

NEXT STEPS AT VANDERBILT

ANNUAL REPORT: 2021 - 2022





TABLE OF CONTENTS



About Us	3
Ambassa'Dore's Corner	4
Your Gift Matters	5
Donor List	6
2021 - 2022 Highlights	7
Commencement	8
Academics	10
Career Development	11
Campus Life	13
Residential	15
Student Spotlight	16
TN Believes Grant	17
Alumni Updates	18
Partnership	22
Staff	23

Front cover (left to right): Ben Mangrum, Wilson Brim, JR Harrison, Theresa Brogan, Dustin Perdue, Andre Carter, Rodrigo Rivas, and Megan Snoddy.
 Page 2 (top to bottom): Jeremiah Whitehead and graduate student, Kelley Fowler, Ella Shafer, Meghan Maynard, Jeremiah Whitehead, Erik Cohen, Emma Ridge, Michael Blackburn, Courtnie Taylor, and Kai Jamison. Claire and Ambassa'Dore, Molly Sullivan.

➔ Academics



Students audit Vanderbilt courses. Each student takes 1-2 courses per semester and has a learning agreement that

addresses how their involvement is supported. Over 200 faculty have had students from Next Steps at Vanderbilt participate in their classes.

➔ Career Development



Our career-related programming is driven by each student's interests, future career plans, strengths, and identified needs

Every semester of their program, students participate in job shadowing experiences, internships, or on and off-campus jobs designed to prepare them for a meaningful, paid career after graduation.

➔ Campus Life



Students participate in the wide range of student organizations, service groups, and campus activities available to

Students participate in the wide range of student organizations, service groups, and campus activities available to

➔ Residential



Independent living skills are addressed throughout the program. Currently, we offer limited residential living opportunities near

the Scarritt Bennett Center. Services are provided to assist students when looking for off-campus housing.



Hannah Humes, Class of 2024, enjoying the weather with one of her Ambassa'Dores, Lilly.

ABOUT US

Next Steps at Vanderbilt is a nationally-recognized inclusive higher education program at Vanderbilt University. The four-year program supports neurodiverse college students (ages 18-26) to participate in the breadth of learning and living activities that comprise a typical undergraduate experience—coursework, extracurricular activities, service projects, recreational endeavors, internships and employment, and residential experiences. Since 2010, we have evolved into one of the leading programs in the country and the very first at a top-15 university. Our students are thriving on campus and graduating to a future of flourishing in the workplace and in their communities.

AMBASSA'DORES CORNER

Our Next Steps Ambassa'Dores organization helps facilitate inclusive communities across campus. Next Steps peer mentors, known as Ambassa'Dores, are undergraduate and graduate students who establish one-on-one relationships with students enrolled through Next Steps.



When I joined Next Steps Ambassa'Dores my first semester of college, I was excited to make friends and to see what an inclusive higher education program looked like. I loved getting to navigate campus and the new experience of being at college with peers of the same age as we worked out, ate lunch, and studied biology. I was impressed with the variety of the student internships, the dedication of the staff, and the authenticity of the experience being offered.

Over the past four years, those relationships I made deepened and the impact the program had on me grew so much that I honestly cannot imagine my college experience without Next Steps and Next Steps Ambassa'Dores.

Next Steps is a pioneer, not only in the sense that it was the first inclusive higher education program in the state of Tennessee, but more importantly as it remains committed to improving its offering of a transformational college experience. In my four years with this program, I have seen my friends pilot residential living, participate in Greek recruitment, and open the door to participation in collegiate club sports through formal change to eligibility requirements for inclusive higher education programs across the country. Next Steps not only provides the opportunity for neurodiverse students to have a college experience and gain the skills necessary for a future of flourishing, but it also contributes to the Vanderbilt community at large by promoting more inclusive and knowledgeable future leaders. Further, the research and pioneering academic work done by Next Steps at Vanderbilt impacts people and programs across the country.

This year, we returned to campus after 1.5 years of remote learning, increased and expanded our recruitment of a larger and more diverse pool of Ambassa'Dores, developed valued leadership roles for students across campus, created new partnerships with many campus organizations and departments, led trainings for student groups as we co-created visions regarding what inclusive spaces on campus look like, worked with the first year orientation team to change the way disability is represented in the first year visions curriculum, served as advocates to staff for student concerns, contributed to two publications for Think College, coordinated Disability Awareness Week on campus, met with countless representatives, administrators, and other university leaders on behalf of Next Steps, and won the Best Diversity and Inclusion Award at Vanderbilt's annual student organization award ceremony! We are most proud of the changes in language that our organization made and of hosting the first few (of many more to come) joint general body meetings with both Next Steps students and Ambassa'Dores as we continue to work towards highlighting and honoring the reciprocity that occurs in our relationships.

While I am sad my formal involvement in Next Steps is coming to an end, the friendships and experiences I have had in the program will stay with me for the rest of my life. I look forward to hearing all the ways that the program continues to grow and impact in the years to come.

- Zoe Rankin



President, Next Steps at Vanderbilt Ambassa'dores

YOUR GIFT MATTERS

Next Steps at Vanderbilt seeks to partner with our extended community to achieve the program's most immediate goals and needs—student scholarships for program participants and graduate students, internship supports, and technology supports. Our success derives not only from the hard work of faculty, staff, and students but also from the supports offered by the wider community.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

- **Andre Carter**
Class of 2022



College has always been a dream of mine. I wanted to be able to meet new people, join multiple organizations, help with community events, and have new experiences in a different environment. I wanted the full college experience. In the first year, my biggest challenge was finding my way around campus. Now that I am an upperclassman, I came up with a solution for remembering where my classes are just by following objects spread out through campus and finding shortcuts I can take so I can arrive at my classes faster. College has helped me become more aware of the issues going on around the world and in small communities. I have also gained more confidence in speaking to a large group of people. My goal after college is to obtain a job as a professional sports broadcaster. I have spoken with radio hosts, joined clubs, and chosen different internships each year to gain the skills needed to succeed. From me and my peers, I want to say thank you to all of our donors who support Next Steps and students like me. I am very thankful for you and appreciate all of your support.

● Your contributions directly support students and graduate assistants. Each semester, students enroll in one or two Vanderbilt courses that fit their academic interests, needs, and future goals.

● Your contributions help prepare our graduates for meaningful employment. More than 89% of program graduates find paid employment within three months of graduation. This far exceeds national employment rate of 18%. Next Steps graduates have worked at places such as Home Depot, Metro-Davidson District Attorney's Office, Vanderbilt University Bookstore, and more.

To give, please visit:

<https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/nextsteps/>

\$26,812

Funds Raised on
Giving Day 2022 from
81 Donors

\$160,000*

Total Funds Raised in
the 2022 Fiscal Year

*Giving through May 2022

Why We Give... Ambassa'Dores Edition



Eva Niederauer

Being a part of Next Steps over the last few years was one of the best and most rewarding decisions I made in my Vanderbilt career. Growing up with a brother on the Autism spectrum, I have witnessed firsthand just how much one organization, one classroom, and even one person can impact the life of another. It has been a privilege to witness the students I have mentored grow and gain confidence over the years, and I am so honored to have been a part of it. The relationships I have been able to make with students in the program are ones that I will cherish for years to come. I sincerely hope more universities across the country adopt programs such as Next Steps to give other students a truly incomparable experience and the opportunity to form unbreakable bonds.

- Eva Niederauer, Class of 2022

Our daughter Eva ('22) has been actively engaged as a Next Steps program Ambassa'Dore and mentor for a number of students during her time at Vanderbilt. We have directed our Vanderbilt giving almost entirely to the program. Our family's inspiration is our son, Eva's brother, Liam, who has Asperger's Syndrome. The commitment that the Next Steps staff and the student volunteers make to give young adults with challenges, like Liam's, an opportunity to have a meaningful college experience is both heartwarming and humbling. It has been our pleasure to support the great work that the Next Steps program is doing at Vanderbilt to make higher education more inclusive. We hope that more universities model their success.

-Mr. and Mrs. Niederauer

Platinum Donors

Mr. Craig Brodie - Mr. Stephen Brogan and Mrs. Mary Brogan- Mr. David Gang and Ms. Charmaine Dittmar- Mrs. Barbara Nelson Lamberson- Mr. Tommy Lamberson and Mrs. Tiffany Shope Lamberson- Mr. John T. Lewis- Mr. Ori Marmur and Alyson Marmur - Mr. Duncan L. Niederauer and Mrs. Alison J. Niederauer

Gold Donors

Ms. Caroline Pfohl- Ms. Clisby L. Hall and Mr. Robert H. Zarabi- Mrs. Elizabeth O'Connell MacLean- Grace Dodd- Mrs. Janet V. Lloyd and Mr. Robert W. Lloyd- Mr. Jimmie Lee Young, Jr. and Mrs. Chiquita R. Young- Mr. John L Van Cleave and Mrs. Mary Layne Van Cleave- Mr. Joseph Gilbert III- Dr. Mary Morel Enoch Harvey- Mr. Sam H. Moran, Jr.- Mrs. Sarah Hunt- Dr. Sharon Lee Shields- Mrs. Vanda Cohen- and Dr. William M. Gavigan.

Silver Donors

Ms. Abigail A. Porter- Ms. Abigail Skye Wollheim- Mrs. Adrienne E. Nordman and Mr. Braden D. Nordman- Mr. Alan W. Pope and Mrs. Mary E. Pope- Mr. Alexander Brian Kwak and Mrs. Caroline Kwak- Mrs. Alexandra Cannell Wendt- Ms. Allison Gauld- American Online Giving Foundation- Mr. Andrew Lloyd- Mrs. Ann B. Story and Mr. Roddy L. Story, Jr.- Anneliese DeDiemar- Mr. Antonio Roberto Dominguez- Ms. April K. Schmidt- Mr. Ben Mangrum- Mr. Brandon Begarly- Ms. Bridgette Lynn Garcia- Dr. Carly Blustein Gilson- Ms. Carly Rae Mecl- Ms. Carol Jean Rabideau- Mrs. Carrie Foster Moore- Mrs. Carrie Hobbs Guiden and Richard Guiden- Mrs. Cecelia T. Caldwell and Mr. Mark S. Caldwell, Charities Aid Foundation of America- Mr. Charles Preston Thomas II- Ms. Christine Kim- Mr. Christopher C. Mc Cormick and Mrs. Stephanie T. McCormick- Mr. Daniel Bautista-Sanchez- Mr. David C. Ter Kuile- Mr. David Chen and Mrs. Mary Susan Chen- Mr. David Rodriguez- Ms. Dawn T. Turton and Mr. Mason Risko- Ms. Devon Sinclair- Ms. Eliza Gayle Lewis- Miss. Elizabeth L. Story- Ms. Emily F. Korab- Ms. Emily Faye Abbott- Dr. Erik William Carter- Ms. Erin Fry- Dr. Evon Batey Lee- Ms. Gabriella Johnson- Ms. Gemma Carson- Ms. Glenna C. Underhill- Good Today Organization- Mr. Hardin Manhein- Mr. James W. Berry Jr., and Mrs. Martha Jo Berry- Ms. Jamie J. Linski- Mrs. Jan Ellis- Ms. Jeanne Marie Gavigan- Mr. Jeffery C. Kvam and Mrs. Shari H. Kvam- Mr. Jim Raley- Mr. Joel Bell Covington IV and Mrs. Angela C. Covington- Mr. John Neumeyer and Mrs. Evelyn Neumeyer- Mr. Joseph Buckley - Ms. Julia M. Alley- Ms. Kate Chen- Ms. Katelyn Paradis- Ms. Kathleen Seabolt- Mr. Kevin S. Lapidus and Mrs. Nancy S. Lapidus- Kim Hardin- Mrs. Kimberly J. Mangrum and Mr. Randall Clay Mangrum- Ms. Kristen Jayne Conoley- Ms. Kristi van Wulven- Kristie H. Jamison- Dr. Kyle Griffin Southern- Dr. Lauren Bethune-Dix- Mrs. Lauren Schmitzer Obersteadt- Mrs. Lindsay Krech and Mr. Richard M. Krech- Ms. Lisa S. Johnston- Margaret Berek- Mrs. Mariana Victoria Kuppili- Mr. Mark A. Petty and Mrs. Jamie Pope Petty- Ms. Mary Helen Sullivan- Ms. Mary Kate Rosack- Mrs. Megan Elizabeth Macon- Mr. and Mrs. Mel Vranicar- Mr. Michael Vranicar- Mrs. Michelle A. Vranicar and Mr. Matthew G. Vranicar- Mr. Michael W. Harrison and Holly Bailey Harrison- Ms. Natalie Northrup- Mr. Nathan Vranicar- Dr. Nina Jahn Gustin and Mr. Ray Gustin Padmaja Kaza- Mrs. Paige Orr Clancy and Mr. Christopher J. Clancy- Mr. Paul J. Hauptman and Mrs. Debra I. Hauptman- Ms. Rachel Kurth- Mr. Riley David Black- Mr. Robert G. Givins and Mrs. Carole A. Givens- Ruby Z Shellaway- Ms. Sarah Michelle Bianca Conway- Mr. Scott Morrell and Mrs. Jane Ellen Morrell- Dr. Steven L. Goodbred Jr. and Mrs. Catherine O. Goodbred- Mrs. Tammy Lynn Day- Ms. Theresa Brogan- Mr. Thomas Alvin McMillan and Mrs. Elise David McMillan, J.D., - Mr. Thomas Franklin Hanson- Mr. Thomas L. Bosse- Dr. Tiffany E. Hines and Mr. Robin G. Hines- Mr. Timothy Culbreath- Mr. Tom Woodard Jr. and Mrs. Veronica C. Woodard- Dr. Vanessa Bowles Beasley and Mr. Arch Adam Beasley III- Ms. Victoria P. Warren- Dr. Wichai Chinratanalab and Dr. Sallaya Chinratanalab- Mr. William Hartwell Macon III

HIGHLIGHTS

Leading the Charge: Inclusivity in the Classroom



Dr. Patrick Leddin,
Associate Professor,
Business Studies

"*Leading Business through Crisis* (a Business Studies course) focuses on our ability to lead ourselves and others in challenging times. Offering a mixture of case studies, guest speakers, and student presentations, we explore what it means to be an effective leader. Having Ali A. (Class of 2023) in class this semester was an absolute pleasure. Her genuine interest in the topic, willingness to share her perspective, and desire to contribute and learn added greatly to our collective experience. I could always count Ali to be present, prepared, and engaged. As a professor, I couldn't ask for anything more!" - **Dr. Patrick Leddin**



Life-Long Friends... Preschool to College

(from right to left) Jeremiah Whitehead, Courtnie Taylor, and Emma Ridge were in the same preschool class at Susan Gray School and are together again as college students, the Class of 2025!



Our Ambassa'Dores won the award for Best Diversity and Inclusion organization at this year's 2021-2022 Vanderbilt Awards for Leadership Excellence (VALE)!

Congratulations!!



Immerging with New Ideas: Experiential Seminar

My Immersion project aimed to allow Next Steps students to practice and improve their opinion-forming skills on a variety of different current events, from Vanderbilt issues to local news to global topics. During my project, I had the help of several Vanderbilt speech pathology graduate students, and together we would run discussion-based classes. They usually began with me lecturing on a specific issue and then breaking the students up into monitored discussion groups before everyone came back together and shared with the class. The motivation behind this project stemmed from my past as a really shy kid. I remember my freshman year of high school when I said 10 words a day, and most of that was the "thank you" after someone would hold open the door for me. When I began being involved with Next Steps and getting to know these students, I noticed their shyness and reluctance to share too much about themselves and immediately resonated with this. From there, I wanted to do everything I could to help them come out of their shells, drawing upon my own personal experience. From the first opinion-forming class on Zoom to now, I see how much easier

it is for them to raise their hands and spark a discussion. Not only that, this experience and these students have taught me so much, and I've wanted to continue pushing myself. This experience has not only allowed me to grow as a teacher but as a clear communicator and person who is able to initiate positive change from their values. 10 years ago, I could've never imagined being a teacher of opinion-forming but with the support of Next Steps and the work ethic of the students, I've grown tremendously. - **Peter Chen (Immersion Scholar)**



The Class of 2022 Graduates with
Peabody Dean Camilla Benbow

Spring 2022 Commencement took place on May 13, 2022 at Vanderbilt Stadium. We are so proud of our Class of 2022! Students enrolled through Next Steps at Vanderbilt walked across the stage in the ceremony alongside their undergraduate peers for the very first time. What a momentous day this was! Anchor Down!

COMMENCEMENT

CLASS OF 2022

SENIOR CELEBRATION

CLASS OF 2022



Next Steps Senior Celebration took place on May 3, 2022 in the Sarratt Cinema. It was a special event for both graduating seniors enrolled through Next Steps and graduating Ambassa'Dores.

Each senior shared their reflections on their college experience and showcased the many memories that were had. To close the ceremony, first-year, Erik Cohen, a member of the **Vanderbilt Singers**, proudly sang Vanderbilt's Alma Mater. What a special and commemorative event it was!

For more information, visit **Channel 4's WSMV** reporting on this special event.

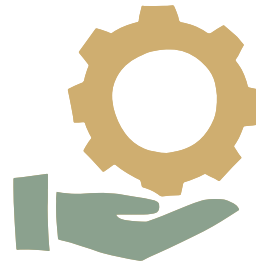


Devon Sinclair (Alum, '21), Megan Snoddy, and Theresa Brogan

INCLUSIVE ACADEMICS



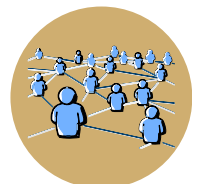
Service Learning and the Power of Inclusion: A Partnership



32 Experiential
Independent
Studies



89 Inclusive
Classes



22 New
Faculty

In the past three years, Next Steps has implemented a successful academic model for teaching core employability skills within an inclusive setting. This past academic year, this model has been strengthened by forming a strong partnership with a Vanderbilt University, the **Department of Human and Organizational Development (HOD)** service-learning course under the direction of Dr. Leigh Gilchrist. This partnership provides the opportunity for undergraduate students to serve in two capacities, as tutors assisting students enrolled through Next Steps with these independent studies, and scholars working to differentiate independent study syllabi. All involved are learning valuable skills in collaboration and teamwork while experiencing first-hand the power and importance of campus inclusion. Utilizing this service-learning approach to guide the collaboration between Next Steps and the HOD undergraduate course intentionally engages students, faculty, and program leaders in all aspects of the learning process.

The nature of the service-learning collaboration lends itself to the power of building capacity to better achieve the measurable outcomes listed above. Joining with the HOD undergraduate class, Next Steps was able to illicit the support of over 65 HOD students over the course of two semesters. Serving as tutors and syllabus developers, these HOD students tackled syllabus topics as entrepreneurship, building technology skills, civic engagement, managing mental health, building cultural diversity, and developing leadership skills. In a direct effort to build community and encourage reciprocity of learning between Next Steps and the HOD course, the service-learning component was designed to continuously integrate Next Steps students, faculty, and program leaders in the syllabus feedback and evaluation process. We are thankful for this amazing partnership - ***Dr. Leigh Gilchrist and Dr. Lauren Bethune-Dix***



CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Ben Mangrum
The Governor's Office and Council on
Developmental Disabilities



Lydia Young
Tennessee Department of Intellectual
and Developmental Disabilities



Claire Nehrenz
Vanderbilt Recreation Center

46 Internship sites

NEW
INTERNSHIP
SITES **15**

15
student interns paid by
internship sites

10 interns paid through MAC
WIOA* funding

5
Job Coaches

6
Industry Tours

4 AmeriCorps
Members



Annabel Hines
The Makery



Andre Carter
Vanderbilt Athletics Communication



Andres Angarita
Nashville Veteran's Affairs Medical
Center

*Federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act funding

Early Childhood Education

APPRENTICESHIP

In the Fall of 2021, Next Steps began a pilot registered Early Childhood Educator apprenticeship program in partnership with The Vanderbilt Child and Family Center. This program is also the first Early Childhood Educator apprenticeship program in the state of Tennessee. Students enrolled through Next Steps work toward earning an industry recognized credential. Next Steps has continuously aimed to equip students with skills and experiences to gain competitive employment upon earning their certificate of completion. And as a program goal, Next Steps is working to:

- Increase opportunities in years three and four for students to gain targeted skill development in fields of interest
- Focus on program development that may positively impact employment outcomes of graduates (e.g., type of employment, wage, benefits)



On November 15, 2021, Next Steps hosted our first Apprenticeship Signing Event where we celebrated our apprentices. Pictured, you see our apprentices Theresa Brogan, Megan Snoddy, and Rachel Williams with staff from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

In the pilot program with the Vanderbilt Child and Family Centers, three apprentices were matched with mentor teachers and worked as integral classroom instructors 15-20 hours per week while developing six key job functions and skills in the field.

“ I have learned how to be an adult role model to the kids and to let them know that I am the teacher. I have learned how to get them to listen to me more.

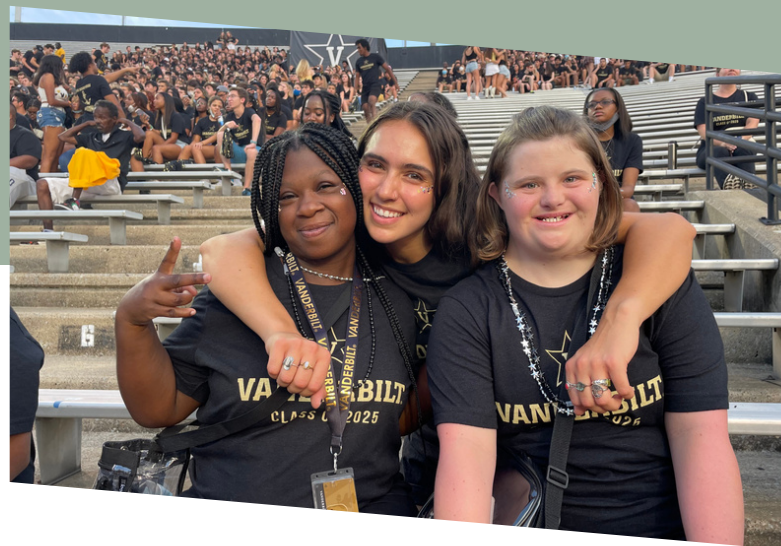
**- Rachel Williams,
Class of 2023**

Megan Snoddy (Class of 2022), Theresa Brogan (Class of 2022), and Rachel Williams (Class of 2023) all applied for this program because of their passion for working with children, their goals of working in education upon completion of Next Steps, and their desire for more autonomy in the classroom. Megan and Theresa have been honing their skills in the toddler classrooms, while Rachel has been learning how to instruct and teach 4-5-year-olds. The apprentices meet routinely with their mentor teachers to review new skills, discuss progress, and receive feedback on how to grow as a teacher.

CAMPUS LIFE

Leadership Positions held by Students in Next Steps

- ★ Multicultural Leadership Council
- ★ CORE Committee with VU Police Department
- ★ Vanderbilt Community Garden
- ★ Vanderbilt Reformed University Fellowship
- ★ Ambassa'Dore Executive Board
- ★ Vanderbilt Student Government
- ★ Special Education Department Advisory Board
- ★ Transition TN Advisory Board



*Ella, Class of 2025, enjoying her Circle Event
with her Ambassa'Dores*



160 Ambassa'Dores
(Peer Mentors)

75 New Ambassa'Dores
(Peer Mentors)

78% Students were involved
in a student organization

240 Hours of one-on-one
inclusive partnerships



VANDERBILT

Spirit Squad

Lydia Young, Class of 2023, joined the Vanderbilt Spirit Squad, Dance Team in 2021. She has danced with the team at many sporting events and special occasions, cheering on the Does. Way to go, Lydia!

“My time with the Spirit Squad has been my most amazing inclusive experience yet at Vanderbilt. I have learned a lot about discipline for practice and games, teamwork, and balancing academics with the team schedule. Go Does! Being with the Spirit Squad has taught me how to be more social and I have learned how to be a good teammate to the girls. I like learning new routines and new skills. Practices, games, and workouts are a lot of work but it's worth the time because it's fun, you get to be on a college dance team, and get to know your teammates more. - **Lydia Young, Class of 2023**

”

RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Opening the Doors to New Opportunities

The pilot year for our residential partnership with **Scarritt Bennett Center** was an important learning experience for us all. Four students enrolled through Next Steps and two Graduate Residents embraced living and learning new skills this academic year. Residents learned invaluable daily living skills, such as cooking, laundry, and simply the experience of living with roommates.



Residents also had a lot of fun living together with game nights, art projects, movie nights, senior celebration night, sporting events, and more. Four new residents will move into the house in the Fall 2022 semester. We are excited about this opportunity for them and thrilled that our partnership with Scarritt Bennett Center will continue!

- Jenny Gustafson, Director of Residential Supports



“

In the Next Steps House on the Scarritt Bennett Center Campus, everyone practices independent living skills that all college students learn when they live by themselves for the first time. The opportunity to live in the Ogburn House with graduate resident assistants gives Next Steps students the opportunity to acquire these skills as members of a tight-knit community.

- Olivia (Livy) Powell (Graduate Resident)”

“

I'm so glad Scarritt Bennett Center and Next Steps opened the door for students to get this important learning opportunity. I hope more students will be able to do the things I have done by living on my own. **-Theresa Brogan, Class of 2022**

”



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Hannah Humes, Class of 2024

My name is Hannah Humes and I am in the Class of 2024 in the Next Steps program at Vanderbilt University. I am from Baltimore, grew up in PA, moved to Ohio in 7th grade and then I moved to Nashville in 2020 to attend college. I enjoy music and working with kids.

My introduction to the Down Syndrome Association of Middle Tennessee (DSAMT) was when I found out that I was chosen to be the 2022 self-advocate of the year after being nominated by the Next Steps program. The first thing I did was to participate in a dinner where I met others in the organization and received my plaque. Then, my family and I participated in the Nashville Buddy Walk and I couldn't believe the DSAMT put my picture on the Nashville digital billboard! I really hope Dolly Parton saw it! As the self-advocate it was fun for me to introduce the band the Ransom Notes at an event, have a photo shoot and attend the Disability Policy Seminar (DPS) in Washington DC.

I was able to meet Senator Marsha Blackburn in her Senate office building to advocate my message of increasing access and inclusive education for students like me. It was a great life experience. I became a Think College Policy Advocate last spring, in 2021, which was interesting but hard to do on Zoom. So, this year I went to the DPS in Washington, DC representing the DSAMT and Think College. I was excited to meet Liz Weintraub in person. She says: "Nothing about us without us!". My advice to other self-advocates is to be **brave, be who you are** and most importantly, **tell your story!**



“ I have learned that disability rights are human rights! ”
- Hannah Humes, Class of 2024

TENNESSEE BELIEVES GRANT

Starting in Fall 2022

The Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) announced in January 2022, that Next Steps at Vanderbilt was one of four recipients, out of nine applicants, of the first-ever Tennessee Believes grant. The grant aims to support and increase the number of higher education programs in Tennessee for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Next Steps was awarded \$103,650 for one year and possible funding of \$207,300 for two additional years to form a new interdisciplinary major, Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL). SAIL scholars will have the opportunity to deepen their interest in the areas of public policy, disability, and leadership on a local, state, and national level.



TN DIDD...TN Believes Check Presentation with Commissioner Brad Turner on April 18, 2022!

“

*I can only imagine what our program at Vanderbilt is going to look like in five years when our first SAIL cohort graduates - **Zoe Rankin, Next Steps at Vanderbilt Ambassadors President***

”

**Capstone/
Mentorship**

**Leadership
Enrichment Activities**

Targeted Paid/Unpaid Internships

SAIL Specific Coursework

ALUMNI UPDATES



CONTINUING EDUCATION

NICHOLAS PINTER, CLASS OF 2015

Nicholas Pinter graduated Next Steps in the Spring of 2015. His favorite memory was taking the Harry Potter writing course. He is living with his parents right now. He works at the Gordon Jewish Community Center as a preschool teacher. His favorite part of his job is working with the young children on

improving their listening skills. Learning classroom management skills has been the most rewarding part of his work. This May, Nicholas graduated with a technical certificate in Early Childhood Education from Nashville State Community College. He has learned that hard work pays off for the people who do it for all the right reasons. He also has learned how to cite certain meaningful quotes in his research paper and has learned how to be a better proofreader as well. His plans for his future is becoming an early childhood teacher. We are so proud of Nicholas and all that he has accomplished and will continue to accomplish in the years to come.

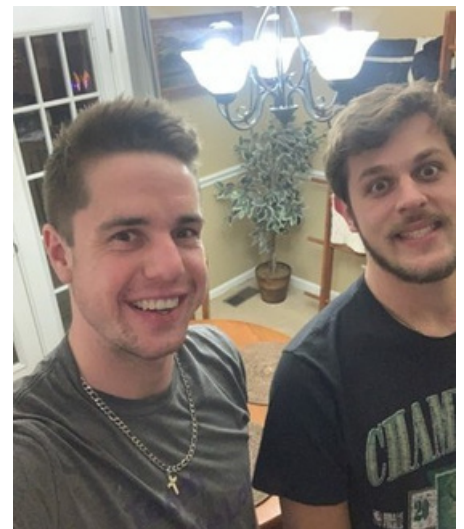
- **Cat Bernstein, Office Assistant**

ROOMMATE EDITION

DANIEL BRAWNER & JACK PICKORN, CLASS OF 2020

Being roommates is fun and when you live on your own you have the freedom to do whatever you want. Jack and I have bonded over the last 3 years and have grown in multiple ways. We have learned to get along and live together. My favorite thing to do with Jack is driving in my car because that is the time that we have fun whether we are talking about life or singing songs. We always have something fun going on. Jack and I have learned to work through challenges as roommates. We sometimes are not on the same page but we work through it! -

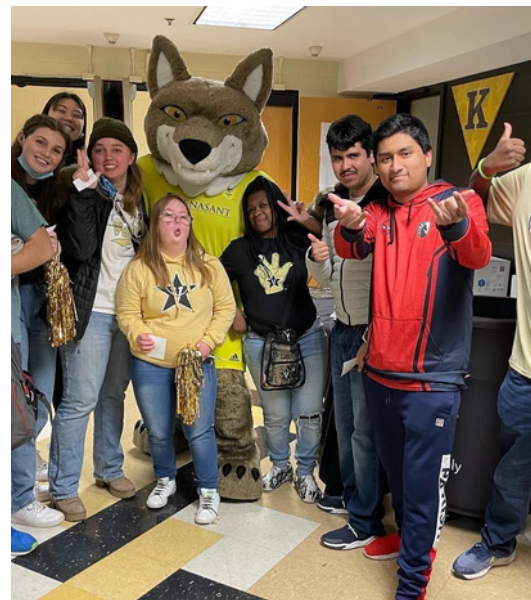
Steven Greiner, Alumni Coordinator and Recruitment Assistant



57 Next Steps at Vanderbilt
Graduates

14 Next Steps Alumni living
independently





Looking forward to 2023...

Welcome, Class of 2026!



**RAY
MALCOLM**

Brunswick, MD



**BAILEY
DUNCAN**

Bowling Green, KY



**JACLYN
MITKOVA**

Boca Raton, FL



**LINDSEY
HOLT**

Nashville, TN



**BROOKE
OLSEN**

Antioch, TN



**KRISTEN
ROMINES**

Pegram, TN



**MALIK
SHELTON**

Antioch, TN



**MARIE
TISDALE**

Maryville, TN

PARTNERSHIPS

Campus Partners

Data Science Institute
Divinity School
Human Organizational Development
Capstone Office
Mama Lere Hearing School
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at
Vanderbilt - Nutrition Services
Plant Operations
Rand Post Office
Recreation and Wellness Center
Reformed University Fellowship - Vanderbilt
Science and Engineering Library
Sarratt Art Studio
Student Media - Videography
Susan Gray School
The Acorn School
The Makery
Theatre Costume Department
Theatre Scene Shop
Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Communications
Vanderbilt University Police Department
Visual Media Team
VU Admissions Tour Guide Team
VU Athletics Communications
VU Athletics Marketing
VU Office of the University Chaplain and
Religious Life
VU Dining
VU Dining/Business Services (Munchie Marts,
Dining Halls, Printing, Card Office)
VU Football - Equipment Management
VU Women's Basketball Team

Community Partners

ABLE
Belmont University Baseball Team
Deloitte
Home Depot
Nashville Stars
Scarritt Bennett Center
TennCare
Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities
Tennessee Department of Environment and
Conservation - Bicentennial State Park
Tennessee Department of Environment and
Conservation - Bledsoe Creek State Park
Tennessee Department of Environment and
Conservation - Long Hunter State Park
Tennessee Department of Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities
Tennessee Governor's Office
Tennessee Governor's Office of Faith-Based and
Community Initiatives
The Down Syndrome Clinic
UPS
Veteran's Administration Volunteer Services
Vanderbilt Visual Media Team
VU Theatre Scene Shop



Ben ('22) met Governor Bill Lee during his internship at the Governor's Office



Lydia ('23) interned with the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities this spring. She is pictured here with DIDD Commissioner, her internship supervisor, and Next Steps staff

NEXT STEPS STAFF

"Next Steps at Vanderbilt is a 4-year inclusive higher education program committed to providing neurodiverse students an inclusive, transformational postsecondary education in academics, social and career development, and independent living, while honoring equality, compassion, and excellence in all endeavors."



Tammy Day, M.Ed
Program Director



Lauren Bethune-Dix, PhD
Assistant Director &
Director of Academics



Lindsay Krech, M.Ed
Director of Campus Life
and Student Supports



Jenny Gustafson, M.Ed,
M.Div.
Director of Residential
Supports



Megan Macon,
Director of Career
Development



Emily Barker
Program Coordinator of
Career Development



Elizabeth Sanders, MAT
Program Coordinator of
Career Development



Emilee Bauer,
Program Coordinator



Laurie Fleming
Program Coordinator,
UCEDD



Steven Greiner,
Alumni Coordinator &
Recruitment Assistant,
Next Steps Alum 12'



Caitlin Bernstein
Next Steps Research
Analyst
Next Steps Alum 15'



Elise McMillan, JD
Faculty Advisor



Erik Carter, PhD
Faculty Advisor

We thank the graduate students who played an integral part in the design and implementation of Next Steps at Vanderbilt in the year 2021-2022.

Caroline Parker (Low Incidence Severe Disabilities Track, Department of Special Education)
Olivia Niestrom (Low Incidence Severe Disabilities Track, Auxiliary Training in Applied Behavior Analysis, Department of Special Education)
Kelley Fowler (Low Incidence Severe Disabilities Track, Auxiliary Training in Applied Behavior Analysis, Department of Special Education)
Kelly Hunter (Low Incidence Severe Disabilities Track, Auxiliary Training in Applied Behavior Analysis, Department of Special Education)
Cara Clark (Social Work trainee)

THANK
YOU

Special thank you to Carol Rabideau for all your contributions to Next Steps over the years. You will be greatly missed. Carol Rabideau, LCSW- Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, is retiring at the end of June 2022.



The graduating Class of 2022 featuring Rodrigo Rivas, Wilson Brim, JR Harrison, Megan Snoddy, Theresa Brogan, Andre Carter, Dustin Perdue, and Ben Mangrum



Inclusive ● Transformational ● Dynamic

Check Us Out:

