

**2023 Raytown Community Pride Scholarship**  
**Quotes from RHS and RSHS Raytown Community Pride Essays**

*Students applying for the **Raytown Community Pride Scholarship** are asked to reflect on why they are proud of their Raytown Consolidated School District education. They reflect on mentors, extracurricular activities, academics, and school and community culture. Raytown Community Pride Scholarships are funded by the **Raytown Educational Foundation** and the **Raytown Retired School Personnel Association**. Seven scholarships were awarded to members of the Class of 2023.*

“My education in the Raytown School District has helped me realize what it means to set goals, work hard, and achieve those same goals I set.”

*Bryelle Ashley*

“Every morning when I walk through the doors of RaySouth, I get a sense of gratitude. The staff that I encountered these last four years always encourage me to do my best. I want to succeed because of how eager they are for me to.”

*Kayauna J. Barnes*

“. . .my favorite part is the community. I have made plenty of friends that are fun to be around. Everyone at my school seems to be significantly more understanding than anywhere else.”

*Nicholas Berg*

“As I await the final moments before graduation, I will take several memories with me. ‘1,2,3,Cards!’ a chant before each game, team huddles, game balls, and positive affirmations after the completion of every game. Posters of my team at the entrance of the school, along the cafeteria walls, and displayed at the entrance of the softball field.”

*Zayana Bradley*

“Our student body is diverse and inclusive. We are a salad bowl. We come from all over the world, have different religions, sexualities, skin colors, and beliefs, but we all respect each other and exist together without disrespecting or belittling the next person. I think that is one of the most beautiful capabilities to have in an educational setting.”

“The culinary arts program has introduced me to a lot more than just food. It has given me networking experience, problem solving and leadership skills, management experience, and introduced me to people in my community who had a monumental impact on the way I view the world who I would have never met otherwise.”

*Yasmin Carson*

“The name of the Raytown High School marching band is ‘Bluejay Pride’. When people go to the Raytown home football games or marching band competitions, they will see the marching band scream ‘PRIDE’ before each performance. I take pride in my marching band program, but I also take pride in my community, my school district, and the people who are as passionate about their education as me. I take pride in myself because of the Raytown Consolidated District teaching me the true meaning of pride.”

*Octavia Duarte*

“Geno Ostermier was the first teacher I built a connection with, and throughout the years I was his student, he taught me that I could be more. I still have the note and journal he gave me before he retired inspiring me to continue being a leader and to stop putting limitations on my capabilities. I am proud to be a member of the Raytown district because of the community that inspires others to grow and become a better person than they were before.”

*Kali Ellis*

“My high school experience contributed to my development as a self-confident, goal-oriented adult because high school taught me how to openly communicate with others, respect the people around me, and be more open-minded. Raytown has educated me to be more open to new people within my environment. With this new perspective on life, I have been able to effectively be less judgmental of people, listen to new views other than mine, and engage more with my classmates.”

*Lai’Ayla Flowers*

“My favorite aspect of Raytown Quality Schools is how diverse the community is. This has allowed me to become close with many people that have different cultures than I do. Sometimes I am even lucky enough to experience these cultures. These experiences are what led me to major in International Business. I always wanted to get a business degree, but with my love for learning about and experiencing different cultures, I knew that International Business would be the best fit for me.”

*Shawn Hulen*

“Cross country was the most difficult, but rewarding sport I have ever had the opportunity to compete in. We went to Rock Island Trail every day for practices and each day our stamina and mentality were tested and pushed to help us improve. Cross country not only made me a better athlete, but it also taught me to push through difficult situations. I was able to realize that I am capable of more than I allow myself to think if I am willing to work hard enough.”

*Lauren Jakes*

“Walking into Raytown South, I am greeted with smiles, encouraging words, and a supportive environment. A specific teacher that comes to mind is Mrs. Thomas. As my Speech and Debate coach, I will always remember how dedicated she is to this activity, but even more to her students. After a hard tournament, I am greeted with her kindness, understanding, and a simple question that always makes me feel better, ‘DID YOU HAVE FUN?’”

*Skyler Lea*

“I am proud of my Raytown Consolidated District education because of the inclusivity the district brings to the student body. There is support from all areas to be my true self, regardless of beliefs, race and ethnicity, gender expression, sexuality. Cultural pride is injected into the student body from those in charge of us. They strive to make Raytown a loving community through the way they treat students and their faculty members.”

*Olivia McCarroll*

“Being on the cheer team helped me learn flexibility with switching of coaches, having to fill spots when people were missing, and stepping up for my teammates when they weren’t there. The cheer team has challenged me in how to work with people, how to stay focused and confident regardless of what others are doing around you.”

*Rhaya Mitchell*

“If I am going to be honest, I don’t know any student from anywhere that goes to all their district’s Board of Education meetings every single month. Now I do have business there; I proudly give reports about Raytown High to the Board and Dr. Martin-Knox each month. I do not have to be the person giving this report, but I do because I love our district. I love going to the Board of Education meetings so I can learn about what’s happening in our district. how new measures or processes may affect Raytown High students, and how I am able to help.”

*Amaya Morgan*

“By being in more diverse schools, we are exposed to many different cultures, ideas, and languages that help us connect more to our world and be more accepting of people’s differences. This has made me more open-minded and aware of other people’s struggles. I enjoyed making friendships the most, whether it is with other students or with the faculty, who do such a great job making us feel included and teaching us how to be our best selves.”

*Lillian Ross*

“My teachers through the years have impacted how I view the world and my ability to be an independent thinker. They are the reason I know I am better than others want to believe I am. Through one of my teachers I learned that I am passionate about teaching. Through Raytown South High School and Herndon Career Center, I am currently completing a year long teaching internship at Raytown Central Middle School.”

*Alec Snider*

“Having been involved in cheer, theater, swim, and softball throughout my high school career, I’ve built lasting friendships, and I’ve gained more knowledge and experience in team work, self-discipline, and even discovering my own potential. Academically, I’ve learned to be confident when I have questions; I’ve learned to push myself and to complete everything I do to the best of my ability.”

“Sports have taught me how crucial it is to have relationships. They’ve taught me the beauty and importance of having people around you, supporting you, laughing with you, crying with you, and struggling with you. Having these friendships makes anything you do even more enjoyable. That’s the thing I love about the community of this school. Raytown South is family. Every club or team you’re a part of, no one is doing anything alone.”

*Delaney Summers*

“One of the many things that I love about the Raytown school district is our diversity. To me, diversity is an extremely important characteristic to a school and to be exposed to. I believe this because it teaches students to better understand each other and become more aware of the rich culture that exists in this world.”

*Nya Vargas*

“Being in Raytown during high school taught me about people, priorities, and expectations; taught me how to be an adult in difficult situation; how to get a job through their different business programs, and how to be a better leader through business experiences and an editor position. It was more than my GPA and good grades; it was my ability to grow as a person that made me a Bluejay.”

*Amya Winters*

“Being in high school has taught me different lessons such as knowing how to be understanding, teachable, advocating for myself and solving problems.”

*Cidney Woods*