



East St. Louis parent wins 2018 GEAR UP Family Leader of the Year Award

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) is honored to announce the seventh annual GEAR UP Leadership Awards, which recognize the outstanding achievements of select individuals. The 2018 Family Leader of the Year is Alexandria Montrece Taylor, the parent of an active GEAR UP East St. Louis student.

After being diagnosed in high school with Myopic Degeneration, which eventually led to the loss of her eyesight, Mrs. Taylor increased her involvement in community service by volunteering in her school district—especially with GEAR UP programs for the past four years. After working at her full-time job each day, Mrs. Taylor takes public transportation to District 189 GEAR UP programs, where she connects with students, engages with parents, assists with classroom presentations, and takes thousands of photographs for events. Mrs. Taylor has volunteered in the East St. Louis School District for 16 years. She has held various positions including Lead Parent, PTA President, and Parent University graduate. Over the past four years, she has volunteered over 1,500 hours and encourages parents to become involved as well. As the first GEAR UP East St. Louis Parent Fellow, Mrs. Taylor coined the phrase, “In GEAR UP, we love each other.” Her kindness and dedication to cultivating community strengthens the local group; not only is she focused on helping students identify and achieve their personal, academic, and career goals, but Mrs. Taylor also makes outreach to parents a priority so that they can fully understand the benefits of GEAR UP and aware of opportunities to participate in ways that will increase their child’s success.

The East St. Louis School District 189 GEAR UP program supports the Class of 2019 and 2020 to ensure they are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. GEAR UP 189 services 650 students and has been supporting these cohorts since 6th and 7th grade, respectively. With Mrs. Taylor’s exceptional efforts, the GEAR UP St. Louis group has grown from 25 to 100 consistent members while enriching students’ lives. Mrs. Taylor exemplifies determination in the face of challenge, empathy for students, and support for other parents. Mrs. Taylor is proud to serve with the District 189 GEAR UP program, because “I see first-hand the impact it has to prepare students for college success and to motivate our students to #dreambigdreams.”

The Family Leader of the Year award will be given to East St. Louis resident Alexandria Taylor on Tuesday, July 18. NCCEP CEO and president, Ranjit Sidhu, will present the award to her.

As the membership association for GEAR UP, NCCEP builds the capacity of communities so that underserved students have the opportunity, skills, and knowledge to successfully pursue education beyond high school.

East St. Louis School District 189 is focused on providing rigorous, high quality education and exceptional educational experiences to the nearly 6,000 students within the community. Our vision is for students to be supported physically, socially, and emotionally in a safe and nurturing environment to achieve academic success that prepares them for college, the workforce, and citizenship in the 21st century. For more information, visit www.estl189.com. Follow more great stories @estl189 on Facebook and Twitter.

