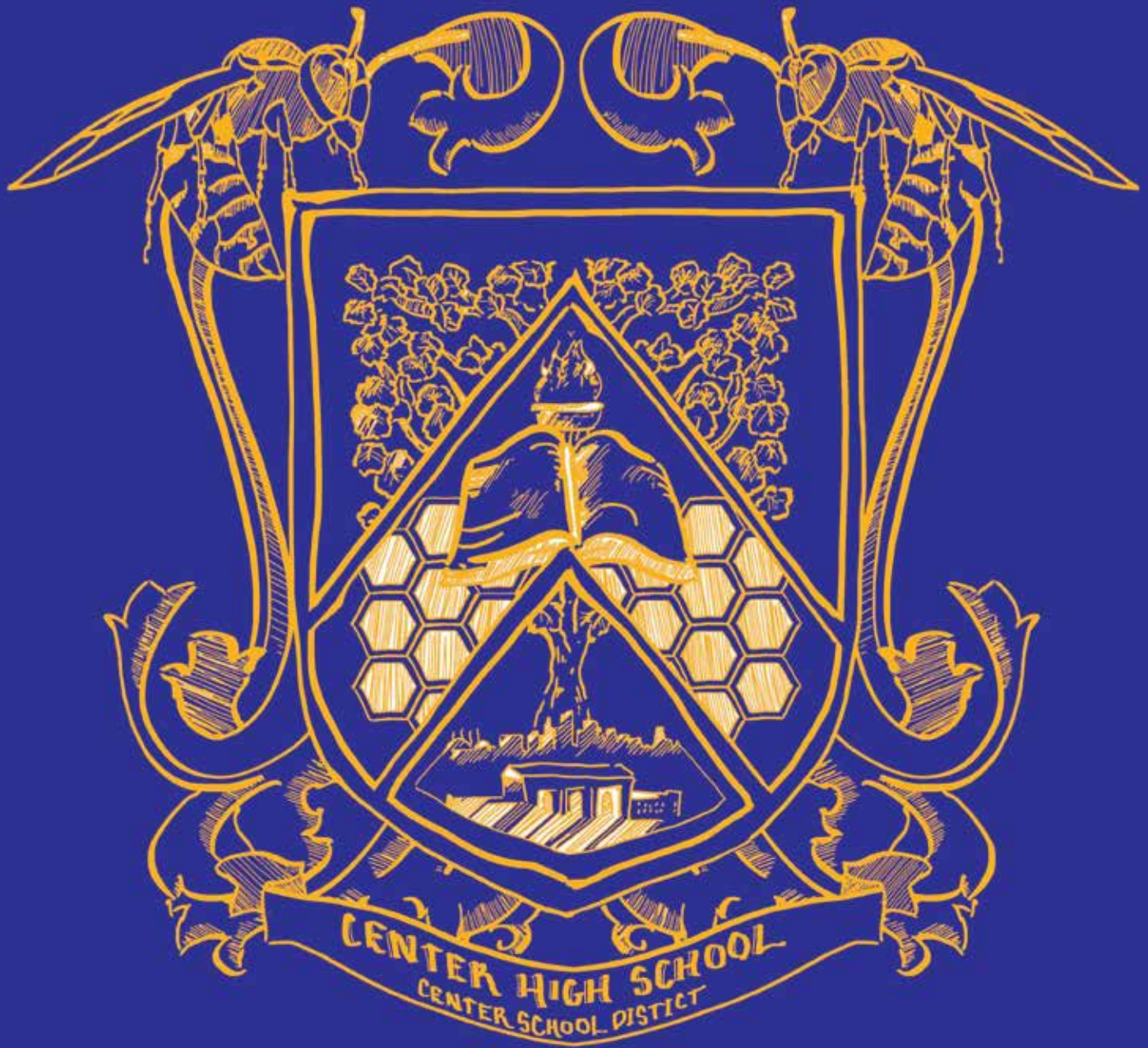


CENTER HIGH SCHOOL



**2019-2020
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
RECOGNITION**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Mrs. Mary Kreigel, for interviewing and compiling each biography submitted by our seniors to make this program possible. Thank you for going above and beyond to make every effort to reach each of our scholars during these novel times. Compiling these biographies is no small feat during a normal school year.

We would also like to thank our Registrar Mrs. Jennifer Thurn for carefully compiling and tracking the data to determine our class rankings.

Program design and compilation by Ms. Donna Vennera

But most importantly, we wish to thank our students and their families for their hard work throughout their academic career. Earning a spot in the top ten percent of your cohort is no small accomplishment.

PRINCIPAL'S
INTRODUCTION

GUEST SPEAKER

FRESHMEN SCHOLARS

SOPHOMORE SCHOLARS

JUNIOR SCHOLARS

SENIOR SCHOLARS

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EDWARD TATE

Principal, CHS

Dear Center High School Scholars and Families,

I am saddened that we are unable to come together in person to honor and celebrate the academic excellence of each cohort's top 10%. This is an honor that students, with the support of their families, work toward for years. To not be able to stand on the stage and receive your accolades is heartbreaking.

Our Freshmen are just planting the seed for their legacy at Center High School. I fear they will not understand what a significant honor they have achieved.

But more importantly, I feel for the seniors who have worked hard for not only the last four years, but indeed their entire school career for this moment. And while the rewards for that work transcend more than one ceremony, to be denied a rite of passage they were looking forward to is heartbreaking.

Yet, we cannot let these achievements go unnoticed. In difficult times it is important to recognize strong work, and each student listed in this program has indeed shown strength in their academic career. I am reminded of the words by Jesmyn Ward, a two - time National Book Award winner. She said, "Real academic success requires step after step after step after step. It requires choice after choice; it demands education and passion and commitment and persistence and hunger and patience."

Our students here in Center School District and students all over the country have been through so much during these unprecedented times, however I am so proud of the resilience, their strength, and their understanding that we may, at times find ourselves down, but we are not out. We are "Center Strong" and I am so very proud of you. Thank you for continuing to push yourselves to excellence. With that, please join me in celebrating their success and achievements.

Edward Tate

Principal's Introduction

SELINA RIOS

Class of 2006

Guest Speaker

It has been 10 years since we last had this conversation. I was 22, had just graduated from college and was asked to share my perspectives on the world. So much had changed for me in those 4 years since high school. I had lost a best friend in a tragic car accident, my father was ill, I had traveled abroad and experienced a world outside of my community. The heart of my message was that I was grateful. I was grateful for the experiences Center had provided me, the care my teachers had shown in preparing me for college. I learned to appreciate home cooked meals and clean laundry. I was also grateful for the grief that I had felt because it was in those moments that I found my strength and voice.

I keep repeating '10 years' because it happened so quickly and yet slowly at the same time.

10 years later I am 32, I am a director in a non-profit and have found an organization/job that fuels me. I fight for equity and social justice through education, which allows me to acknowledge both my privilege and authentic identity as a woman of color. I experienced more grief, this time with the loss of my father in 2018. The impact of his absence affects me in a way that I know it will take me the rest of my life to figure out. Those of you who know this type of loss understand what that means. In the last 10 years I have lived in several cities, had plenty of failures and the life I imagined for myself in high school is so very different from the one I am living, but I am proud. I am learning every day to love myself a little more and to appreciate the moments as much as the destination.

10 years ago I shared about all the things I had learned, but as someone who believes in the power of young people and has dedicated my past decade to education and youth development, what I have to share is the greatest lesson I have learned from young people like yourself, and that is that nothing is ever hopeless.

I would be amiss not to acknowledge the context of the times and the moment in which we are living in. We continue to live in a world in which communities and people (of color) are disproportionately impacted and harmed, but at the end of the day this pandemic is changing us all. It is changing our definition of 'normal' with policies of social distancing and re-opening, and in many ways, it is helping us to name what we demand from our elected officials. Many of you will head off into the next part of your journey and into an economy that is not the same. If you head off to college or continue in school, the experience may be different from what you pictured originally, but in my many conversations with young folks I can see that you remain hopeful about your future.

You are part of a generation that has never lived in a world without computers or global connection. You engage in protests, you are cautious about student loans, you want to reduce waste, dialogue around #blacklivesmatter, police brutality and the changing global climate, because regardless of what you believe, you know that there is power in conversa-

Guest Speaker continued

tion, being heard and imagination...AND you have the tools to see this through. You teach me that things are never hopeless when you start Black Student Unions, start food drives and speak out on things that make others uncomfortable. Despite the many things that will forever be changed by this pandemic, I know that this will only continue to grow for the better.

The only advice that I have for you in this moment is to allow yourself to grieve. You lost a graduation ceremony, a recognition program, time with friends, prom, and a direct connection to your social outlets, and these are not small things. Allow yourself to feel the loss of these, because even in that loss I know that you can find your strength, boldness, and brilliance. Feel the grief, do not ignore it, because although it is unfortunate, I know that you will be a generation that is stronger because you felt this grief. Do not allow the loss of these moments or time stop you from moving forward, because we need you, I need you. You inspire me in your thoughtfulness of others and your desires to become empathetic innovators who can imagine a world that is so different and yet plausible.

I tell the young people who I lead that I have one goal for them each year, and that is for them to leave this experience angry. I want you to be angry at the injustices around you, feel them and acknowledge them. I want you to allow that anger to cultivate your passions and the ways you choose to lead, do not allow yourself to become paralyzed by it. I was once told "As a woman of color I could spend the rest of my life learning about the ways in which I enable racists systems and that would be enough. Because the world isn't 9 billion people. The world is you." In that moment I realized that if I truly wanted to see change, I had to change the way I engaged with those around me.

Congratulations on your impressive achievements, you have a community rooting for and cheering you on. I am so very proud of you. Believe me when I say that this is not the end, it is only the beginning. 10 years goes faster than you think but spend the time deciding where you belong. Use this grief to find your voice and strength, because in that you will make our world better and continue to remind us all that nothing is ever hopeless.

Selina Rios is a 2006 Center High School graduate and moved back home to Kansas City in July 2015 to serve with the City Year Kansas City startup team. After graduating from William Jewell in 2010 with a Bachelor's in International Relations, Selina moved to the Texas-Mexico border to help start a non-profit with the Mexican Consulate, serving as a Project Manager for a women's shelter and a literacy coalition.

Over her nine years with City Year, Selina has directly managed over 60 AmeriCorps Members and led six school partnerships with sites in Cleveland, Tulsa & Kansas City. In her current role as the Learning & Evaluation Director, Selina leads AmeriCorps Member instructional training, manages the evaluation of school impact data and is a certified Racial Equity Strategist (Disruptive Equity Education Project) leading Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work both at a site and national level.

Outside of her work with City Year, Selina is a Big with Big Brothers Big Sisters, sits on the Board of Governors for William Jewell College, the Board of Directors for Center School District's Foundation for Education, is a committee member for Amplify (a conference for educators of color) and serves as the Board Chair for The Latinx Education Collaborative.

In her free time Selina enjoys spending time with her rescue puppy, Benjamin Franklin III, and working on her photography.

MANSOUR BALDE
ANYLA BANKS
AMANDA BUENDIA
ALEEYAH COKER
KENDAL CUNNINGHAM
DANIELA GUERRERO
PEYTON GUMMINGER
GRACE JACKSON
NATHALY MAURO
KIRSTEN MORA VALDES
ABYGAIL PEOPLES
JOSEPH REBERRY
ALEXIS REED
CADIENCE SZAPOCZNIK
TROY TAYLOR
TARA THOMPSON
CADENCE THURBER
WYTIS TINNER
ALEXIS TRENTADUE
SOPHIA TROUT
DIRAC TSAFACK

Freshman Scholars

SAMUEL ASHER
BRANDON CHANDLER
ANDREW COOK
MADDISON CUNNINGHAM
MARQUES GRIFFITH
REBECCA HANCH
SAVANNAH HOLSMAN
PRIYESH JOSHI
EMILIA LATAS
KAITLYN LEWIS
KADEN MARSHALL
DENNY MOSBY
JAMES MYERS
ARIAL REBERRY
JOEY TEJADA
ZORRAH TERRY
JACOB WESTRING
KAYSHAWN WHITWORTH

CLAYVONTE ABNER
IMANE BOUHAMIDI
PHUONG THAO BUI
SERENA CALDWELL
TORI GERMAN
BENJAMIN LAHANN
AINSLEY LEWIS
BRONWYNNE MILLER
NEVAEH MISOMALI
ELHADJI MANSOUR NDIAYE
ELEANOR PEOPLES
CHRISTIN REY
EMMA ROGERS
KHADIDJA SONKO

Junior Scholars

MORGAN ANAST

Morgan Anast

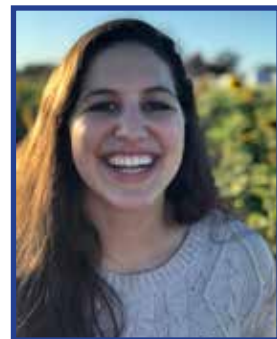
Morgan Anast is an 11-year Center student and is off to study Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration at Metropolitan Community College in the fall. Morgan has lettered in academics each year of high school, earning a place in the Top 10% this year. Morgan is known among staff for his excellent work ethic and time management, as well as his empathic nature and willingness to work as a team player. Many teachers have spoken to Morgan's willingness to take risks and to challenge himself in the classroom, especially during his senior year. Congratulations, Morgan!



ANALYNN BULLOCK

Analynn Bullock

Analynn Bullock is a 13-year Center student known to be dedicated and involved by students and staff. Each year of high school, Analynn has placed in the Top 10% of her graduating class. She has participated in Math Relays all four years of high school and for two years has been a member of the National Honor Society. This year, she has had the honor to serve as the President of NHS. She has dedicated a great deal of time to club swimming for the past 12 years and competed as a member of the Center Swim Team during her sophomore and senior years. In those two years alone, she has broken two school records: the 200-Meter Individual Medley her sophomore year and the 100-Meter Backstroke her senior year. Additionally, she has earned All-Conference recognition and placed in the top sixteen at the state level in the 100-Meter Backstroke. She was the first Center swimmer to make it to state-level competition in fifteen years. Analynn has been accepted to several colleges and universities, but plans to attend Millikin University in the fall to study Mathematics and to continue her swimming career. Millikin has offered Analynn \$42,000 each year in grants and scholarships. Go Big Blue!



GABRIEL CALVIN

Gabriel Calvin

Gabe Calvin is a 13-year Center student who will continue his studies in Systems Engineering Technology at the University of Central Missouri following graduation. He has been in the Top 10% of his class all four years of high school and is slated to graduate in the Top 5%. Gabe has participated in band, Student Government Association, golf, Robotics, and Academic Team and is a member of the National Honor Society. Gabe was accepted into the MIC Program at Summit Technology Academy his junior year and secured a paid internship at Data Locker, Inc. the following summer where he served as Lead Technical Intern.



Through Summit Tech, Gabe has earned seven separate certificates in systems engineering. Gabe will graduate in May having already earned an Associate of Systems Engineering degree. He will pursue his bachelor's degree at UCM where he has been accepted and offered a renewable Red and Black Scholarship worth up to \$6,000. Gabe also plans to continue his work with Data Locker.

DAVID CLARKSON

David Clarkson

Joel Clarkson is an eight-year Center student who is already well on his way to a college degree in Design and Drafting. Every year of high school, he has placed in the Top 10% of his class and has lettered in academics. Freshman, sophomore, and junior years, Joel participated in cross country, theater, and Math Relays. During his junior year at Center



he began pursuing an Associate's Degree in Design and Drafting by taking night classes, and during his senior year he became a full-time college student at Metropolitan Community College. During spring semester of his senior year, Joel began working as an intern at international engineering firm Black & Veatch as an intern drafter. During this time, Joel also worked at the

Senior Scholars

Blue Moose restaurant. After he graduates he will start taking classes toward a bachelor's degree in Design and Drafting at the University of Central Missouri which will only take two years with all the college credits he has already earned!

KIMBERLY COOK

Kimberly Cook

Kimberly Cook is a 13-year Center student who will major in Pre-Med and Biochemistry at Regis University in Denver, Colorado this fall. Kimberly is a highly involved student: during her years at CHS, she was a part of the Political Science Club, the National Honor Society, HOSA, Key Club, and the girls' volleyball team. During her senior year, she was the manager of the boys' soccer team. Kimberly also took on several leadership roles including Secretary of both Key Club and National Honor Society and Vice President of the Poli Sci Club. Her participation in Poli Sci allowed her to attend the Missouri Youth and Government Convention for three years where she served as a lawyer; her senior year, Kimberly was promoted to the role of judge. Outside school, Kimberly has volunteered at Montessori Academy and as a staff member at a COGWA youth camp, Camp Cherokee. She has been ranked in the Top 10% of her class each year of high school. Her academic achievements have granted her many opportunities. She has received over \$215,000 in renewable scholarship offers from five different universities. She has been accepted into Benedictine College, Missouri Western State, Northwest Missouri State, Missouri Southern State, the University of Missouri-Columbia, Wichita State, the University of Kansas, Iowa Wesleyan University, and Regis University.



JOSEPH EZEUGO

Joseph Ezeugo

Joseph Ezeugo is an 11-year Center student and a proud Nigerian who plans to study Biology and Biomedical Science or Business and Architecture this fall. Every one of his years at CHS, he has earned a place in the Top 10% of his class while taking on a formidable schedule of nearly all-Honors and AP courses and working part-time on weekends and over breaks. Joseph is also a stand-out athlete who has played on the varsity soccer and golf teams each year of high school. Joseph's passion for soccer is evidenced in the myriad awards he has earned while on the team: Best Freshman Award, Most Valuable Player, the Heart and Soul Award, and the Team Cheerleader Award. Joseph's maturity and work ethic have made him a natural fit for leadership roles across a range of settings. He has served as Captain of the soccer team, Co-Captain of Academic Team, President of HOSA, and Secretary of the National Honor Society. Outside of school, Joseph has represented the district at HOSA competitions and at the Missouri Scholars Academy. Joseph has been accepted to programs at Butler University, Hampton University, Howard University, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri-Columbia, the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Wichita State University. Joseph is the recipient of a renewable KC Scholars scholarship worth up to \$50,000. He plans to attend Butler University where he has been offered a renewable scholarship worth \$76,000.



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HOLLY GERRY

Holly Gerry

Holly Gerry is a 13-year Center student. She plans to attend the University of Missouri-Columbia in the fall to study Spanish and Women's and Gender Studies. Mizzou has awarded Holly with the Curator's Scholar Award, worth up to \$18,000 over four years. Holly has ranked in the Top 10% of her class each year of high school and will graduate with college credits earned in English, Spanish, and Pre-Calculus. Holly is a highly involved student. She has been a member of the Mighty Marching Yellowjacket Band for four years where she has served as both Section Leader and Drum Major. Holly has also been promoted to several other leadership positions during her high school career including President of Players 58, Lead Critic of Cappies, and Vice President of National Honor Society. Outside of school, she has represented Center at Girls State as well as held the position of Media Director at Missouri Youth and Government. Holly has been accepted to Mizzou and to the University of Missouri-Kansas City; she was also accepted to both schools' Honors Colleges and received the Curator's Scholar Award from both schools.



REINA GRAY

Reina Gray

Reina Gray is a 13-year Center student bound for New York University Tisch School of the Arts Dance Program. Reina has been at the top of her class throughout high school and has been awarded an academic letter each year. Reina has served as Co-Captain of the Varsity Academic Team and as Captain of Center's Improv Team, Plan C. Reina is a National Honor Society member and was Chairperson of this year's Blood Drive. Reina has also participated in Players 58, performing several featured roles in Center musicals and directing a Senior One Act this year. Outside of school, Reina has dedicated much of her time to dance and choreography. Reina has



Reina Gray continued

danced at The Pulse Performing Arts Center since she was in the first grade and has danced in its Competition and Performance Company (CPC) since fourth grade. As a CPC member, Reina has claimed myriad regional and national titles as both a soloist and as a team member. She has volunteered as an assistant dance instructor at Kingswood Senior Living and as a substitute instructor at the Pulse Performing Arts Center. Reina has also worked professionally in Kansas City as both a dancer and a choreographer: this year, her work, “Cuckoo Wake Up Call,” was selected to be performed professionally at the Folly Theatre. Reina has also spent much of her high school summers furthering her knowledge and training at dance intensives and workshops in Kansas City, Dallas, Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco, and New York. During her training in New York she has earned six college credit hours toward her Bachelor of Fine Arts at NYU.

XANDER HACKING

Xander Hacking

Xander is a seven-year Center student who joined the Center family at the end of fifth grade. Xander, who has ranked in the Top 10% of his class each year of high school, has been accepted to several university programs, but has decided to follow his dream of studying video game design. Xander’s first stop this fall will be Johnson County Community College; after earning his associate’s degree, he plans to transfer to a university program to complete his studies. As a middle school student, Xander enjoyed participating in the high school theater program



which sparked his love for drama and design. He has been awarded several times for his theater performances, including winning the Shakespearean Monologue Competition his freshman year, winning Best Newcomer Award his freshman year, and earning a Cappie his junior year for his performance in “Lucky Stiff.” His passion for role play and costume design has de-

Senior Scholars

veloped into a passion for Cosplay. His junior and senior years at Center, Xander organized the first- and second-annual Cosplay Day for students. Xander has spent his summers volunteering as a camp counselor at Shawnee Mission UU's Hogwarts Camp, a Harry Potter-inspired camp that teaches racial, social, and economic justice principles to children. A proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, Xander hopes his mark on the world is to make it a kinder and more inclusive place.

ARIANA HERNANDEZ

Ariana Hernandez

Ariana Hernandez is a seven-year Center student who will be attending Wichita State in the fall to study Spanish and American Sign Language for Interpreting; she has also been accepted into the prestigious Cohen Honors College there. She has remained in the Top 10% of her class for all four years of high school while taking on a schedule of primarily Honors courses. She will graduate with college credits earned in Spanish, Pre-Calculus, and English. Ariana has been a leader in Key Club, a member of the National Honor Society, and has also been a member of Cappies since her junior year. Her reviews for Cappies have been selected for publication multiple times. Ariana is known by staff at Center to be a natural friend and teacher to others, displaying maturity and empathy beyond her years: for these reasons coupled with her commendable writing abilities, Ariana will receive the English Department Award this year. Ariana also spends much time outside the classroom serving others: she has provided pro bono babysitting for mothers in need and works full time as an Infant Teacher at Punkin Patch Daycare. Her junior year, Ariana was selected as a KC Scholar, earning her up to \$50,000 in scholarship funds. Ariana is a first-generation college student who will be receiving over \$9,000 a year from Wichita State in grants and scholarships.



BROCK HOWERTON

Brock Howerton

Brock Howerton has attended the Center School District for 13 years and is now headed to Pittsburg State University to study Construction Management and to play baseball for the school. He will receive \$1,200 from the university in academic scholarships each year and has also been admitted to their Honors College. Throughout his four years at Center, Brock has been in the Top 10% of his class every year; he is also a member of the National Honor Society. Brock with graduate with college credits earned through dual-credit courses in Pre-Calculus, Statistics, Composition, and Popular Literature. He has also been an active and successful member of the Yellowjacket Baseball Team: he has played for the Varsity team since his freshman year, has lettered each year, has been the team's captain for two years, has broken many



school records, has made the All-District Team three times, and has been named the Jackson County MVP. Brock received offers to play college baseball from Highland Community College, Butler Community College, Iowa Wesleyan University, Emporia State University, Ottawa University, Hannibal-LaGrange University, and Pittsburg State.

ASHLY MOTA-PEREZ

Ashly Mota-Perez

Ashly Mota-Perez is a 13-year Center student who has lettered in academics and has been a member of the Top 10% of her class each year



of high school. She will be the first student in her family to attend college and is still undecided about what major she will pursue. Ashly is a natural leader, and has represented Center proudly in a variety of roles and settings. Her sophomore year, Ashly was accepted to attend the prestigious Missouri Scholars Academy with other gifted students from across the

Senior Scholars

state. Since middle school, she has competed with both the Academic Team and with the Math Relays Team. She is the Vice President of Key Club, serves as Chairman of Charities for the National Honor Society, and is the French Horn Section Leader in the Yellowjacket Band. This past year she has also earned the title of Distinguished Officer in Key Club. She was selected to work full-time at Cerner over the summer as an Associate Summer Intern. Ashly has been accepted to the University of Missouri-Columbia and to the University of Illinois at Chicago as well as to numerous other programs. Ashly has been honored as a KC Scholar, receiving a renewable scholarship worth up to \$50,000 at Mizzou. In the fall, Ashly plans to attend the University of Illinois at Chicago. Congratulations, Ashly!

ZANE PARKER

Zane Parker

Zane Parker has been a Center student since his freshman year. Zane plans to attend Wichita State University in the fall to study Child Psychology to become a play therapist. During every one of his years at CHS, he has been ranked in the Top 10% of his class while taking on a rigorous schedule of nearly all-Honors courses. Zane will graduate with college credits earned in Pre-Calculus, English, and Executive Finance and Technology. While at Center, Zane was a dedicated member of the football team where he was a four-year Powerjacket, lettered each year, and helped his team to two District Championships. A natural role model, Zane was selected throughout his high school career to numerous leadership positions. His senior year, Zane was Co-Captain of the football team. He was also elected as Media Director at Missouri Youth and Government his senior year after participating for three years. This year, Zane was also inducted into the National Honor Society. Zane is excited to begin his life as a WSU Shocker. Congratulations, Zane!



DEMOND WASINGTON

Demond Washington



No Comment

CALEB WORCESTER

Caleb Worcester

Caleb Worcester is a new Center student who plans to study Engineering Design among other subjects this fall. Caleb is known among staff and students for his polite and friendly personality and for his intellectual prowess. Teachers report that Caleb is innovative and brings a unique perspective to any problem he's working to solve: his intelligence quickly made him a stand-out student during his short Center tenure. Caleb consistently goes above and beyond in the classroom, serving as natural leader for others. He will enter college with credits earned in both English and Physics through Advanced Placement testing and through his



success in off-campus college classes in Software Development. Throughout his high school career, he has remained in the Top 10% of his class all while working nights and creating, selling, and commissioning original artwork. He has been accepted into the University of Missouri-Kansas City and to Metropolitan Community College.

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**2019-2020 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE RECOGNITION
MAY 2020**