



A photo gallery of **Success**



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

Harriet Tubman

Our Young, Gifted & Black tribute celebrates outstanding Black students who have inspired us by defying stereotypes through their successes, achievements and leadership. Congratulations to our honorees and to their parents and family members, and to the teachers with whom they built their success.

Carole Smith

Superintendent
Portland Public Schools



Shatoya Allen

Grade 9
Young Women's
Leadership
Academy at
Harriet Tubman

a loyal friend faithful student
Shatoya has discovered
her own super powers
once shy now a recognized leader
once socially challenged
now a favorite at sleepovers

she used to act out to get attention
now she gets attention
by being authentic
witty charming sweet
smart articulate engaged
her enthusiasm is infectious

she sparkles radiance self-assurance
revealing the process of possibility
as when a caterpillar emerges
from a cramped cocoon
spreads her wings and flies

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

an only child, Mekai
is singular in his dreams
his razor sharp focus
cuts away all distractions
a mini LeBron James in the making
bringing the Heat even when wet
dunking on the showerhead I'm told
yeah Mekai is dripping with potential
a natural leader he follows the rules
solving problems in math and life
he is kind to classmates
helpful to his teacher
loving to parents
the best yard worker
a grandmother could ever want
is there anything Mekai doesn't do well
if so, nobody's figured out what that is yet
whether behind a desk or behind in points
smiling Mekai always plays to win
swish - he scores
naturally



**Mekai
Anderson**
Kindergarten
Beach PK-8 School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



**Nohealani
(Lani)
Bannister**

Grade 7
Astor K-8 School

Nohealani is quite mature
She really has a big heart
Self-motivation also sets her apart

When it comes to schoolwork
Lani's always on her game
The honor roll is regularly listing her name

In sports, she's a leader
On stage, she's a star
Prompting standing ovations
And mouths left ajar

As a writer, she goes above and beyond
This young lady's heart, mind, integrity
Are all equally strong

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

leader

learner

an inquisitive eager mind

curious

confident

excellent communicator

eager artist

sketching promise

she exudes positivity

an aspiring ballerina

she moves gracefully

within between among

a positive role model

past present future

star



Jada Commodore

Grade 5
Chief Joseph
PK-5 School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Joseph Dessou

Grade 11
Franklin High
School

self disciplined
he knows when to work
when to have fun
when to rest
whether playing soccer
or playstation3
doing homework
or doing chores
watching movies or
laughing out loud
Joseph gives his all
to the moment
his talent has no limit
leadership is innate
politeness is an art
like any engineer
he knows how
to design success

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

it is said that kindness is
more compelling than knowledge
compassion offers more comfort
than a word of wisdom

an extended hand at the right time
can exude the depth of one's humanity
nourish a desperate plea for love
with an earnest full-mouthed smile

Hannah has a precious combination
equally wise and warmhearted
like a muse waiting for invitation
a paint stroke that brings completion

peers say she is a champion of peace
she spreads kindness on wings that
flutter not for the sake of movement
but to guide us to places we want to be



Hannah Dressa

Grade 8
Mt. Tabor Middle
School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Sekai Edwards

Grade 8
DaVinci Arts
Middle School

eloquent and talented
compelled and engaging
Sekai's divine artistry
names and creates

"Change"

"Making Change"

inspiring change
an intense 12 minutes of art
an imagined exchange of words
weaved with appropriate complexity
identifies our inadequacies
forces participation
in our shared reality
gives what is unresolved
a necessary context
incites a response
that can - ultimately
change
a mind
a life
our silence

YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK

if you are wise enough
you don't have to taste defeat
to know what you don't want
so Breah runs from failure
as hard as she sprints toward success

she makes conscious choices
of what not to be
pushes herself to prevail
disperse any clouds of self-doubt

I want to be the best, she says
along the way she inspires
encourages tutors others
to reach past their own limits

I don't want to be one of those people
who quits when things are hard
press on gentle warrior
press on toward peace



Breah Etherly

Grade 9
Scott K-8 School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Essence Fleming

Grade 1
Rigler K-8 School

YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK

she carries the soul of a sage

with a fearless curiosity

a challenger of mysteries

what does this mean?

how come?

why not?

repeating questions like an ancient chant

that rhythmically seeps from her bones

even mindless play provides lessons

on the how comes and what fors

a constant gardening of wisdom

even as a first grader

she understands the importance

of prudence staying on task

expanding her own horizons

doing her absolute best

on family trips she collects rocks

a symbol of security spiritual faith

the Essence of strength

A curious voracious learner
Angelisha has argued for justice
Researched diabetes
Walked for those struggling with HIV
Presented at conferences
Interned at a NE free clinic
Learning reading pushing
She treats high school
Like a stop on the success train
Everyone knows she's going places
Respected competitive college bound
She juggles her responsibilities
Like the leader she is
Strong motivated self assured
A picture of success



Angeleesha Frierson

Grade 11
Jefferson Middle
College

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Ben Jackson

Grade 11
Jefferson Middle
College

his leadership is measured
in the quiet accomplishments
of making the honor roll
taking college courses
pursuing biotechnology
mentoring middle schoolers
he doesn't have to be loud
for his life to speak
of success vociferously

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

hope was ever present from
the moment his parents gathered
values in different countries but
discovered they spoke the same language

hope moved like meringue around
his wondering 5-year-old mind
he determined then not even space
was the outer limit of his curiosity

Michael is a natural born scientist
who discovers value in the unknown
delight in the universe's ionic bonding
of problem and possibility

life then becomes a constant experiment
Michael the ever-questioning inquisitor
buoyed by his insistent certainty
that the answers will - one day - be his



**Michael
Joseph**
Grade 11
Cleveland High
School

**YOUNG
GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Stanley Mathabane

Grade 12
Lincoln High
School

YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK

mouth sealed eyes closed
eyebrows furled close enough to play tag
nimble fingertips plant firmly on keys
harvesting an intense note bending rift
jazz sweet jazz
played in bands all over the city
played in New York in front of jazz legends
played on three ambitious tracks
of a Grammy Award winner's latest album
he doesn't let time interfere
with his self-determined destiny
taking a full load of college-prep courses
creating space for theater theory singing
multiplicities of magic that moves him
like any jazz artist, a strong foundation
is merely a source of inspiration
Stanley is the embodiment of an
eloquent South African father whose
accomplishments instigate inspiration
like father like son

you know how to move us astound us
recapture our life's rhythmic subtleties
teach us young dancer
to flow gracefully over edges of thorns
gather our raw emotions with quick limbs
lay them bare upon your fingertips
fling them back to us - loose and liberated
to mingle with the glistening scents
of red roses and sandalwood
that rest in the hush of the crowd
free us from the weightiness
of what doesn't really matter anyway
all heaviness fades as we witness
wide-eyed and breathless
the beauty of your nimbleness
whirling jumping transforming time air
dance for us once more young dancer
dance for our tears mirth hopes dreams
help us rediscover wonder
help us to know beauty
again



Abriana McKinney

Grade 12
Benson High
School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Rayla Moore

Grade 8
Marysville K-8
School

the sun has to borrow her smile
so bright are her daily greetings
which sparkle with the thoughtful
glow of well-placed compliments

meek modest and quiet she
laughs when teachers' jokes aren't funny
offers grace to quivering students
eagerly carries loads that are not her own
makes others feel embraced heard safe

unafraid of taking risks she stands
firm resolute as Mt. Hood takes notes
wise beyond her years always
wanting to do her very best

Rayla embodies success
willing and eager to build community
model inclusivity
seek we

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

when his school
holds up a mirror it
finds its community
in the reflection
of Michael's soul
genuinely respected
he excels academically
volunteers voraciously
mentors enthusiastically
he never gives up
he is like a gardener
actively implanting
kindness humor
integrity beauty
nurturing all
blossoming respect



Michael Ninen

Grade 8
Sunnyside
Environmental
K-8 School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Elijah Raiford

Grade 7
George Middle
School

a lover of math
he has it all figured out
resourcefulness multiplies dividends
any questions

near perfect attendance, check
football awards, check
principal awards, check
honor roll awards, check

charismatic and curious
he is a natural charmer
motivated by challenge
meticulously astute

he can even be equation changer
it's not often a teacher says
"he makes me want to be better"
Elijah is just that special

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

a persistent joy
it seems as if he grins
on the inside
strong in math
reading writing
he seeks learning
with the diligence
of a playful kitten
grabbing at string
a steady temperament
he teaches others
what it means
to be genuinely
yourself
yet
constantly
creating
a better you



**Solon
Sanders**
Grade 2
Grout K-5 School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Izear Smith

Grade 12
Madison High
School

YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK

his smile radiates
reflecting an inner strength
kind thoughtful unrelentingly positive
Izear chases challenges like the wind
trying to tame an unfurled flag
his ambitions have led him to
tutor younger students
organize a Black Student Union
excel in basketball
be himself

mother teachers mentees
all trusted guides to help channel
his potential tame his grief
smother self-doubt in the
depths of their encouragement
he wants to major in business
start a non-profit help change lives

his dreams have already begun

if you want to discover
the core of her determination
the dimensions of its being
you have to look within
seek out the contours of her soul

it was there
from the beginning
that independent radiant fire
intense as a dragon's bellyache

Genesis has the kind of defiant will power
that will work a mother's last nerve
at age 2 but inspire pride at age 12
a divine inheritance of success

these days, people don't ask
what talents this willful child can unfurl
they wonder what she can't accomplish
that mystery? still undiscovered



Genesis Spires

Grade 7
Peninsula K-8
School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Emanuel Washington

Grade 4
Buckman K-5
School

if you look at his sleeves too closely
you'll find his heart there
open beating raw

Emanuel has risen from rocky places
whose sharp edges and deep crevices
threatened to swallow his progress

but compassionate teachers art
a family's unconditional love
protects his heart from nicks bruises

helps him find balance
fine-tune his scientific mind
experience the shaping of new possibilities

genuinely faithfully
Emanuel embodies the meaning
of his name "God is with us"

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

she greets each day
with enthusiasm
happy motivated
curious caring
open-minded
energetic
thirsty for learning
focused hardworking
self-motivated
secure confident
“I know I got this” attitude
winner



**Olivia
Washington**
Grade 1
Sabin PK-8 School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Christylle Weeks

Grade 8
Jason Lee K-8
School

entangled with unfair challenges
she learned to love selflessly; her

quality of character was indestructible
persistence was the thing for her; she

held fast to unlimited possibilities
transcended the horror of heartbreak

with the guidance of her great aunt
her teachers nurturing her sinuous roots

Christylle stands tall with the natural
beauty resolve of a redwood tree; her

face turned toward the light; her arms
wide with the breadth of her potential

her triumphs are like willful saplings
sprouting wisdom resilience hope

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

Everything was different
Friend's homework gossip
lockers lunch recess games
a middle school jigsaw puzzle

Tyler stayed steady on task
helpful loving smart
confidently he arranged
the pieces of his life

at school at church
at grandma's house
the soccer field basketball practice
everywhere he went

he deposited bits of himself
like golden rays of sunlight
polishing forgotten smiles
brightening the atmosphere



**Tyler
White**

Grade 6
Beverly Cleary K-8
School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**



Ajeya Woods

Grade 11
Lincoln High
School

in some families

people are just born who they are
destiny is infused into their genes
nurture takes a backseat to nature

while mommy daddy procrastinate relax
Ajeya is assiduous focused fearless
an initiator of girls' empowerment projects
a Constitution Team state champion

challenge is regularly calling her name
excelling is her claim to fame
volleyball is her favorite team game
she's impresses us very much, mom says

can't wait to see what she does next
somebody pass the popcorn please
when Ajeya is in the house
you're in store for a show of brilliance

YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK

a quiet strength, Hanan
moves with grace and maturity
spritzing cheerfulness with every step
her spirit beckons your smile

a middle schooler, Hanan
stays steady during an age of transition
self-motivated leading by example
focused as a photographer's eye

a friend to many, Hanan
gathers a bountiful harvest of admirers
teachers students family all grateful
for having encountered sincere joy



Hanan Yassin

Grade 8
Beaumont Middle
School

**YOUNG GIFTED
AND
BLACK**

The *Young, Gifted and Black* tribute is a collaboration between PPS staff, special contributors and the community including:

Reiko Williams, creator and curator

S. Renee Mitchell, researcher and writer

Marquis Stoudamire, photographer

Francisco Garcia, graphic designer

Melody White, printing support

Support Staff: Andrea Wade, Erin Barnett,
Terry Proctor, Elizabeth Hamilton and
Robb Cowie

YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK 2012 NOMINEES

Lillie Holzworth Arleta K-6	Jettt Sheng Cesar Chavez K-8	Jahmian Howard-Carey Franklin High School
D'Angelo Lenford Arleta K-6	Kira Alberti Chief Joseph PK-5	Alivia Kent Franklin High School
Nohealani (Lani) Bannister Astor K-8	Jada Commodore Chief Joseph PK-5	Elijah Raiford George Middle School
Jaida Jeter Astor K-8	Michael Joseph Cleveland High School	Solon Sanders Grout K-5
Mekai Anderson Beach PK - 8	Sekai Edwards DaVinci Arts Middle School	Maryan Yerow Grout K-5
Ay'Mehir Tucker Beach PK - 8	Ameer Fofanah DaVinci Arts Middle School	Chiza Baleke Grout K-5
Shiloh Day Beach PK - 8	Jehdah Walker DaVinci Arts Middle School	Sagal Hadaflow Hosford Middle School
Hanan Yassin Beaumont Middle School	Isaac Amaral East Sylvan Middle School	Samira Hadaflow Hosford Middle School
Abriana McKinney Benson High School	Maya Brown Faubion PK-8	Nate Williams Hosford Middle School
Precious Andrews Benson High School (Alliance)	Nakyia Burns Faubion PK-8	Javondre Cole Humboldt PK-8
Tyler White Beverly Cleary K-8	Chinwendu Ughamba Faubion PK-8	LaShaya Corney Humboldt PK-8
Jordan Johnson Beverly Cleary K-8	Josie Bairo Franklin High School	Rebecca Davis Humboldt PK-8
Rebekah Lathan Boise Eliot PK-8	Shatanya Banks Franklin High School	Anayla Warren-Prem Singh Humboldt PK-8
Emanuel Washington Buckman K-5	Joseph Dessou Franklin High School	Jazmin Shaffer Irvington K-8
Kayden Logan Cesar Chavez K-8	Paris Gresham Franklin High School	Mathias Thelus Irvington K-8

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YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK 2012 NOMINEES (CONTINUED)

Christylle Weeks Jason Lee K-8	Shanice Harris Lincoln High School	Josiah Greene Peninsula K-8
Clayborn Collins Jefferson High School	Stanley Mathabane Lincoln High School	Rize Robinson Peninsula K-8
Lauren Steele Jefferson High School	Jalen Asana Madison High School	Jenesis Spires Peninsula K-8
Makayela Johnson Jefferson High School	Kassandra Yewchuk Madison High School	Essence Fleming Rigler K-8
Uriah Boyd Jefferson High School	Mical Yohannes Madison High School	Adam Strasburg Roosevelt High School
Desi DuBoise Jefferson High School	Nykell Hunter Madison High School	Brajaye Williams Roosevelt High School
Angeleesha Frierson Jefferson High School	Terrence Keller Madison High School	Olivia Washington Sabin PK-8
Antonio Greely Jefferson High School	Biruk Molla Madison High School	Giovanni Cunningham Sabin PK-8 (ACCESS Academy)
Ben Jackson Jefferson High School	Izear Smith Madison High School	Trevionn Cunningham Sabin PK-8 (ACCESS Academy)
Jalean Webb Jefferson High School	Bryton Wilson Madison High School	
Elisabeth Hairston Laurelhurst K-8	Basil Urom Madison High School	Breah Etherly Scott K-8
Olivia Perry Laurelhurst K-8	Rayla Moore Marysville K-8	Michael Ninen Sunnyside Enviornmental K-8
Beau Gaines Lincoln High School	Hannah Dressa Mt. Tabor Middle School	Makiyla Rounds Vestal K-8
Linnea Rohdin-Bibby Lincoln High School	Nailah Barrett Peninsula K-8	Sadella Adams West Sylvan Middle School
Haley Dowell Lincoln High School	Justin Dike Peninsula K-8	Shatoya Allen Young Women's Leadership Academy at Harriet Tubman
Ajeya Woods Lincoln High School	Ayre Bradley Peninsula K-8	

YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK 2012

In its third year, the Young, Gifted and Black 2012 tribute continues to focus on telling a story of persistence, hard work and student success – success that has been highlighted as a model for all students. Since this program began in 2010, several hundred students have been nominated by classroom teachers, counselors, principals and community members. Graduating students have continued their education at colleges and universities throughout the country - Tuskegee, Penn State, Lewis and Clark College, Grinnell College, and Portland State among others. YGB students balance athletics, music, community service and other extra-curricular activities demonstrating what is required to be a student scholar.

The board of directors for Portland Public Schools adopted a Racial Educational Equity Policy in June 2011. That policy is intended to acknowledge race and address race-based disparities in student achievement. Young, Gifted and Black is intended to tell a counter-story; namely, the experience of Black students is not mono-lithic, as is often portrayed in mainstream media. Black students come from diverse backgrounds and have myriad experiences, but they have a shared identity – as Black people representing the African diaspora.

We are proud to share with you student success stories. Please join me in acknowledging all of this year's honorees as well as the nominees and wishing them continued success.

Reiko Williams
Program Director, Family Engagement
Portland Public Schools