



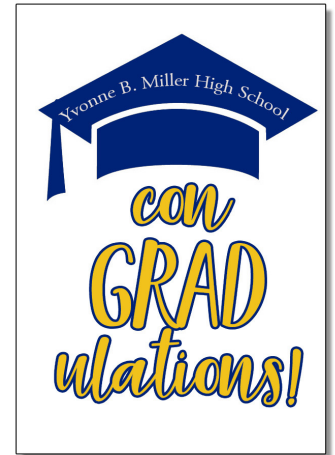
# EDU**T**OPICS

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

July, 2022



*Secretary Mosier congratulates a graduate.*



## Yvonne B. Miller High School Graduates Seven Students

Yvonne B. Miller High School and Post Secondary Programs celebrated seven high school graduates and GED completers on June 17. These graduates have persevered through the pandemic and capitalized on the support offered to them by DOE staff and teachers, residential staff and their families. This important milestone was shared across DOE administration, faculty, residential staff, as well as family members of the graduating class. DJJ Chief Deputy Dale Holden and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Robert Mosier attended and shared their thoughts and congratulations.

This ceremony marked the end of the first complete school year following the return to in-person instruction. The highlight of the program was a student speaker who reflected on the time and effort spent working toward his diploma. This young man encouraged the other graduates to use this accomplishment as a launching pad for making positive change for themselves and their community at large.

Resiliency was also a common theme during the ceremony. Chief Deputy Holden and

# 2022



Secretary Mosier both expressed their pride in the graduates and encouraged them to continue their personal growth and to make decisions that will lead to present and future success. During one particularly heartfelt moment, Secretary Mosier shared his untraditional path to his current position of service, and offered to personally mentor students post release.

Following the formal ceremony, attendees enjoyed lunch and visited with the graduates and their families. It was by all accounts a most remarkable day.

# Students Earn Scholarships

By Robert Anderson



In collaboration with Thomas Jacobs, co-founder and program manager of the Life Scholar Project, and George Peoples, DJJ reentry advocate, two students were awarded the Life Scholar Project Scholarship totaling \$1,000 each. The first student is currently enrolled at a college, working toward earning an associate's degree. He aspires to one day be an entrepreneur and to work with the National Football League (NFL). Through the Life Scholar Project, this student will also be speaking with an NFL representative in the near future to discuss his interest in the programs/services they offer to minority individuals.

The second scholarship recipient is currently

enrolled at Yvonne B. Miller High School/Post-Secondary Programs. He will continue his post-secondary education at Tidewater Community College (Virginia Beach campus) subsequent to his release. He plans to major in business in an effort to one day pursue a career in the music industry. As a result of this student's desire to eventually work in the music industry, a meeting with a Disney Record Company executive is in the planning stages. This meeting will consist of this student being given an overview of the business aspect of the music industry. This student says he is very excited about this opportunity, and thanks all who are involved to make his dream come to fruition.



The Life Scholarship Project was born out of a desire to help non-traditional learners in need. The project's purpose is to make a difference in the lives of at-risk students, one child at a time. The scholarship seeks to support individuals outside the scope of traditional academic grants and promote their three core values/tenets: Aspiring for more, inspire others, and show empathy. Aspire to Inspire U.S. Scholarship Program provides scholarships up to \$1,000 for students in alternative education programs across the country as they enroll in state accredited trade schools, community colleges, and or universities.

Scholarship eligibility criteria include:

- Candidates must be currently enrolled in or are a recent graduate of an Alternative School

Program, Alternative Education Program, Non-Traditional High School, Juvenile Justice Re-Entry Program or have plans to attend any accredited trade school, community college or university in the US.

- Candidates must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA.

- Candidates must submit a letter of recommendation from a school counselor and or school administrator.

- Candidates are required to submit a 450-500 word essay as part of their application.

- Copy of official High School Transcript and or GED.

- Copy of official trade school/college acceptance letter.





# What Are The Odds?

By TOM SCOTT

What are the odds a movie trailer could be created inside a correctional facility? Three students enrolled in a VCU pilot program called “Creative Media Production Technology” proved it could be done, and done well.

The partnership introduced these hand-selected students to video production, music production and digital media marketing. Each section required successfully completing two semesters with the second semester focusing on the art of storytelling.

“One of the most amazing outcomes of this program has been the students learning the value of working together,” says Tom Scott, video production instructor with the post-secondary program at the Bon Air JCC. “Their collective efforts produced a far better product than any one of them alone could have created, and they realized that early on.” Another aspect of this program that assured a successful outcome was the ingenuity each student brought to the project. No obstacle was too big and no challenge couldn’t be overcome as these students strived to find a way of making things work.

Three residents working together came up with the concept, wrote the script, selected locations and actors and then spent nearly a week in production capturing each scene multiple times until it was just right. A project of this size and scope would normally take a dozen or more professionals to complete. Once production was completed they turned their attention to post-production and created a custom music track to go with the visuals.

“I had never produced music for something like this before and so I was a bit intimidated until I started looking at the footage and realizing what type of music would work best,” stated one student working on the project. Another noted how he discovered a knack for editing and was able to lay out the story clip by clip, sometimes rearranging them multiple times before it was just right.

In the end, a movie trailer of a fictional movie was created and produced by these three young men. They did everything on their own with limited supervision while facing the inherent challenges of being incarcerated. It was no easy feat, yet the result is a three-minute movie trailer that leaves the audience wanting more, exactly what storytelling is all about. The name of this fictional movie is “Checkmate.”





# Cougar Carts – And Staff – Benefit From Cadet Service Project Led By Sgt. Pittman

During the school year, Sgt. Richard Pittman requires the cadets to conduct a service learning project. With most public schools’ ROTC programs, the cadet leadership determines where the cadet will go to provide their service for the community. Even though our environment is unique, Sgt. Pittman has found creative ways to find projects for his cadets that would be meaningful for them. Planning and carrying out the service learning projects helps cadets discover what they can do for their neighbor, their community, their state, their country, and their world. Service learning experiences can become the starting point for self-awareness, self-improvement, and self-fulfillment.



One of the identified projects for this year was to detail the school’s cougar carts, and boy, what an experience that was! “I discovered things about my cadets that I just took for granted, like some didn’t know the steps in cleaning a vehicle of any kind,” said Sgt. Pittman. The cadets went through the whole process to include vacuuming the inside of the carts, rinsing and washing, drying and waxing, using Windex to clean all windows, and finally using Armor to protect and shine the dashboard, seats and tires. The end result were clean vehicles for staff to use.



After the experience, each cadet completed a rubric that addressed five questions: 1. What was your service project? 2. What was done to conduct your project? 3. What did you like or dislike about the project? 4. What was your role when participating in the project? 5. Would you recommend doing this project again and why? Author Aldous Huxley said, “Experience is not what happens to you; it’s what you do with what happens to you.” Sgt. Pittman has found creative ways to give his cadets experiences that they can carry with them, and use to impact how they can have a greater impact on others. This was a very rewarding experience for the cadets. We salute Sgt. Pittman for his continued support and creativity leading this program, and ALWAYS leading by example!



## SERVICE

