

## History

Great Expectations began in 2008 to help Virginia's foster youth pursue associate degrees and workforce certifications, transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and position themselves for employment and life success. Since then, the program has served over 3,000 current and former foster youth at 21 community colleges. Coaches served almost 1400 students across Virginia during the fall of 2018. The Virginia Foundation for Community College Education is the primary funder of this program.

## Return on Investment

Few young people who have experienced foster care ever attain any kind of college degree, only around 8% nationally. Great Expectations students are graduating at a rate of 20%. Outcomes for former foster youth are dim, with 76% incarcerated at some time before they are 26, over 30% becoming homeless, and over 60% relying on public assistance (Courtney, et al., 2011). Great Expectations students are succeeding, obtaining credentials and degrees, and flourishing.

Total annual costs for the Commonwealth are estimated at \$41,460 per aging-out foster youth, calculated from incarceration costs, use of public assistance, and decreased economic output. Great Expectations can eliminate the achievement gap and save Virginia over \$25.7 million per year (Chmura, 2011), based on the current number of graduates.

## Current Costs

The average cost per student has been calculated for each college. Average cost was based upon total program expenses and the total number of all students served. The average cost of the GE program per student was \$853 per year. The program is largely philanthropically supported.

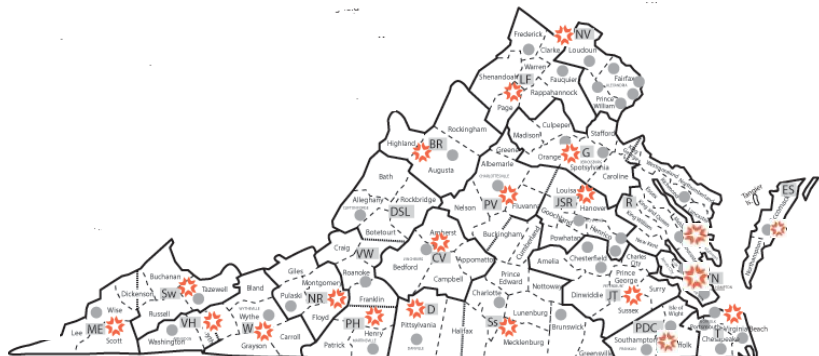
## **A Success Story: Diamond**



Diamond Jackson's experience in foster care was not a positive one. At times, she was separated from her siblings. She came to VHCC as part of the Great Expectations program in 2013-2014 school year, and things began to turn around. She excelled academically and professionally. She completed her Associate's in General Studies at VHCC and then went on to complete her Bachelor's in Healthcare Administration at King University. In December 2019, she will receive her MBA in Project Management and recently accepted a management position with Cintas Corporation. In addition to this, she is a nationally certified Pharmacy Technician. Diamond continues to be active with the Great Expectations program at VHCC. She is always willing to help in any way she can to inspire and encourage other Great Expectations students. She believes that the Great Expectations Program and VHCC have been a huge part of her academic success.

## Where We Are

Great Expectations coaches are at 21 of Virginia's 23 community colleges. Visit <http://greatexpectations.vccs.edu/> our facebook page @VCCSGreatExpectations or email Rachel Mayes Strawn, Ph.D., Program Director at [rstrawn@vccs.edu](mailto:rstrawn@vccs.edu) to learn more.



# Great Expectations is empowering Virginia's foster youth through active support and access to higher education.

1372

students were enrolled in Great Expectations in 2016/2017

105

certificates or degrees were earned by Great Expectations students in 2016/2017

396

degrees or certificates have been awarded to Great Expectations students since 2008

12X

The number of students in Great Expectations has increased by a factor of 12 since the program launched.

25%

of Great Expectations graduates earn academic honors