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Mayor Lightfoot, CTA and CPS Announce Student Recipients of “CTA Elevating Futures Scholarship Fund”

CTA, RPM Contractor Walsh-Fluor and Chicago Scholars in 2020 Launched RPM Scholarship Program to Help Youth Pursue Education and Careers in Construction

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. and CPS CEO Dr. Janice Jackson announced today that three recent Chicago Public School graduates have been named recipients of the “CTA Elevating Futures Scholarship Fund”, the first students to be awarded these scholarships since the program was launched earlier this year ([click here](#)) for a video about the winners).

The scholarship program provides \$5,500 per year for four years to economically disadvantaged students who plan to pursue studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) for engineering and construction-related degrees.

“As Chicago faces multiple challenges, now more than ever we must continue to find ways to increase equitable access to opportunity for all of our youth,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Innovative programs like this scholarship program help give the financial and mentoring support these outstanding students need and prepare them to build careers and participate in our city’s economic vibrancy.”

“From the very start, the RPM project has been about making a better future for all Chicagoans: residents, riders, businesses and the workforce,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “This program moves us closer to that goal by offering these remarkable students with the opportunity to pursue education and build careers in the construction and engineering fields.”

“Every CPS graduate deserves to be able to follow their postsecondary dreams without facing an insurmountable financial barrier,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “Through the ‘CTA Elevating Futures Scholarship Fund,’ the CTA and Walsh-Fluor are providing a helping hand to some of our city’s hardest-working young adults.”

“We are proud of these three students and the work they've accomplished,” said Dave Shier, Walsh-Fluor RPM Project Executive. “We hope this scholarship not only brightens their present, but enables them to lead tomorrow's engineering fields and truly become the city of Chicago's next generation of homegrown leaders.”

“The commitment provided to Chicago Scholars’ students through the ‘CTA Elevating Futures Scholarship Fund’ is a game changer. Not only does it provide important financial support, it is proof that Chicago’s leaders see these three students as the leaders of tomorrow,” said Dominique Jordan Turner, CEO of Chicago Scholars. “We are proud of these students, and all of our Scholars, who are continuing to commit to their futures and education in these uncertain times.”

The program was created as part of the CTA’s historic \$2.1 billion Red and Purple Modernization Phase One (RPM) project. Project contractor Walsh-Fluor Design-Build team is sponsoring the scholarships and making paid internships on the RPM project available to scholarship recipients.

The first-of-its-kind CTA initiative provides scholarships, mentoring support and career guidance for under-resourced college students. The scholarship program is administered by Chicago Scholars, a nonprofit dedicated to college access, college success, and leadership development for first-generation and low-income students in Chicago.

Donated by Walsh-Fluor to help offset tuition costs for CPS graduates, the \$250,000 ‘CTA Elevating Futures Scholarship Fund’ will provide 10 financial aid scholarships from 2020 through 2023 for students who plan on majoring in construction management, civil engineering, industrial or systems engineering. Students who are awarded scholarships will also be eligible to apply for paid summer internships with Walsh-Fluor and the CTA.

The 2020 CTA Elevating Futures Scholars, featured in a [video here](#), are:

Jasmine Jackson, 18, Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood



Jasmine ranked first in her class of nearly 200 students at **Noble Street Charter – Gary Comer College Prep** and will study engineering at Howard University. Her goal is to become a civil engineer because it will allow her to merge her two passions: math and art. She loves the challenge of solving a difficult math problem and the satisfaction of expressing her creativity through art. As a civil engineer, she will bring her creative side to her projects while ensuring everything is mathematically correct. Jasmine plans to use her profession to make the world a better place, for example, by starting a program that would build tiny homes for people who are experiencing homelessness.

Jorge Vargas, 17, Humboldt Park



Jorge graduated near the top of his class at **Lake View High School** and will pursue a degree in civil engineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is passionate about engineering and fell in love with trains as a young child, when he would travel back and forth between New York and Chicago on the Amtrak. He believes the innovative power that civil engineers have can be of immense benefit to society, and he hopes to use his engineering skills for positive social impact. In the future, he aspires to combine his interest in civil engineering with his entrepreneurial spirit by developing an international high-speed transit company that works to combat climate change. His goals also include providing more accessible and affordable transportation around the city in order to address needs in transportation deserts and promote economic development.

George Vintila, 18, Portage Park



After excelling at **Lane Tech College Prep** in advanced courses such as AP Physics C Electricity and Mechanics, AP Calculus BC, and AP Computer Science, George will be studying computer engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology this fall. He believes that engineers hold the power to implement ideas to help ease economic inequality. He is excited about what he will learn through studying engineering in college and hopes that his efforts “will contribute to a cycle, where new students learn to engineer and apply their new-found proficiency to help others in need, who will then learn and do the same thing.” At school, George tutored other students through the Physics Club and focused on promoting renewable energies and recycling through the Environmental Club.

For more information about this program, visit CTA’s web site at transitchicago.com/rpm/workforce-opportunities or [Chicago Scholars’ web site](https://chicagoscholars.org/elevatingfutures) at chicagoscholars.org/elevatingfutures.
