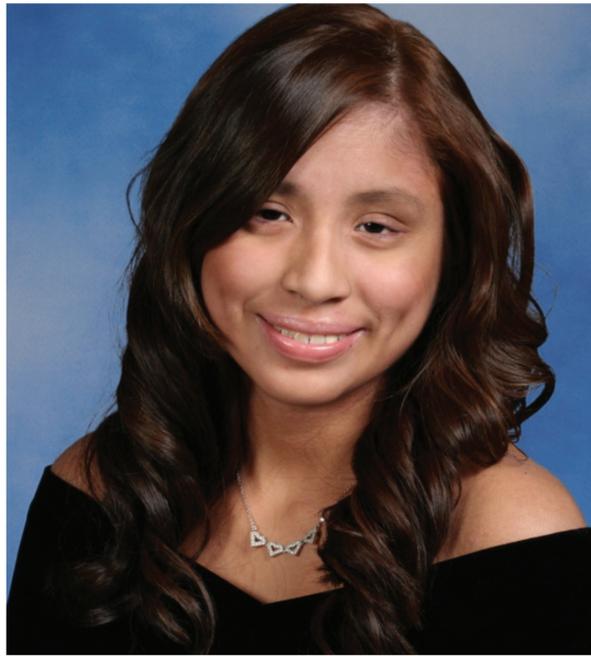


DREAM, BELIEVE, SUCCEED!

Meet the Office of English Language Learners'
Star Graduates



Zhi Cong Ou

William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School

Nominated by Tarah Frosini-Montalbano, Assistant Principal

Zhi's advice to students

One bit of helpful advice someone else gave is that the harder you work, the more pay off you will get. Accept your failure, learn from your mistakes, and don't give up before you try.

Ms. Frosini-Montalbano on Zhi

Valedictorian of William E. Grady High School, 2013 Zhi is without a doubt the most humble young man I have ever met. He has made such amazing achievements in such a short time...In addition, he has earned the love and respect of his classmates, who all admire his tenacity. Yet, when you speak to him, he will never take credit. He instead thanks his family and talks about how thankful he is to have had the opportunity to work hard and do his best.

Johanna Zumba

Ralph R. McKee Career and Technical Education High School

Nominated by Jennifer Miller, Guidance Counselor

Johanna's advice to students

Never feel like people don't care about you. They do. I know that now and I wish I had believed it when I was a kid. Work hard; ask for help and practice, practice, practice. Believe you can do it...Never say- "I can't." I was reminded all of the time that whatever my dreams are I just have to work hard and believe in myself. I have learned to be a positive thinker and I take the time to recognize and appreciate all of my accomplishments.

Ms. Miller on Johanna

Over the years, I have seen Johanna blossom into a truly wonderful student who is a pleasure to be around. In her early high school years, you wouldn't have known when Johanna was around. She was quiet, shy, scared to speak up and be seen or heard...More and more, Johanna has exuded confidence in the way she speaks and shares information with others, especially incoming students and their parents...I enthusiastically recommend Johanna Zumba for this honor, which I am positive will help her on her path to be an agent of change in the world.

Anthony Mftidi

Academy for College Preparation and Career Exploration

Nominated by Roberta Chacon, ESL Teacher

Anthony's advice to students

I would like to advise students not to feel left behind, helpless, or not smart enough because they can't speak the language yet. They just have to keep moving forward and work hard to accomplish their dearest dream. They must remember that it is just a temporary situation...Excellence is never an accident; it's the result of hard work.

Ms. Chacon on Anthony

Anthony Mftidi left the Democratic Republic of Congo at the end of 2009. He was fluent in three languages, but didn't yet know a word of English when he started school in January of 2010. He didn't allow English to be an insurmountable obstacle to learning and excelling in his studies. He soon became comfortable in his new language, culture, and school system...he graduated with a Regents diploma and as the salutatorian of his class.