**GRASP News**

August 2018

GRASP Alumnus, Xavia Gary - Armstrong High School, 2010 - JMU (B.S.), 2015 - VCU (M.Ed.), 2018

*What did you study?* My JMU B.S. degree was in Sports and Recreation Management and a double minor in Business and Human Resource Development. My VCU M.Ed. degree was in Sports Leadership/Administration from the Center for Sports Leadership.

*What is the best thing GRASP has done for you?* The best thing GRASP has done for me was providing me financial support in the form of a scholarship during my first year at James Madison University. Every bit helps, and GRASP played a vital role in my success of becoming the first in my family to graduate from a 4 year college or university.
What are you doing now? I just finished my 200 hour externship with Henrico County Recreation and Parks, serving as a Tournament and Site Assistant for different parks throughout the county. That was my last requirement to obtain my M.Ed. from VCU. I will continue to work part time with Henrico County Recreation and Parks while serving as the Director of Student Activities for Carver College and Career Academy in Chesterfield, VA.

What one piece of "educational advice" would you give to high school students? Whether you want to further your education at a 4 year college, university, community college, trade school, or enter the workforce after graduation, NEVER stop learning and NEVER stop growing!

What is the biggest life challenge you faced relative to your educational path? The biggest challenge I faced as it relates to my educational path was enduring the many hardships and overcoming obstacles to be successful. After my freshman year at James Madison, I had to work two jobs to help fund my college and living expenses, while also maintaining my academics as a full time student. I was determined to become the first in my family to graduate from college, and the challenges I faced throughout my college career molded me into the person I am today. After overcoming those challenges during my undergraduate years, I knew it was possible, so I decided to further my education and strive for my master's degree. As of today, I can say that I faced my challenges head on and came out successful with my Master's of Education from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Expanding students' opportunities to learn

GRASP is a Virginia 501(c)(3) nonprofit. GRASP seeks to give ALL students in Virginia the opportunity to build fulfilling lives through postsecondary educational pathways.

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4551 Cox Rd., Suite 115, Glen ... info@grasp4va.org

(804) 527-7726 grasp4va.org