



2025 **ANNUAL REVIEW**





NEXTDC enriches the lives of students through inspirational experiences and educational opportunities to cultivate the next generation of leaders in Washington, DC.

A trusted educational intermediary, NEXTDC invests in young people, connecting them with professionals, entrepreneurs and executives to help ensure they can enter college and careers with confidence.

Front cover: Shamiyah McGee, Coolidge (Mass Media), Class of 2025, was the master of ceremonies for the Building Futures scholarship event. Shamiyah was a 2025 NEXTDC AIP Intern and attends the University of Pittsburgh. *This page:* Sydney Mabry, Jackson-Reed High School (Hospitality & Tourism), receives her 2025 scholarship from NEXTDC Executive Director Claire Carlin and NEXTDC Board President John Snedden.

NETWORK

Professional events and networking opportunities to connect students with hospitality and tourism industry professionals

EDUCATE

Scholarships to qualified students and alumni from partner Career Academies to help them pursue higher education

EXPERIENCE

Internships and work-based learning educational programs for students to learn about careers and build professional skills





TRAVEL

Field trips to our nation's capital and destinations across the northeast to explore college and career possibilities

Our Partner Schools



1. Ballou High School 
2. Cardozo Education Campus 
3. Columbia Heights Education Campus 
4. Coolidge High School 
5. Dunbar High School 

6. Jackson-Reed High School 
7. Maya Angelou Public Charter HS 
8. River Terrace Education Campus 
9. Roosevelt High School 

 Academies of Hospitality & Tourism
 Academies of Culinary Arts

 Academies of Mass Media
 Academies of Sports Marketing

Dear friends and colleagues,

This year we share an exciting step forward with a new name: **NEXTDC**.

It's more than a rebrand—NEXTDC stands for what comes next for our students, our industry professionals and for all of us who know the transformative power of opportunity.

In today's challenging economy, young people need more than encouragement. They need access, connections and real experiences that will prepare them for success.

But here's the truth: this work is only possible when people like YOU step forward. Supporting NEXTDC—through contributions of time, resources and money, is tangible:

- It means a student gets exposure to a career they never knew existed.
- It means a young person builds a professional network before they graduate.
- It means the next time an intern makes a boardroom presentation, it's not their first.
- And it means YOU play a direct role in shaping what's next.

Let's show students and each other that even in uncertain times, our community stands with our scholars. Together, we provide concrete opportunities and lasting results.

We invite you to join us in investing in what's NEXT.



John Snedden

*Chair, Board of Directors
NEXTDC
Founder & Owner
Rocklands Barbeque &
Grilling Company*

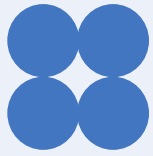


Claire Carlin

*Executive Director
NEXTDC
Senior Vice President,
Partnerships & Alliances
Destination DC*

IN 2025

SINCE 2015



119

Students at
networking events

461

Students at
networking events



37

Scholarships totaling
\$38,500

132

Scholarships totaling
\$216,500



23

Interns hosted
by NEXTDC

217

Interns hosted
by NEXTDC

1,266

Students on work-based
learning programs

3,202

Students on work-based
learning programs



211

Students on
field trips

924

Students on
field trips

IN 2025

SINCE 2015

197

Educators engaged in
professional development
opportunities

344

Educators engaged in
professional development
opportunities

1,656

Total student
engagements

6,245

Total student
engagements

SINCE 2015

OVER

\$2,000,000

Donated in financial support

SINCE 2015

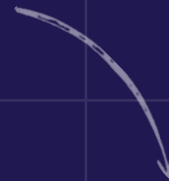
OVER

\$1,000,000

Donated in-kind support

REBRAND JOURNEY

- ✓community
- ✓local
- ✓youth
- ✓pathway
- ✓future



This year the American Experience Foundation launched a bold rebrand to NEXTDC to better showcase our youth-focused mission in Washington, DC.

With leadership from **LINK Strategic Partners**, the creativity of **Destination DC's** in-house team and the digital expertise of **MMGY Global**, we introduced a fresh identity, a new website and a powerful video that spotlights our scholars and makes our work more accessible than ever.

1 Brand Exploration

LINK Strategic Partners led the exploration process with surveys and interviews with key stakeholders to better understand what made the work of the American Experience Foundation so special and how it could be best reflected in a new brand.

Special thanks to: *Michael Akin, Gabriel Lemos, Matt Helfrich, Majy Gibboney*



2 Brand Development



Destination DC's in-house creative team distilled the learnings from brand exploration into a new name and logo for NEXTDC. In preparation for launch, they developed a suite of print, digital and video assets.

Special thanks to: *Alex Gnafakis, J'Nay Penn and Ethan Sherman*

Annual Review Designer:
Brittany Johnson

Engagement from our educational partners and scholars was key to this process. Their excitement ensured the NEXTDC name and brand resonated with young people and professionals alike.

Thank you to these stakeholders for their insights:

Academy Scholars:

Christian Osborne, *Ballou High School*
Haryiah Hunt, *Ballou High School*
Malijah Jackson, *Ballou High School*
Shamiyah McGee, *Coolidge High School*
Tabitha Haythe, *Jackson-Reed High School*
Yovanna Ortiz-Cotto, *Jackson-Reed High School*

NEXTDC Alumni Advisory Board:

Diamond Hunter, *Destination DC*
Lauren B. Brown, *RaggedyRoyal LLC*
Makayla Cruz, *Destination DC*
Tadjanique Phillips, *American Federation of Teachers*
Zoe Roberts, *Destination DC*

NEXTDC Board of Directors:

Elliott L. Ferguson, II, *Destination DC*
John Snedden, *Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company*; Chair, NEXTDC Board of Directors
Tanisha Lewis, *Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority*

Educational Partners:

Cynthia Privott, *River Terrace Education Campus*
Dr. Calvin Ruffin, *Ballou High School*
Glenn Starnes, *DC Public Schools*
Kristen DiSanti, *DC Public Schools*

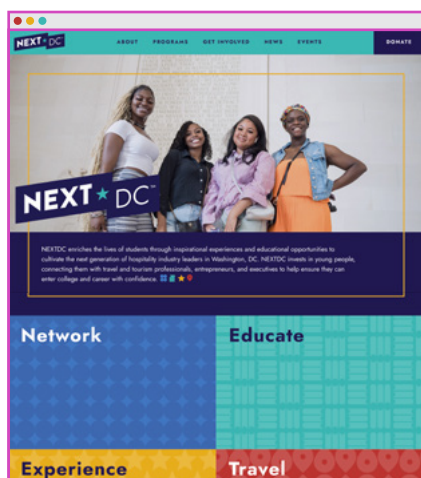
Industry Partners:

Dr. Erin Bibo, *CityWorks DC*
Josh Feldman, *Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company*
Genevieve Ladino, *Fogo de Chão*

Watch our new launch video



3 Website Development



MMGY, in partnership with Destination DC's web team, developed a new website (thenextdc.org), which highlights our incredible scholars and makes finding information about our work easy. Special thanks to: *Craig Compagnone, Anna Lowry, Andrea Ringgenberg, Fiona Dougan, Andrew O'Connor and Alexandra Staats*



NETWORK

This Page: NEXTDC Scholarship Winner and summer college intern, Ty Monroe, Coolidge High School (Mass Media) Class of 2024, networks with former NEXTDC Board of Directors member Charles Williams II, Director of Sales and Marketing for W Miami, and NEXTDC Alumni Advisory Board member D'Mani Harrison-Porter, Regional Director of Marketing for City Cruises, at the NEXTDC Building Futures scholarship event in May at the **Embassy Suites by Hilton Washington DC Convention Center**.

Facing page: Scholars from Roosevelt High School's Academy of Culinary Arts work behind the scenes with Ree Guillermo and her team at **TeRiBelBlue Catering**; Scholars from Jackson-Reed's Academy of Mass Media prepare to take family portraits of guests as they experience **Zoo Lights**; A scholar from Coolidge High School's Academy of Mass Media runs the photo booth at the **Destination DC** Open House.

SCHOLARS AT WORK

Every year, NEXTDC scholars support our partner **Destination DC**'s signature events including the Member Holiday Celebration and Open House, networking with hundreds of industry professionals.

The Member Holiday Celebration provides important work-based learning and professional networking opportunities for more than 30 DC Academy students. They welcomed guests to Zoo Lights at the **Smithsonian National Zoo & Biological Center**, providing hot beverages, helping with registration and wayfinding, taking photos of guests and emceeing the program. Event caterer **TeRiBelBlue Catering** provided a special workshop for the hot beverage contest winners from Ballou High School Academy of Culinary Arts.

The Member Open House featured scholars from Roosevelt High School's Academy of Culinary Arts who showcased their culinary skills. Scholars from Ballou High School and Coolidge High School Academies of Mass Media captured memorable photos of the event. NEXTDC interns were each embedded in a **Destination DC** department to help execute event logistics.



"I enjoyed helping with the Open House event. I loved talking with guests and encouraging them to engage with my marketing department colleagues. Actively participating sparks my interest in event planning."

- Haryiah Hunt
Ballou High School (Culinary Arts)
2025 NEXTDC Advanced Intern



2025 COLLEGE INTERN SPOTLIGHT

This summer, NEXTDC welcomed intern **Ty Monroe** to the team. Ty represented the organization during several public speaking engagements, planned a new alumni network program, mentored our high school Career Ready Interns (CRI) and prototyped a new website for a reimagined NEXTDC.

"I discovered this internship through my Academy—proof that the connections we make in high school can shape our future. Strong educators and industry partnerships helped me get to where I am today. My Academy gave me hands-on experience, real-world projects and a sense of professionalism that made my transition to college smooth."

- Ty Monroe



Coolidge High School (Mass Media), 2024
Wake Forest University (Major - Communications), 2028
Winner, 2024 NEXTDC Joe Shymanski Memorial
Scholarship for Photography & Media



"Even in challenging times, while our city faces the highest unemployment in the nation, our hospitality industry shows unflagging enthusiasm and grace.

I remain determined to provide NEXTDC interns opportunities at Destination DC and ask other leaders to do the same.

It is imperative that we create a strong network and community for scholars who may not have that social access on their own. Plus, interns are fun to have around the office!"

- Elliott L. Ferguson, II
President & CEO, Destination DC
NEXTDC Board of Directors Member

Facing page: Ty addresses the crowd at the July 4th VIP Celebration; *This page:* Grace Kelleher, Destination DC, with students at Jackson-Reed; a scholar from Maya Angelou speaks to representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration at the NEXTDC and Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's Career Expo; 2025 CRI interns with Elliott Ferguson; welcoming 15 young leaders from Kesennuma, Japan through the U.S.-Japan Council and Laurasian Institution's TOMODACHI Initiative; scholars enjoy networking with each other during the Backyard Bound field trip; Roosevelt student Robert Butler enjoys refreshments at the Building Futures event.





BUILDING FUTURES

Since 2015, NEXTDC has provided 132 scholarships totaling over \$215,000 to deserving students and alumni who have demonstrated success, leadership and service at school, at work and in their communities.

In May, NEXTDC once again partnered with the **Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington's Educated Eats** and the **Washington Area Concierge Association** for an awards ceremony at the **Embassy Suites Washington DC Convention Center**.

Together, we honored students and career professionals with over 50 scholarships and honorarium awards, which provided more than \$71,000 in financial support for educational and career journeys.

Thank you to our partners,

- **Embassy Suites Washington DC Convention Center**
- **Encore**
- **Designs R Us**
- **LINK Strategic Partners**
- **Ben's Chili Bowl**
- **Chris Ferenzi Photography**

Facing page: 2025 NEXTDC Scholarship Winners. *This page:* NEXTDC Executive Director Claire Carlin and Chair John Snedden with NEXTDC Scholarship winner JohnTay Taylor, River Terrace Education Campus (Hospitality & Tourism), Class of 2026; NEXTDC Program Manager Brittany Anderson hugs former NEXTDC CRI Valerie Benitez, Jackson-Reed (Hospitality & Tourism), Class of 2025; James Walton, Maya Angelou (Hospitality & Tourism), Class of 2025 networks with **NAF** Assistant Director of Academy Development Jessica D. Williams and NEXTDC Associate Director Lisa Waldschmitt.

2025 NEXTDC SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

SCHOLARSHIPS



James Walton Jr.

Maya Angelou Public Charter High School, 2025



Jennifer Pineda-Arias

Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025



JohnTay Taylor*

River Terrace Education Campus, 2026



Sydney Mabry

Jackson-Reed High School, 2025

ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIPS



Belinda Alcoser Gonzalez*

Jackson-Reed High School, 2024
Montgomery College, 2028



Mattison McDonald*

Coolidge High School, 2023
Washington & Jefferson College, 2027

*Has been awarded a NEXTDC Scholarship in previous years

DAVID ISELIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE



Adame Temesgen*

Arizona State University, 2026
University of Rochester, 2024

RAY BENNETT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR LEADERSHIP



Shamiyah McGee

Coolidge High School, 2025

AKIRA WILSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Leslie Galo-Valle

Jackson-Reed High School, 2025

JOE SHYMANSKI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR PHOTOGRAPHY & MEDIA EXCELLENCE



Darren Heard Jr.*

Ballou High School, 2025



“Receiving the scholarship means a lot to me because it represents both recognition of my hard work and an important investment in my future. Knowing that my commitment and goals are being supported by an organization that is dedicated to helping students realize their full potential inspires me to pursue excellence. I am motivated to give back to my community and make more of every educational opportunity that lies ahead.”

– *Jennifer Pineda-Arias*
Columbia Heights Education Campus
(Hospitality & Tourism)

ALUMNI HONORARIUMS

Adorre Fells-Watson*, North Carolina A&T State University, 2028

Cenaria Fells-Watson*, Towson University, 2025

Makayla Cruz*, Liberty University, 2026, North Carolina A&T State University, 2024

Mista Barnes, Washington & Jefferson College, 2028

HONORARIUMS

Aaron Perkins*, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Alana Hill, Ballou High School, 2026

Angeline Cherif, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Arrington Ward Jr., Jackson-Reed High School, 2025

Azul Tiburcio, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Briseyda Siguenza Romero, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Brooklyn Trice Jr., River Terrace Education Campus, 2025

Bryan Montiel, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Christian Osborne, Ballou High School, 2025

Haryiah Hunt, Ballou High School, 2025

Hasaan Coles, Ballou High School, 2025

Jade Stanback, Coolidge High School, 2025

Leslie Perez-Chavez, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Makayla Boller, River Terrace Education Campus, 2029

Malijah Jackson, Ballou High School, 2025

Maricela Gutierrez, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Michael Johnson, Coolidge High School, 2025

Miriam Bezabih Tebebe*, River Terrace Education Campus, 2025

Rafael Ventura Juarez, Columbia Heights Education Campus, 2025

Shanda Eley, River Terrace Education Campus, 2027

Wayne Jones Jr., River Terrace Education Campus, 2026

JOE SHYMANSKI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP HONORARIUM

Edina Young, Jackson-Reed High School, 2025

Zachary Songu-Mbriwa*, Ballou High School, 2025



★ EXPERIENCE

This page: Scholars from Academies of Culinary Arts at Ballou and Roosevelt High Schools get a behind the scenes look at Love, Makoto during the NEXTDC Backyard Bound field trip.

CONNECTING TO PROFESSIONALS

MASS MEDIA CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION

For the second year in a row, four students from the Coolidge Media Network had the chance to cover the **Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's** Annual Legislative Conference. Highlights included shadowing professionals in the press office, the State of Black Tourism panel, Maryland Governor Wes Moore's press conference and a panel led by Senator Raphael Warnock. Thank you to Yolanda Raine, VP for Marketing and Communications.

HOSPITALITY METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

Over 150 students from across the region were invited to **Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport** for the second annual MWAA Career Expo to network with leaders from across the aviation industry, get a behind-the-scenes tour of airport operations and get up close and personal with public safety professionals. Thank you to Tanisha Lewis, VP for Regulatory Compliance and Community Engagement.

CULINARY PROSTART

Ballou High School, Cardozo Education Campus and Roosevelt High School competed in the ProStart DC Invitational at the National Union Building, led by **Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington** and **DC Public Schools**. NEXTDC coached the Roosevelt High School business management team (pictured, Lena Webb and Aaron Claggett) as they pitched their original restaurant concepts in the lead-up to the national competition in May.



"As a former student at Jackson-Reed High School, my mentors inspired my support of NEXTDC and giving back to their student hospitality network. It's important to me to show young professionals the many possibilities within the hospitality and tourism industry and reinforce City Cruises' role as a leader in workforce development."

- D'Mani Harrison Porter

Regional Director of Marketing, Mid-Atlantic Region, City Cruises
NEXTDC Alumni Advisory Board Member



"Working with NEXTDC helps further our mission of creating a pipeline of hospitality professionals from within. It opens doors for young people, giving them opportunities to discover what they want to do in their future. It's an incredible benefit for us and them. From career fairs at schools, to job shadowing on the property and hiring long-term employees, I see the value of this program, and it works!"

- David Kasprzyk

General Manager, Embassy Suites by Hilton Washington DC Convention Center

"Our partnership with NEXTDC reflects a shared commitment to equity, education and civic engagement. Together we do more than showcase the beauty and history of Washington, DC—we open doors for opportunity. That's a mission I'm proud to stand behind as we work together to create the next generation of leaders."

- Rauf Shakir

CEO, USA Guided Tours; NEXTDC Board of Directors Member



NEXTDC AS A LEADER

DC OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION (OSSE)

During the 2025 OSSE DC Educator Workforce Summit (a professional development conference), NEXTDC Executive Director Claire Carlin and intern Ty Monroe highlighted how educators can leverage **DC's 250th anniversary in 2026** to strengthen work-based learning, preparation, school leadership and partnerships. Associate Director Lisa Waldschmitt and Director of Career Academies Dr. Calvin Ruffin shared strategies for engaging community partners by planning and aligning programs.

PARTNER CITIES

NEXTDC's partnership with **Destination DC** inspires other destinations to strengthen their own community programs. NEXTDC supports other destinations by hosting quarterly virtual calls and welcoming colleagues this year from Explore Asheville (pictured at right), Choose Chicago, San Diego Tourism Authority and Visit Cincy to Washington, DC to learn about our work.

DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEXTDC sits on several education advisory boards, representing the hospitality industry and ensuring the classroom remains relevant to careers today and in the future. The DC Public Schools' Chancellor's Panel of Industry Experts convenes executives from across major city industries to inform curriculum standards and priorities for career and technical education across Washington, DC.

ASSOCIATION FOR CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

NEXTDC Associate Director Lisa Waldschmitt and Program Manager Brittany Anderson led a workshop on building industry partnerships and leveraging their reach and resources at the ACTE Work-Based Learning Conference in Bellevue, WA in April for more than 70 educators and policymakers.



"NEXTDC creates transformative professional experiences for our scholars but also invests in the growth and development of educators. I'm excited to collaborate with NEXTDC in its next phase of leadership and youth development as it supports students and educators in the District of Columbia."

- Dr. Calvin Ruffin
Director of Career Academies,
Ballou High School

ADVANCED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Advanced Internship Program (AIP), a partnership with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, is a school-year-long internship for high school seniors to help them prepare for college and careers. This year, six NEXTDC AIP interns networked with professionals and executives at industry events, educated themselves more deeply in the history and culture of their hometown, experienced what it's like to work in an office and traveled to Richmond, VA on a work-based learning trip planned by the interns themselves.





Christian Osborne*, Ballou High School
(Hospitality & Tourism)



Haryiah Hunt, Ballou High School
(Culinary Arts)



Malijah Jackson, Ballou High School
(Hospitality & Tourism)



Shamiyah McGee, Coolidge High School
(Mass Media)



Tabitha Haythe, Jackson-Reed High School
(Hospitality & Tourism)



Yovanna Ortiz-Cotto, Jackson-Reed High School
(Mass Media)



*2024 NEXTDC Summer Career Ready Intern

Facing page: The 2025 NEXTDC Advanced Internship class.
This page: AIP Interns enjoy a canal river cruise in Richmond, VA; Yovanna Ortiz-Cotto serves as a conversation facilitator at Destination DC's Sustainability Roundtable at the **Friends Meeting of Washington** in January.



"The Sustainability Roundtable was a great opportunity to speak with professionals in DC who are committed to learning about sustainability in tourism, which relates to my own career goals. As a moderator, I was able to guide discussions and take notes on the ideas explored in my group. Everyone at my table was engaged and excited to learn, which made the event much more fun!"

- Yovanna Ortiz-Cotto
Jackson-Reed High School (Mass Media)

CAREER READY INTERNSHIPS

Career Ready Internships (CRI) is the marquee summer internship program for DC's Career and Technical Education Academies.

Through the **Office of the State Superintendent of Education**, the CRI program connects Academy students to paid summer internships across DC.

Interested in hosting your own CRI?
Contact NEXTDC to learn more.



Claudia Burgess

Jackson-Reed High School (Hospitality & Tourism)



Da'Mya Holmes

Maya Angelou PCHS (Hospitality & Tourism)



Destiny Israel

Ballou High School (Hospitality & Tourism)



Helden Tsehaye

Coolidge High School (Mass Media)



Heydi Medina Ferman

Coolidge High School (Mass Media)



Jesus Crespo-Castillo

Coolidge High School (Mass Media)



Kobi Sana

Monmouth University (Mass Media)



Layla Armstrong

McKinley High School (Mass Media)



Luiz Zelaya Velasquez

Coolidge High School (Mass Media)



Micah Bracey

Jackson-Reed High School (Mass Media)



Phoenix Hollingsworth

Jackson-Reed High School (Hospitality & Tourism)



Samiah Penny

Coolidge High School (Mass Media)



Sean Baltimore

IDEA Public Charter School (Mass Media)



William Wills

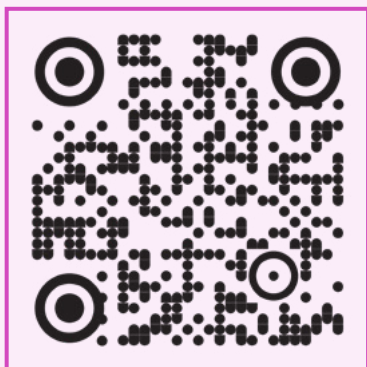
Jackson-Reed High School (Mass Media)



ZyKayla Nicholson

Ballou High School (Hospitality & Tourism)

Visit for a full list
of CRI Partners



NEXTDC interns presented weekly to a panel of industry professionals who gave constructive feedback. Year after year, interns report these experiences make them more confident in public speaking and optimistic about making further connections with professionals to gain opportunities after graduation.

THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S JUDGES

- **Alexandra Haley**, Archer Hotel
- **Alice Lee**, EOS Hospitality
- **Andrew Roby**, Andrew Roby Events
- **Angela Kramer**, Friends of Peirce Mill
- **AnnaGrace Hale**, Destination DC
- **Ariana Hines**, Destination DC
- **Bianca DeStout**, Visit Cincy
- **Brittany Edlow**, Destination DC
- **Dr. Calvin Ruffin**, DC Public Schools
- **Carlie Smith**, Destination DC
- **Carole Lambert**, LINK Strategic Partners
- **Casey Browne**, Howard University
- **Claire Carlin**, Destination DC
- **Danielle Davis**, Destination DC
- **Elvina Suryani Sawito**, Destination DC
- **Georgia Lucas**, Destination DC
- **Grace Kelleher**, Destination DC
- **Jennifer Rodrigues**, Destination DC
- **Jordana Rozenman**, Destination DC
- **Jose Dominguez**, NEXTDC
- **Jy'Naejah Caples**, Howard University
- **Kenlaun Mitchell**, Destination DC
- **Laura Calhoun**, Destination DC
- **Lauren Kieltyka**, Destination DC
- **Lee Callicutt**, Visit Montgomery
- **Linda Koontz**, Embassy Suites by Hilton Washington DC Convention Center
- **Macharia Davis**, US Department of Homeland Security
- **Matteo Coletta**, Destination DC
- **Mercedes Colina**, TCMA for the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
- **Michael Akin**, LINK Strategic Partners
- **Mila Nikolaeva**, Hosts DC
- **Olivier Lau**, The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC
- **Patricia Najar**, Destination DC
- **Rauf Shakir**, USA Guided Tours
- **Sandra Whitehead**, Destination DC
- **Shelby Luzzi**, Destination DC
- **Skye Carter**, Skye Marinda Tarot
- **Skye Curry**, Luxury of SPC Hospitality
- **Stephanie Adams**, Destination DC
- **Susan O'Keefe**, Destination DC
- **Taylor Hartley**, Capital Turnaround
- **Zoe Roberts**, Destination DC

SUMMER AS A NEXTDC INTERN

Over six weeks this summer, NEXTDC Career Ready Interns discovered more about what makes their hometown of Washington, DC so special. From networking with executives and founders to going behind the scenes of iconic institutions, interns expanded their worldview and discovered career possibilities across several industries.

"Destination DC and NEXTDC gave me the opportunity to show up as my authentic self. Through my weekly presentations, I was able to discuss topics I'm passionate about while strengthening my public speaking skills. I connected with people who supported me through college applications, offered guidance and truly want to see the next generation succeed. I'm especially grateful to my colleagues, who made work so enjoyable. Watching such a diverse group collaborate so well gives me great confidence in all our futures."

– Micah Bracey
Jackson-Reed High School
(Hospitality & Tourism)
2025 NEXTDC CRI Intern





Thank you to our experience partners:

Anacostia River Keepers
 Anacostia Roller Skate Park
 Ben's Chili Bowl
 Black Broadway Tours
 CareFirst Arena
 Chad Manhertz
 City Cruises
 Concord Hotels
 Conrad Washington, DC
 Convene Washington, DC
 DC Bird Alliance
 DC Public Library
 Destination DC
 Donohoe Hospitality
 Dr. Calvin Ruffin
 Dr. Zakiya Edens
 Embassy Suites by Hilton Washington, DC
 Convention Center
 Events DC
 Fish & Fire Food Group
 Fogo de Chão
 Go-Go Museum & Cafe
 Grounded Plant Shop & Gallery
 HGCreative
 International Spy Museum
 Moxy Washington, DC Downtown
 National Bonsai & Penjing Museum
 National Portrait Gallery
 National Public Radio
 Planet Word
 Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company
 Smithsonian Folklife Festival
 Sycamore & Oak
 United States National Arboretum
 USA Guided Tours

📍 TRAVEL



Backyard Bound

Over 50 students from the DC high schools' Academies of Hospitality & Tourism, Culinary Arts and Mass Media participated in a two-day adventure across Washington, DC.

Emerging professionals experienced both the consumer-facing aspects and behind-the-scenes operations of the hospitality industry, thanks to the support of these partner organizations:

- Arlo Washington DC
- Brittany Edlow Etiquette Training
- Clyde's of Gallery Place
- DC250 Committee
- DC Public Library
- Encore
- Hargrove from Encore
- Love, Makoto
- National Archives Museum
- Pinstripes Georgetown
- USA Guided Tours
- Well Dunn Catering
- Washington Improv Theatre
- Yotel Washington DC

Facing page: The 2025 NEXTDC Career Ready Internship class learns more about the Korean War Veterans Memorial during a **USA Guided Tours** monument tour.

This page: During this year's Backyard Bound field trip, Academy of Hospitality & Tourism students learn about industrial scale printing processes at **Hargrove from Encore's** design facility; **Well Dunn Catering's** Executive Chef Bradley Nairne took Academy of Culinary Arts students behind the scenes of their kitchen facility before taste testing some of their best offerings; Academy of Mass Media students attended the DC250 press conference at the **National Archives Museum**.



Hospitality Horizons

NEXTDC led groups of 50 DC Academy students to explore major cities on the East Coast, merging industry exposure and college exploration. Students visit tourist attractions, large-scale hotels and engage with professionals to learn about hospitality career pathways and contrast tourism differences with what they know from Washington, DC. Thank you to our partners:

NEW YORK CITY

- Arlo Midtown (top photo)
- Big Bus Tours New York
- Chelsea Market
- New York Marriott Marquis
- RiseNY
- Whitney Museum of American Art

PHILADELPHIA

- Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management and Fox School of Communications (middle photo)
- Reading Terminal Market
- Big Bus Tours Philadelphia
- Lincoln Financial Field

RICHMOND

- Virginia State University's School of Hospitality Management (bottom photo)
- Virginia Commonwealth University's Richard T. Robertson School of Communications





"We're so proud to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Rite of Passage program! It is very rewarding to have a partner in NEXTDC who understands the power of travel on changing young lives for good. Together we believe we can have a positive impact on youth."

- Carylann Assante, CAE
Chief Executive Officer, Student & Youth Travel Association & SYTA Youth Foundation



Rite of Passage

NEXTDC, in partnership with the **Student & Youth Travel Association Youth Foundation and Educational Tours, Inc**, welcomed 35 students to Washington, DC through the Rite of Passage program. Middle schoolers from Wallace Middle School in Waterbury, CT explored the nation's capital.

Thank you to all our partners:

- Student & Youth Travel Association
- SYTA Youth Foundation
- Educational Tours, Inc.
- Yankee Trails
- Jassby
- City Cruises
- Hard Rock Cafe
- Old Town Trolley Tours
- International Spy Museum
- Hyatt Place Washington DC/US Capitol
- Student Watchers
- TripMate
- Arlington National Cemetery
- National Archives
- Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum
- Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture

This page: Students reflect at the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** and explore the **International Spy Museum** during the 2025 Rite of Passage field trip.



Partners & Donors

FINANCIAL PARTNERS

- Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
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*This page: Academy of Hospitality & Tourism and Mass Media students tour the **Hargrove from Encore** warehouse on the NEXTDC Backyard Bound field trip.*



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Each July, NEXTDC is joined by over 300 friends, scholarship winners, educators, supporters and their families for the annual **July 4th VIP Celebration**. This year, the event raised over \$90,000 toward work-based learning, scholarships and career readiness resources.

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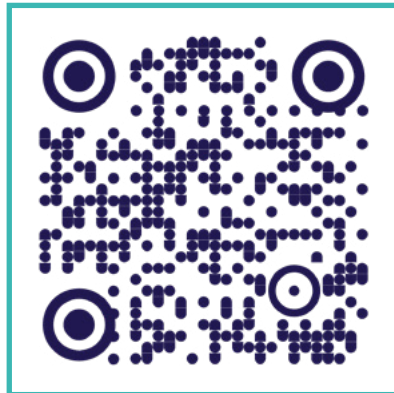
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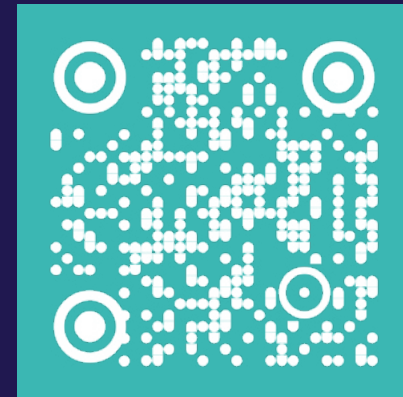
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*Back cover: Academy students learn more about the resources available to them on a tour of the **DC Public Library's Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library** during the 2025 NEXTDC Backyard Bound field trip.*



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