

# Zena's House, Inc.

Where youth have HOPE!

Fall 2021

## Zena C. Gyasi Academic Scholarship

We are beyond thrilled to introduce the **Zena C. Gyasi Academic Scholarship** for seniors attending a public high school in South Fulton, GA. Our committee has worked extremely hard this year to bring this dream to fruition. Our committee members are Mrs. Ellen Tannor Richardson, sister to Zena and Bernice, Dr. Melissa Hagan, dedicated and longstanding supporter of Zena's House and Mrs. Katrina Sloan, a devoted former Zena's House tutor and current Operation Graduate mentor.

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[www.zenashouse.org](http://www.zenashouse.org)

The scholarship will award two students \$1,000 each to assist with tuition at a 4-year accredited college or university. Students must attend a public high school in South Fulton, have a 2.7 GPA (B average), complete application package and provide all supporting documents and materials. Details for submission will be announced in January 2022! Stay tuned!

*Zena was an amazing young lady who left us too soon. She died at the age of 17 due to Lupus and its complications in 2002. Zena loved school. She took her education seriously and always worked hard to do well. She loved to read and appreciated a Barnes & Nobles gift card! She also loved to play basketball and volleyball. She exhibited leadership, maturity, and a strong measure of faith at her young age. Our family is happy to continue her legacy through this scholarship. We celebrate Zena's life through education with the Zena C. Gyasi Academic scholarship!*



**We invite those who appreciate and support Zena's House, value education and want to support a promising young person on their college journey to donate to our inaugural scholarship fund. You can text zena4college to 44321, donate via cash app at \$zenashouse (706-503-2524) or donate via Paypal on our website [www.zenashouse.org](http://www.zenashouse.org). Please note in your giving 'scholarship.'**

With your backing, we hope to support more students each year!!

Thank you in advance for your love and support!

See our videos and workshops at [www.youtube.com/user/zena0485](https://www.youtube.com/user/zena0485)

## LIFE'S ESSENTIALS Workshops to INFORM and EMPOWER



### The Well-Rounded Student (WRS)! 8.28.21

The focus of this workshop was to equip students with the tools needed to be the WRS. The WRS knows their GPA, has a good relationship with his/her counselor, is involved in after school programs or sports and volunteers in their community. Ms. Merriweather, Career, Technical and Agriculture Education (CTAE) educator and Future Health Professionals Organization (HOSA) program lead and Mrs. Watkins, Counselor, both from Langston Hugues High School, and Mrs. Stacey Grundy, ZH volunteer, facilitated. The workshop covered the importance of extracurricular activities, volunteering in your community and how counselors help students on their journey.

Students also completed their student profile, which acts as their resume. Photos Unlimited (Ricardo Ivory) was onsite to capture headshots for their student profiles. The workshop was a HUGE success and engrained in students a better understanding

of what it means and takes to be a WRS and how to make the most of their current opportunities to guarantee a successful college admission outcome.

### Social Media: The Good, Bad, and Super Ugly, 9.25.21

Teens and adults alike are using social media now more than ever due to the pandemic. ZH and Distinguished Young Ladies (DYL) hosted this important workshop to sustain efforts to keep our students and parents informed and safe online. Our amazing speakers were Mr. Harris, new Langston Hughes High Principal, DJ Beelax, Social Media Influencer, Attorney Trinity Townsend, Toni Tennyson Smith, counselor, and Ms. Lydia Sermons, engaged parent. Some important takeaways from this workshop were: 1. Schools can discipline students for what they post online after school hours (nudes, fights, threats, bullying, etc.). Don't keep pictures or videos of fights, nudes or threats on your phone. DELETE images and tell your school administrator of threats. 2. Students can be charged with crimes for cyberbullying, cyberstalking, fighting, threats, child pornography (sending semi or nude pictures of other students). 4. Students and adults can lose jobs, opportunities, scholarships, admissions etc. for what they say and do online. We ALL have a digital footprint. Make sure it is CLEAN and doesn't inadvertently hold you back from your educational or professional goals.



### Let's Get College-Ready! 10.16.21



ZH and DYL are always excited to help prepare our students to successfully apply to college and for scholarships. Our phenomenal speakers were Ms. Marnessa Vital, Executive Director of GRASP Inc., Mrs. Tahira Chandler, New Manchester High school AVID and Math Teacher and yours truly, Bernice Bronson. The important points from this workshop were:

1. Start your process early! Do not wait until your senior year to look at your grades or join after school activities or to volunteer. Great grades alone will not get you acceptance or scholarships! 2. Communicate regularly with your counselors 3. Ask for letters of recommendations 3-4 weeks in advance and follow up. YOU need their help! 3. Let 1-2 other qualified people read your essay. DO NOT hit submit until someone else has read your essay and provided feedback.

4. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) EARLY and make no mistakes. Mistakes on the application will move you to the end of the line. Complete on laptop/computer, NOT phone. Colleges have different FAFSA

deadlines. The FAFSA provides 10 slots to add the schools to which you are applying. Use all 10.

5. Volunteer and participate in extracurricular activities starting in the 9th or earlier. 6. The 9 black sororities and fraternities known as THE DIVINE 9 give scholarships! Google all nine serving the city you live in and apply. For example, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority in CITY you live in and see what comes up. Do for all 9! 7. There are scholarships for everyone! (C student, twins, left-handed, first-generation college student)! Do your research! Check out [www.avwsf.org](http://www.avwsf.org).

## Sponsor Spotlight: Verla Neslund, Esq.



It is with great pleasure we spotlight Mrs. Verla Neslund! Mrs. Neslund was Bernice Bronson's supervisor at the CDC Foundation. Verla has since retired and Bernice left the Foundation in 2018 to pursue Zena's House full-time. Verla was a great supervisor and provided professional mentorship and all-around support while at the Foundation and after. Mrs. Neslund has donated to ZH over the past several years and we are thankful. Mrs. Neslund received her BA in Journalism from the University of Minnesota; and her Juris Doctor from Emory University School of Law. She spent the first 8 years of her career in television and newspaper journalism and then attended law school. She spent the remainder of career in law and public health with CDC.

**We asked Verla why she decided to support ZH.** "I strongly believe in supporting and encouraging motivated young people as they start to develop their professional and personal interests. I have always loved young people, especially because of their idealism and enthusiasm. "I know from personal experience the difference that encouragement from a trusted person and learned coping skills make when a young person is uncertain about an important decision, or is about to give up on their dreams." **How would you encourage others to support ZH?** I would encourage anyone to support Zena's House because their programs inspire and develop leaders. They have results to back up the effectiveness of their youth-oriented leadership and development programs. They have the ability to build up and populate our communities with educated, talented and motivated people who can carry forth the same vision of positive change as Zena's House founder exemplifies. Lastly, we asked Mrs. Neslund **what advice she would give to youth,** "Do not underestimate the ability of God to develop your talents, to put the right opportunities in your pathway, or your own ability to work hard for what you believe. You were designed and created by a loving God who will be at your side every step of your life! We salute Mrs. Verla Neslund!

## Student Spotlight: Janiyah Williams

We are always excited to spotlight an amazing Zena's House student. Janiyah is a senior at Langston Hughes High School and will graduate salutatorian in May 2022. Janiyah was introduced to ZH by Mrs. Bronson who served as her substitute teacher in her health careers class in 2019. Janiyah expressed her interest in becoming a physician and Mrs. Bronson told her about ZH. Soon after, Janiyah volunteered at ZH during Covid and motivated Mrs. Bronson to take a Covid course through Coursera as Janiyah's resume had reflected. Janiyah volunteered and attended our Well-Rounded Student workshop and encouraged students to stay connected with their counselor and be proactive.



Janiyah hopes to attend GA Tech and major in Biology and maybe minor in English. She is interested in becoming an Obstetrician or Physician Assistant. We asked Janiyah how ZH has helped her- "Zena's House had provided me with many networking opportunities, and I have met other students who are interested in the same things as me. Ms. Bernice is always around to give a helpful hand whether it's for high school or getting ready for college." We asked Janiyah what advice she would give to her peers. 'I would tell them to register for any upcoming Zena's House events so that they may be able to learn something that can help with the college process. I would also tell them to create a timeline to keep track of all important deadlines.'

Janiyah is smart, mature and focused. We are happy she became apart of ZH and wish her all the best in college and beyond!

**Want to donate to ZH? TEXT zenashouse to 44321**

# Thank YOU 2021 \$upporters!

**Donors: \$1- \$99 \$100—\$999/year \$1,000+/year (\*) Monthly**

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## Zena's Hou se WISH LIST

5 or more new monthly donors – donate any amount you can monthly for at least one year.  
(Funds support programs and operating expenses)

Volunteers to:

- Develop new Youth Advisory Board of 4-5 teens in South Fulton
  - Raise funds as the ZH Fundraising Squad
  - Help Increase our reach and awareness on Social Media

Please email or call us with any questions about our Wish List

bernice@zenashouse.org \* 678.665.6506



Zena's House is a non-profit youth development organization that provides life-skills workshops, mentoring and exposure trips for middle and high school students in metro Atlanta. Our vision is to instill hope in youth through education, life-skills workshops, exposure, encouragement and love—ultimately to see youth so full of hope whereby they know and believe nothing shall be impossible to them!