

Juliet Avila

Clinton High School, Class of 2023

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

A: Hi my name is Juliet Avila! I am a first generation to the country as well as a college student. I was raised back and forth between Honduras and Tennessee, and I am currently starting my future here in the States. I have two jobs. I work at Panera Bread and at Techmer PM as an intern under the HR department. I enjoy the outdoors, like to read, and I love to try new things.

Q: What have you done since or do you plan to do after graduating from high school?

A: I plan on finishing my associate degree at Roane State Community College and then transferring over to the University of Tennessee Knoxville. I will be transferring over by Spring Semester of 2025. I would like to major under the Marketing field and/or International Business. I will also be minoring in a foreign language. I am still debating on whether or not to go for a degree high than a bachelor's degree; it is still a thought.

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

A: An accomplishment that I have become most proud of at this point in my life is realizing how hard working and independent I have become. I look back and notice the effort I have put in for my future and I thank myself for it. Many do not have the dedication to continue to push themselves harder.

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

A: I would say that my GEAR UP site coordinator has had the most impact in my academic career. Hoppy Merryman has been like a second mother to me. She has helped me with scholarships, college applications, and any concerns that I have had with my education. Not only has she helped me with my education, but she has also helped me with my personal life. Hoppy has seen me at my lowest point, and she made sure to lift me up. She has seen me cry and she has seen me extremely happy. If it was not for Hoppy Merryman, I would not be where I am today. I am truly thankful that I have met her, she has been a blessing.

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

A: The most meaningful activity that GEAR UP TN provided for me was the Youth Summit of 2022. Some rising seniors were selected to be a part of the activity, and I am thankful that I was one of the selected. My classmates and I, along with other schools, dormed at Austin Peay State University and had the time of our lives. The highlight of the trip was when we had to perform on a stage. We spent hours planning out the dance moves. Hoppy Merryman provided for the accessories, and even bought us "confetti poppers". Once we were on the stage, we performed as we had rehearsed. To end the dance, we opened the poppers and boom! The poppers were actually powdered poppers. Most of us on stage were stained with red powder, the front row had it worse, the stage itself was covered, and the bottoms of our shoes were stained. We did help clean the auditorium and had a good laugh to end the day. This Youth Summit has many great memories, and I loved my time there.

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

A: Work on your future and stay focused. You will thank yourself in the long run for all of the effort you have put in. Also, enjoy your life as much as you can. This stage of your life is the best years for you to have fun before life adult life gets serious. Keep your head high, the best it yet to come!