

Community Pride 2018 (designates the 5 recipients)**

“I will remember meeting all the unique teachers at every school and the common characteristics within each of them: the strong importance of education and the respect that was shared for the Raytown school district. . . . the staff of teachers and my counselor really made me feel secure and helped with my planning of the future. My entire high school experience played the major role in my development into thinking like an adult. It was this building and the people inside that gave me the courage to really contemplate something as important and inevitable as my future.”

“I will also remember how much appreciation was shown toward students that exhibited a serious attitude for their academic success. It is this act of being given the credit of the hard work that was put into education that keeps the students in Raytown quality schools so motivated.”

Sophia Ahmed RHS

“Ever since I started school at Raytown High School I’ve always had some type of goal for myself no matter if it was to make all A’s or have 95% or more attendance. The staff at Raytown High School pushes you to achieve and strive for the best.”

Imani Battles RHS

**“I am proud of my Raytown Consolidated District education because it has shaped me into the person of character that I am today. I can remember the teachers, administrators, and friends who comforted me as a frightened incoming freshman, nurtured me, and championed me when I felt like I was not smart enough or good enough. Now, I am a confident senior. I am enriched just by attending Raytown schools and honored to be a part of this special community. Thank you, Raytown.”

“I remember junior year, walking into College Chemistry and Mrs. Barchak helping me grasp difficult content with silly chemistry songs that she played on her guitar. I will always remember her passion and commitment to teaching. This taught me to be committed and passionate about my goals.”

Asha J. Berry RHS

“Raytown is a beautiful microcosm of all sorts of people and ideas, with goals for success and the tools necessary to achieve it.”

Tom Bettis IV RHS

“. . . one more incredible opportunity I was granted during my high school career, was my mentorship with Likarda. Likarda is a research company whose aim is to find successful treatments for diseases in animals and transfer them to human medicine. Their main focus for treatment relies on cell therapy as opposed to invasive treatments or long term medical dependency. I was presented the task to research Addison’s Disease and how cell therapy can be used to treat or possibly cure the uncommon disease. In return they will publish my paper.”

“. . .very few high school students have been granted the opportunities that I am so grateful for. I have a job, internship, mentorship, and I am enrolled in dual credit classes. I will graduate from Raytown High School with twelve college credits and a published paper!”

Kaylee Ellmaker RHS

“From the beginning of high school, I attached myself to the friends I made in middle school, becoming the stereotypical, shy freshman. Then, I was persuaded by my best friend to do the fall musical in November. . . . I was only used to singing in front of church, with the congregation packed with family members and family-friends. “. . .with each step I took toward the choir room to audition for *The Drowsy Chaperone*, my stomach was crammed with butterflies. . . . while I sang the audition song, my sweaty and shaky hands held onto the sheet music as if it were rope. As days passed, the cast list appeared onto the bulletin board in front of the theater with my name printed on the paper. “

“If you fast forward three years, you can see an improved version of me. I continue to put the best of myself onto any stage I’m put on. I have been a part of 11 shows total. . . . I have created tight knit friendships with the most imaginative people I have ever met. The warmth and love that I felt since kindergarten made me feel more confident in who I am today, and who I’ll become in the future.”

Sydni Embry RHS

“The many activities and clubs I am involved in have all taught me skills I will continue to use my whole life. These programs have also influenced my future career. As an athlete I was exposed to many types of injuries and complications throughout seasons; this inspires me to work with athletes in the future as an athletic trainer. But, I not only want to help athletes, I want to help anyone in need. I plan on creating a non-profit to help children and teens find their voice, their confidence, and promote a good work ethic. My community service. . . helped me make this choice because every child should have an opportunity to a bright future. None of my plans would have become realistic without the help and guidance of the Raytown School District, most importantly, Raytown South High.”

Emma Gibson RSHS

“Participating in theater and choir have given me such amazing gifts of knowledge in real world events that can’t be taught in a classroom. These skills of communicating and making connections can’t be done through textbooks and that is a part of what I want to do when I grow up. I want to be a music teacher to not only teach the material but the lessons outside the classroom.”

Grace Givens RHS

“I’m grateful that I come from a very diverse yet accommodating school unlike others in the metro. This district showed me how anything is possible, but it was best to get things by working hard for them instead of getting them handed. I am grateful for the opportunities I was given like Girls’ State and being able to take part in the Trailblazer program which allows me to graduate with an associate of arts degree two days before getting my high school diploma.”

Gabriela Gerler RHS

“I used to think that it was rather unfortunate that I went to school in a small town like Raytown, but time and time again this district has proven me wrong. It’s our demographic and the rightness of the community that gives us a different perspective of the world and encourages us to reach for the stars.”

“Someone might think that activities like soccer and theater probably don’t have anything in common, but these two are the perfect juxtaposition to illustrate my experience at Raytown South. When I was simultaneously in these clubs, I realized that they were both very big on achievement and simply trying your hardest. High school has truly set me up to take on the world, and I wouldn’t trade my experience for anything, because without Raytown South I would probably still be afraid to even raise my hand in class.”

Brandon Guzman RSHS

**“I would not be as extroverted and social as I am if it were not for our theater program. Many would assume that you are brought out of your shell by being on stage, but that is not always the case. Being on sound crew, and eventually becoming the sound designer, has shown me just how important someone can be behind the stage. Going from a crew member on sound freshman year to the head student from junior year on has allowed me to see what it takes to be a leader. It has taught me how to prioritize the progress of the show with my school work, my relationship, and with my friends and family. It gave me the chance to talk to people of completely different experiences and backgrounds and find something that we had in common.”

Lydia Jefferson RSHS

“I’ve met teachers during my time in Raytown who, if I need them ten years from now and I called them, would pick up and help in a heartbeat. These teachers aren’t just there to get you to pass so you can move on; they actually want to see you succeed and enjoy life.”

“Sports teams are like families who meet every day for a couple hours, grind together, sweat and bleed together, eat together, lose and win, cry sometimes all together. That’s what I have here. I have multiple families who I can call on, whether it’s just to talk, or for advice. I have hundreds of brothers and sisters now. Sports have always been really important to me, but a family within my sport is worth more than any winning record.”

DaeRon Jones RHS

**“The student population is like an oversized family; sure we step on each other’s toes and clash occasionally, but at the end of the day we stand together. Cardinals go beyond the basic high school stereotypes; there aren’t any typical cliques. The same athletes that put on should pads, also wear the feathery band hats. The artists are mathletes. The guy who had the lead in the school musical applied to Harvard and plans to pursue a career in astronomy.”

“Every interaction I have had within this building has instilled confidence in me one way or another. Theater taught me how to work in teams; newspaper taught me how to meet deadlines, and student council taught me to advocate for myself and my peers. All of the skills I have learned in my high school career have helped me establish goals. Raytown pride runs through my veins because of my time spent at South High.”

Trevor Leslie RSHS

******“Raytown has been my home for a majority of my life, and I am proud that I lived here. When I went to the National Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders, most of the people around me came from private schools. When they introduced themselves to me, I had so much pride that I came from a public school, that I came from Raytown. It made them see me in a new light and look at me with a newfound respect.”

Juventud Luna RSHS

“Raytown District has such a diverse bunch of students. Kids who are black, white, gay, Muslim, Christian harbor a unique sense of personality and identity. I have been fortunate enough to obtain friends who fill a variety of niches in the melting pot. Having friends who are different has promoted me to learn and gain love and acceptance for all types of people. I was more enlightened on certain topics and often found myself seeing the work through different lenses due to the unique perspectives of my friends. I evolved as a person. I no longer operated on a one dimension mindset, but rather I was rewired and thrived. . . .”

Chiamaka Madu RSHS

“One of the biggest things I have learned is that I can make change happen; I have been empowered as a young woman to be the change I want to see happen. I will soon be moving on to Rockhurst University. I will be majoring in Nonprofit Leadership so that someday soon I will be able to open my own nonprofits that offer music therapy and music lessons to children in foster care. I have incredibly ambitious plans because the Raytown School District has instilled the idea in me that I can do whatever I set my mind to.”

Iliana Miller RHS

“My school district is a conglomerate of social groups, financial statuses, and walks of life. . . . I am humbled by the diversity and opportunity of my district. I am a straight A student in advanced math, English, and sciences classes. My test scores are competitive with students from other schools.

I played on the boys’ soccer team all four years of my career. Each year we were steamrolled by the other schools in our district, but each year my team came back and fought again and again. If that isn’t pride, I don’t know what is. I am confident I and others will walk out of the doors and influence the world for the better.:

Jack Scanlon RHS

******“Growing up I would always love to go to Norfleet elementary with my mom when she would prepare her classroom for the following week. My mother has devoted her life to the Raytown C2 School District as an elementary school teacher because she believes in what the district stands for. Now that I am about to graduate, I have experienced that school district through the perspective of both a student and a staff’s family member, and I know that this district is about as good as it gets. The Raytown School District is a community that feels like family.”

Dawson Schmutzler RSHS

“My career goal is to become a youth pastor and eventually lead pastor for a local church. One of the greatest benefits of my upbringing in the Raytown educational system is learning so much

about the culture around me. I've been able to see the best and the worst in people during my life, but a common issue among students and people outside the educational system is ignorance. Ignorance is what drives the hate in our culture; people hate who or what they've never known; cultures clash due to a lack of understanding of what made another person who they are. Raytown has blessed me with the opportunity of meeting so many people from very different walks of life. This has created the perspective of the world around me. My education and unique experiences have constructed me into a well-rounded individual that not only knows how to apply various math formulas to an equation and analyze classic literature, but also how to engage and interact with someone who is distinctly different than me”

Jakob Taylor RHS

“Theater was one of the most impactful clubs I joined. I learned how to be a leader through being in charge of the costume crew. I could have never thought that possible until I was shown how to be confident in my decision making while choosing what actors would wear. National Honors society and Student Council showed me the importance of community service and helping others. The annual Christmas party we throw for less fortunate kids around the district is the thing I am most proud of being a part of. I love seeing their eyes light up as they open their presents and meet Santa. These are the things I will never forget as long as I live. There is no other place I would have rather grown up than here is Raytown.”

Morgan VanRoss RSHS

“From the beginning of freshman year to the ending of my senior year, I notice a large shift in the goals I want to pursue. As I began to ponder about what I want to do as a career, I remember that I thought small and did not dream of too much. However, I believe that my years at Raytown have grown my confidence and my ability to expect more from myself. In the fall of 2018, I want to earn a degree in construction management, a field that I would have never had the courage to pursue in my younger years. The environment at Raytown has influenced me to create strong goals for myself and to go after them with full force.”

Sara Williams RHS