

Philadelphia-based non-profit Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. celebrates first class of Scholars to graduate from college

Philadelphia, PA – June 17, 2010 – On Saturday June 19 Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. will host Summer Orientation to welcome new Scholars and introduce them to alumni of the program. The event will celebrate an important milestone for the Steppingstone Scholars - the organization's first class of Scholars will graduate from college this year.

Steppingstone Scholars, is a Philadelphia based non-profit that develops and implements programs that prepare underserved schoolchildren for educational opportunities that lead to college. This year, the organization's eldest alums will graduate from colleges and universities across the country, including Philadelphia-based schools such as Neumann College, Philadelphia University, Temple University and Villanova University.

These students were accepted into the Steppingstone Scholars Program as fifth-graders at inner city schools. They completed the 14-month program that prepared them for entrance and success at top college -preparatory schools in the greater Philadelphia region.

“Success at these schools opened doors previously unimagined to the Scholars. By succeeding, both in and out of the classroom, they changed their own lives, positively impacted the schools they attended, and opened doors for Scholars who followed,” said Nina Weisbord, Steppingstone Scholars President.

Upon completion of the 14-month component, Steppingstone provides comprehensive support services, including tutoring, mentoring, college counseling, through middle and high school. After graduating from high school, Steppingstone continues its relationship with the Scholars.

Michelle Thomas, a member of the inaugural Steppingstone Scholars class and a 2006 graduate of Episcopal Academy, graduated from Villanova University with dual degrees in Sociology and Criminal Justice as well as a minor in Peace and Justice. She will continue to attend Villanova University as she pursues her Masters in Criminology. Thomas is also a recipient of the Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges award for the 2009-2010 academic year.

“In addition to the tremendous support I received from my family, the Steppingstone Scholars Program also played an integral role in my academic success. Without the continued support from both groups, I don't know where I would be today,” said Thomas.

Not only have members of the first class of Scholars graduated from college, but 97% of the Scholars who completed the Program and graduated from high school have matriculated to college.

“Our first class of Scholars has achieved the ultimate goal, to graduate from college,” said Eddie Mensah, Director of the Scholars Program. “This illustrates the role we can play in the future of our region, our country and our world by opening doors of opportunity to academically driven students.”

For more information about Steppingstone Scholars, Inc., visit www.stepscholars.org or call Kendra Kirk, Director of Development at 215-508-5150.

About Steppingstone Scholars, Inc.

Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. is dedicated to helping educationally underserved students in the Greater Philadelphia Region achieve academic success. Students with the potential and a community of support are prepared for admission to and success at the best public, non-public and independent college preparatory schools through a program of academics, mentoring and support. Steppingstone Scholars works with partner schools to create opportunities that lead to college.