



Student Spotlight

Ashlyn Smith is a senior at Clinton High School in Anderson County, and a participant in GEAR UP TN.

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

A: I am finishing my requirements for my General Associate degree through Roane State Community College while completing the requirements for graduation at Clinton High School. I will earn my associate degree one week prior to my high school graduation. My passion is percussion. I play in my high school band and enjoy the competitive nature of a private drum corps. This summer I will travel with Colts Drum and Bugle Corps competing nationwide. Our team is made up of performers age 14-22. We will spend one month on the Monmouth College campus preparing, then go to venues from coast to coast throughout the summer.

Q: What accomplishment are you most proud of at this point in your life?

A: My greatest accomplishment would definitely be receiving the National College Match Scholarship from Questbridge. With this scholarship, I am able to attend Davidson College with a full ride, including travel, food, room and board. I plan to major in Psychology with a concentration in Forensic Science with the goal of using that degree in a criminology field.

Q: What impact did GEAR UP TN or your GEAR UP TN site coordinator have on you?

A: I would not have been as successful in my college journey without my GEAR UP TN coordinator. Before her, I had no idea what Questbridge even was, much less where I wanted to go after high school. From 7th grade onward, the GEAR UP TN coordinator has been able to help me determine what path I wanted to take in life, and though I'm still uncertain on what I want to major in, I have a better understanding of what I do and don't wish to pursue.

Q: Of all the activities and services GEAR UP TN provided, what was the most meaningful/helpful for you?

A: The most beneficial activities that I have done through GEAR UP TN were the college visits and career inventories. I also had the opportunity to visit Davidson College after I got accepted, and I am grateful to have gotten to experience part of the college experience before fully attending.

Q: What advice would you give a current high school junior or senior?

A: Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. You will never get opportunities if you don't put in the effort and present yourself to people. I knew I had to work harder than most people to earn scholarships in order to go to a university because my parents are divorced, and the money was going to be a challenge. Hard work gets rewarded eventually.

To learn more about the Questbridge National College Match Program, visit [Questbridge.org](https://www.questbridge.org).