

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Birmingham National  
College Fair**

**Location: BJCC**  
September 17

**National GEAR UP Week**

September 17-23

**GEAR UP PARENT  
AMBASSADOR  
RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To enhance communication between parents and families and GEAR UP Birmingham

- To provide a positive GEAR UP experience for parents and families of GEAR UP Birmingham students

- To assist in disseminating information to parents and families at various GEAR UP events, as well as Birmingham City Schools' events.

- To encourage involvement and participation from parents and families that reflect GEAR UP Birmingham's diverse student population.

If you are interested in joining or learning more about the ambassador program, contact [mfunderburg@bhm.k12.al.us](mailto:mfunderburg@bhm.k12.al.us).

# GEAR UP

## BIRMINGHAM BULLETIN

### A NOTE FROM DR. SIMMONS

Greetings GEAR UP Birmingham family!

Can you believe that we've made it through the first month of school? Time sure does fly by when you're having fun :-). September is an exciting time for the GEAR UP Birmingham family because GEAR UP sites across the nation designate a whole week to raise positive awareness about the impact the nationwide GEAR UP programs have on helping students Gain Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. Mark your calendar for National GEAR UP Week - September 17-23. During this week, we will provide resources that our Birmingham City High Schools can use to plan fun and engaging activities that promote a college-going culture. Stay up-to-date with all GEAR UP Week activities by following us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, using the hashtags #GEARUPBham and #GEARUPWORKS.



**Dr. Kisha T. Simmons, NBCT**

GEAR UP Project Director

Twitter: @KTSimmons4AU

Email: [ksimmons@bhm.k12.al.us](mailto:ksimmons@bhm.k12.al.us)

Last, but certainly not least, the GEAR UP Birmingham staff and ambassadors would like to extend a warm welcome to our new superintendent, Dr. Lisa Herring. Dr. Herring came to us from Jefferson County Public School System in Kentucky, where she served as the Chief Academic Officer. She has already demonstrated tremendous leadership abilities, and her passion for children is truly evident in both words and actions. We are so excited to have her, and we look forward to "powering the future" along-side her and the rest of the BCS family.

### UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL ALABAMA OFFERS FAMILIES A WAY TO SAVE MONEY THROUGH A STATEWIDE 2:1 MATCH PROGRAM

United Way of Central Alabama offers the Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program. This state-wide program is a matched savings program that allows students and families to build assets and establish skills for financial self-sufficiency. Through the match program, individuals are able to pay for college or job training, purchase a first-time home or start or expand a small business. Applicants must have a low to moderate income and be employed.

The program has a 2:1 match ratio. Individuals can save up to \$2,000 and receive a \$4,000 match. They will be able to use up to \$6,000 to go toward college, a home or a business. Parents are able to save on behalf of their student. Senior year high school students can participate in the program through a special matching option. Students can save up to \$500 in earned income and receive a \$4,000 match for a total of \$4,500 that can be used for qualified college related or job training expenses.

All applicants must take financial literacy courses. Based on their specific saving goal, they may complete an education plan, business plan and/or credit counseling.

This program has proven to be successful for many. More than 200 people have purchased a home, 187 individuals have attended college and 57 people have started a new business.

To learn more and/or apply, visit [www.uwca.org/ida](http://www.uwca.org/ida).

## AMBASSADOR TEAM LEADS



***Kimbrough Jennings***

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** My duties are based on the relationship between GEAR UP Birmingham and Birmingham City Schools. I have a long-standing alliance and partnership with GEAR UP, and as an active ambassador, I participate in many social and cultural events.

**Why I decided to become a parent ambassador:** To ensure my son's school success, I wanted to be actively involved in his education.

**A fun fact about myself:** I love to take photographs!



***Keona Oliver***

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** As an ambassador, I represent the parent view of GEAR UP. I am the voice so parents can hear first-hand new opportunities.

**Why I decided to become a parent ambassador:** I wanted to let everyone know about the wonderful

opportunities GEAR UP offers and those it has personally offered me.

**A fun fact about myself:** I can't dance, but I will get on the floor and jam like no one is watching.



***Lindsay Arrington-Williams***

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** As an ambassador, I try to encourage other parents and students throughout Birmingham City Schools System to take part in GEAR UP events and activities.

**Why I decided to become a parent ambassador:** I became an ambassador because I've seen how great this program is first hand. Not only is my daughter excited to go to college, but she is already preparing, as a freshmen. GEAR UP gives her the tools to make college a reality in high school.

**A fun fact about myself:** I like NASCAR.



***Kobie Jennings***

**School:** Ramsay H.S.  
**Grade:** 10th

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** I am a student ambassador that makes a commitment to the mission of GEAR UP Birmingham.

**Why I decided to become a student ambassador:** So, I can let my peers know of all the wonderful opportunities that are out there for us.

**A fun fact about myself:** I like to meet new people.



***Kennedy Johnson***

**School:** Jackson-Olin H.S.  
**Grade:** 9th

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** I represent GEAR UP in school. I participate with fellow peers to implement more ideas so that we can broaden our future.

**Why I decided to become a student ambassador:** I want to tell my friends about the program. I took advantage of the camps, ACT prep and math tutoring.

**A fun fact about myself:** I'm very silly. I love to make jokes.



***Shelbe Arrington***

**School:** Ramsay H.S.  
**Grade:** 9th

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** I believe that my responsibilities as a student ambassador are to lead when no one is looking, to enrich people with the knowledge of

GEAR UP and share my experience of GEAR UP.

**Why I decided to become a student ambassador:** The reason why I chose to become a student ambassador is to help me widen my horizon on how to be a better leader and to improve my outlook on the world.

**A fun fact about myself:** I am very inquisitive, and I enjoy history.

## AMBASSADOR TEAM LEADS



**Herman J. Lumzy, Jr.**

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** My responsibilities as an ambassador include informing other parents within the GEAR UP cohort of the available resources for themselves, opportunities for their children, to be a sounding board for other parents and to be a cheerleader for not

just GEAR UP Birmingham but also Birmingham City Schools District.

**Why I decided to become a parent ambassador:** As a parent, I see the absolute value of what GEAR UP Birmingham means to my daughter. I want to be able to convince other parents and BCS collaborators of how important this program is to our children and the families involved. GEAR UP Birmingham has the ability to impact the entire community.

**A fun fact about myself:** GOD, Family, 'Bama State - Until I Die ... I think that about says it all!



**Tamika Jenkins Bolton**

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** To promote GEAR UP and inform eligible students and parents of its benefits.

**Why I decided to become a parent ambassador:** I believe in and support GEAR UP's mission of instilling a college going culture.

**A fun fact about myself:** My dream career would be a storm chaser or a wedding/party planner.



**Kamil Goodman**

**School:** A.H. Parker H.S.  
**Grade:** 10th

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** My responsibilities are to try and get other students involved and exposed to the GEAR UP program, to represent GEAR UP Birmingham at different programs and functions and to be a

good representative of GEAR UP Birmingham and Birmingham City Schools.

**Why I decided to become a student ambassador:** I decided to become a student ambassador because GEAR UP has exposed me to things I haven't seen before, and I want to continue being a GEAR UP student until I graduate high school.

**A fun fact about myself:** I am a well-rounded person involved as a Bisonette in Parker's band, and I play basketball and soccer.



**Sydney Bolton**

**School:** Huffman H.S.  
**Grade:** 10th

**My responsibilities as an ambassador:** My responsibilities as a GEAR UP ambassador are to promote GEAR UP to all parents, students and all possible participants; to uphold GEAR UP's

expectations; and to continually be active in the GEAR UP program.

**Why I decided to become a student ambassador:** I decided to become a student ambassador because I am aware of all the opportunities that GEAR UP provides for current 9th and 10th graders in Birmingham City Schools. I believe that I am worthy and have the ability to continually endorse the Birmingham GEAR UP program.

**A fun fact about myself:** I enjoy traveling.

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### PARTNERS

