festival](#) with The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. These students worked closely with professional playwrights, directors, and designers to refine their work before showcasing it on stage.

Congratulations to the following students and their selected plays:

**Old North:** “Hood Aliens” by Jerry Brinkley, Terron Jackson, Alvin Ewell, McArthur Freeman, and Terron Johnson Hill; “Forbidden Love” by Jody Cornell, Destiny Harvey, and Ghia Price

**GCAA:** “Airplane Crash” by Destyne Crawley, Lily Wymore, and Cheyenne Stuart

**South City:** “I Love You, I’m Sorry” by Savannah Carter, Damaris Hernandez, Amirah Lane, and Priscila Salgado

We are proud of these students for representing Confluence Academies with excellence!

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## Partner Spotlight: Save Our Sons and Sisters





Confluence Academies is proud to partner with the Urban League's Save Our Sons and Sisters (SOS) program to support our students' personal and professional growth.

This year, 36 students in the JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates) program at Confluence Preparatory Academy participated in an eight-week series of the SOS initiative. Students developed career readiness skills, learned how to craft resumes and elevator pitches, practiced for job interviews, and explored conflict resolution in both personal and professional settings. They also gained valuable insight into professionalism—from understanding appropriate email etiquette to recognizing how first impressions begin in the parking lot.

This partnership reinforces the JAG program's mission: to equip students with the tools they need to break cycles of poverty and build pathways to long-term careers. We're grateful for this impactful collaboration that continues to open doors for our CPA scholars.

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## Aspire Academy



GOALS Mr. Mumford's MakerSpace students visited Mrs. Morris' first-grade class at Aspire Academy to lead robotics lessons using Sphero Indi robots. The hands-on activities, designed by students in his Building Creative Confidence class, capped off a year-long partnership between the two schools.



Our Aspire Comets had a blast this spring showing off their skills on our flag football and cheer teams! Lots of fun and school spirit for our 1st and 2nd graders!

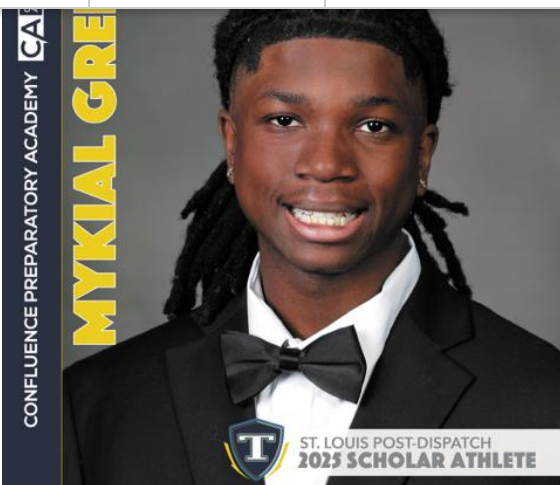
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## Confluence Preparatory Academy



CPA students celebrated Prom at Venue 1227 with a festive Masquerade/Mardi Gras theme. From creative expression to the included professional photos, the evening was perfect. Congratulations to Prom King Roy Davis and Prom Queen Jamaya Brown!

Congratulations to Mykial Green, Confluence Preparatory Academy's 2025 St. Louis Post-Dispatch Scholar Athlete! A top ten student and NHS



track athlete. He has earned a scholarship from McKendree University, where he plans to continue his athletic and academic journey.



Don't forget to grab your friends and sign up for our [5th Annual CPA Golf Tournament](#) on July 10th at Forest Park! Not a golfer? You can still support our student-athletes by sponsoring the event—showcase your business while making a lasting impact on our athletic programs!

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## Grand Center Arts Academy





Sun Theater in April, welcoming a dozen area schools and featuring nine of our own choral and instrumental groups. Students performed, received expert feedback, and learned from their peers. Congrats to Mrs. Stephanie Grasso and the Music Department for putting together the event!



GCAA's Theatre and Music Pathways teamed up to present *Twelfth Night* at the Sun Theater. It's the first musical in eight years to feature a live student band onstage, blending acting and music in a fantastic showcase of creative genius. An outstanding performance by our young thespians and musicians!



Two opportunities remain to experience our students' creative genius this spring! Don't miss the GCAA Dance Pathway performances on May 8 and 9 at 6:00 p.m. in the Sun Theater, featuring original choreography inspired by iconic Soundtracks. Before the May 9 performance, join us for the Visual Art Exhibition and Senior Show at GCAA, beginning at 3:30 p.m.





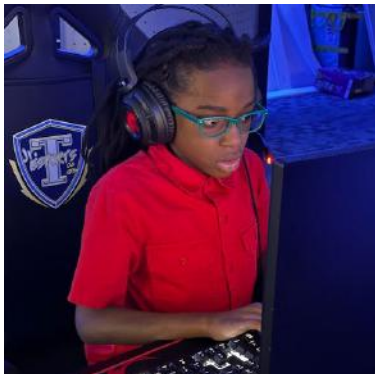
GCAA 8th graders took an unforgettable trip to Washington, D.C. From visiting the White House and U.S. Capitol to reflecting at the MLK Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery, students enjoyed exploring our nation's history firsthand.



GCAA 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students showcased their research, public speaking, and diplomacy skills at the Model United Nations event. Representing countries from around the world, our middle schoolers engaged in thoughtful debate and problem-solving on global issues, an impressive display of leadership and critical thinking.

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## Old North Academy



competitive space to build digital skills, teamwork, and strategy through organized gaming. Not only do we celebrate student talent, but we also build a strong community of scholars doing something they love together.



Old North had their scholars properly inspired to take on MAP tests! We appreciate all of our teachers and families who supported us during testing time.



Ms. Harris brought the spirit of March Madness to her 4th grade classroom with a creative Behavior Bracket challenge. The competition ended with Marcello crowned champion and awarded a trophy for his excellent behavior.

Old North fifth graders joined River City Outdoors for a Trash Bash at O'Fallon Park, helping to clean up the community. It was a hands-on day of service and environmental stewardship!



Old North students visited the Junior Achievement of Greater St. Louis TradesTown, where they explored skilled trades through hands-on activities and career training. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about future career paths in a variety of professions.

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## South City Academy



Shoutout to our middle school soccer team for their hard work, teamwork, and determination this season! It's been a joy watching them grow together and bring great energy and skill to the field each game.

A big thank you to the Student Council for organizing a fantastic Masquerade





grateful to all the staff who helped make it memorable.



South City's PreK–2nd grade after-school Lego League is sparking creativity and collaboration among our youngest learners. The club gives students a fun, hands-on way to build problem-solving skills and teamwork as they explore and create together.



South City Academy's Gardening Club is growing strong again this year. Each Wednesday, our PreK–2nd grade students get to dig, plant, and learn in the school garden. From tomatoes to corn, and even an apple tree, these young gardeners are enjoying nature and learning about the science behind how plants grow.







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