



## On the Fast-Path to College with Out-of-School Programming

By: Mariah Mendoza

*Now that summer is finally here in Minnesota, NAZ out-of-school-time (OST) partners are in full-summer operation. Creating a college-going culture requires year-round programming. Thanks to the partnership of organizations, families, and generous donors, we're providing more support for scholars to continue on the path of academic success!*

Entering high school, Entegryti (14 and a scholar at Cookie Cart) decided to claim her future one opportunity at a time. With unconditional support from her family and the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ),

Entegryti is not only focusing on school but a dream as well.

"When I was younger, I would go to the hospital to visit my grandma. She went through a lot of surgeries, and

I didn't feel like she was getting the treatment she deserved ... Now, I want to go to school for medicine and, one day, become a doctor," said Entegryti.

### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Since joining NAZ, Entegryti's mother Lucretia made sure to bolster her daughter's education through NAZ partner OST learning programs. In elementary school, Entegryti enrolled in Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC). In middle school, she attended the Kwanzaa's 21st Century Academy. And now, she works at the Cookie Cart. Together, the programs have been a recipe for empowerment and success.

OST programming plays a significant role in the lives of many NAZ scholars. The additional learning time enables students to catch up and

sometimes jump ahead in reading and math proficiency. NAZ partners host after-school academic programs during the school year and high-energy full-day academic programming during the summers. All programs follow best-practice methods for academic enrichment.

Catrice O'Neal, the Director of the OST programs at PCYC, can't say enough about the benefits of youth development programs and how they positively influence scholars. "I was a young person not on track for graduation and was uncertain about my future. It wasn't until I got involved with programs outside of school that I was able to see my future and think about what that could look like for me," said Catrice. "Youth development programs give scholars opportunities to explore their individual talents and interests."

PCYC's after school and summer programs are open to youth in kindergarten through fifth grade who live and attend school in North Minneapolis. "Everyday, during the school year, students will come from area schools to PCYC for two hours of additional academic-enrichment programming. In the summer, students participate in an eight-week program," Catrice explained. "We combine academic enrichment, social and emotional learning strategies, and the arts. We include as

many fun activities as possible for our scholars to enjoy so they are excited about coming every day."

### COLLEGE

As the process to apply for college nears for Entegryti, affording higher education is at the forefront of her concerns. Her family knows college can be expensive, but the experience as a whole is utterly invaluable. "If Entegryti were to go to college and graduate, it would mean she'd be in a better place than I am. She would be the first in our family," Lucretia said. "She would be self-sufficient and successful. I know she can overcome any obstacle that stands in her way—I've seen her do it."

"Even just saying the word 'college' has meaning and holds weight," Catrice says. "Talking about college, celebrating college, and having conversations about college is something we do year-round with our scholars. The college-going-culture is something we celebrate."

Both Entegryti and Lucretia honor the role OST programming has played in Entegryti's life thus far. "NAZ Partner OST programming has contributed to who Entegryti is today, and the skills she's learned there will help her succeed when she gets to college as well."

