

## Southland College Prep Charter High School Seniors' College Scholarships Top \$ 1 million



RIGHTON PARK, IL.—December 18, 2013-- Two Southland College Prep Charter High School college-bound seniors, who each received \$ 262,000 scholarships to prestige institutions, were feted at a Southland College Prep school board meeting. Left to Right are: Dr. Deborah Bordelon, Provost, Governors State University and a founding board member of Southland College Prep; Andrea Kidd, Director, Southland College Prep; Ian Katiku of Park Forest, who received a scholarship to Columbia University, New York; Dr. Blondean Davis, CEO, Southland College Prep; and Asia Jenkins, Olympia Fields, who earned a scholarship to Vanderbilt University, Nashville. (Posted By richard barry, Community Contributor)

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RIGHTON PARK, IL.—December 18, 2013-- Half of the Southland College Prep Charter High School's first commencement class has received early admission to scores of top-ranked colleges and universities. To date, the new charter secondary school's seniors have been awarded \$1.2 million in college scholarship and merit funds.

“Southland seniors have been accepted on an early admission basis to 40 colleges and universities to date, including 22 private institutions,” said Ron Anderson, the school’s college counselor.

“Among the acceptances, are nine of U.S. News & World Report’s 50 top colleges and universities: [Columbia](#), Vanderbilt, Pittsburgh, St. John’s, Purdue, Monmouth, Kings College, Coe College and the [University of Pennsylvania](#)’s Wharton School of Business,” he said.

Several students have been accepted at multiple institutions and others are awaiting word.

Ian Katiku, 17, of Park Forest and Asia Jenkins, 17, of Olympia Fields, each received scholarships valued at \$260,000 for four years of undergraduate studies at Columbia University and [Vanderbilt University](#) respectively.

A dozen of their classmates earned four-year renewable scholarships averaging \$52,000 each and others have received as much as \$25,000 from colleges and universities.

“News of such excellent accomplishments, coming as it does in this season of promise and prophecy, is an affirmation of everything I’ve believed in throughout my own life and professional career,” said Dr. Blondean Davis, CEO of Southland College Prep.

“These college scholarship awards aren’t just about money—they offer something far more valuable—a hope for a future,” she said.

“The substance and size of these scholarship and merit awards to Southland seniors by first rate higher education institutions coupled with early admission to quality colleges and universities are proof that our dream is becoming a reality,” Dr. Davis said.

“Southland’s students, who are with few exceptions, African-American young people many of whose families are economically diverse, competed in a public lottery to earn

one of 500 seats in this new charter school that opened in the fall of 2010 to serve nine south suburban communities.

“At Southland, students spend a nine-hour European model school day pursuing a rigorous academic curriculum of science, math, technology, foreign languages and fine arts that earns them 32 credits-- more than one full year of courses completed by most other Chicago area high schools in the course of four years,” said Dr. Davis said.

“Our goal is to offer Southland College Prep students something that life often doesn’t give today’s high school students—a solid preparation to become citizens of the 21st century,” she said.

“While Southland’s days are long and the curriculum challenging, the faculty and staff of this new charter school are focused on preparing our students to earn a four-year college degree from an accredited institution so they may expand their horizons,” she said.

For many of our students, they will be the first in their family to achieve the goal of earning a college degree, she said.

“At Southland, we believe that young people can achieve their highest potential to learn, despite socioeconomic realities that frequently are cited as insurmountable barriers to achieving optimal educational results.

Jenkins, a member of Southland’s National Honor Society chapter, plans to pursue chemical engineering.

Outside of her high school activities, she has been an active participant in Girls4Science and Project Syncere, two independent non-profit organizations that are focused on encouraging girls to focus on science, technology, and engineering. Jenkins is also a volunteer at Missionary Baptist Church on the south side of Chicago.

Katiku, a native of Nairobi Kenya, is treasurer of Southland’s National Honor Society chapter and active in the school’s Interact Club that organizes and executes multiple service projects for people in need. He is also an award winning member of Southland’s

speech team. Last year, Katiku placed 2nd in Impromptu Public Speaking in the IHSA Regional tournament and took third place in Extemporaneous Speaking.

He plans to pursue a career in finance and economics.

#### About Southland College Prep Charter High School

Southland College Prep opened in August, 2010. It is the only public charter high school in Chicago's suburbs.

Admission to Southland is on a non-discriminatory basis with respect to race, ethnicity, disability and religious preference. Admission to the school is based on successful completion of elementary school and residence in District 227's four elementary school districts which include: Country Club Hills, Flossmoor, Hazel Crest, Homewood, Matteson, Olympia Fields, Park Forest, Richton Park and Tinley Park.

Dr. Davis' conviction that "children can achieve their highest learning potential when given the opportunity in an encouraging, student-centered, academically challenging environment," was a major factor in petitioning the Illinois State Board of Education to authorize the creation of the new charter public high school for students who reside in nine south suburbs.

The new school incorporates several intervention strategies to insure student success and has a team in place to provide all eligible students special education and related services.

Southland is located at 4601 West Sauk Trail Road, Richton Park, on eight acres in a three-story, 85,000 square foot, state-of-the art learning center with small class sizes, an extended nine-hour school day and a college prep curriculum which emphasizes math, science, technology, foreign languages and fine arts.

Southland's students use 21st century classroom tools including an electronic portfolio of work and a blog for each subject area. Students engage in technology-based collaborative learning with other students.

Qualifications for admission to Southland are elementary school graduation, residency in the District and the good fortune to be selected in a public lottery for the 500 places capped by the Illinois State Board of Education in the new four-year school whose first graduation is scheduled for Saturday, May 24, 2014.