



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SCHOLARSHIP GIVEAWAY CREATE HOPE FOR MONROE COUNTY WINNER**

**ATHENS, W.Va.** – Middle schoolers from Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, and Wyoming Counties filled the Convention Center with elevated levels of energy and excitement for the GEAR UP SWV kickoff event. GEAR UP Southern West Virginia handed out four \$500 scholarships during the kickoff event on January 27 at the Raleigh County Convention Center. Two students from Monroe County took home checks for \$500 to Concord University, while a student from Bluefield Middle and another student from Park Middle took home a scholarship for New River Community and Technical College.

A Concord scholarship went to 7<sup>th</sup> grader Dylan Reece also from Peterstown Middle. Reece said he was excited to win because he, “always dreamed of going to college.” The scholarship puts him one step closer to that dream with a downpayment. Reece said he plans to build a shelf to display the check in his room. Macy Pitzer, a sixth grader at Peterstown Middle, had the golden ticket for the first Concord scholarship awarded.

Bluefield Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> grader Jazmine Alexander won the first New River Community and Technical College scholarship. Samuel Demoss, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader from Park Middle School won the second New River Community and Technical College scholarship.

Students arrived to see a “beach ball banter” that included the colorful balls bouncing around the sections, moving quickly from one child’s toss to another during the playful game. Most of the noise came during the featured speaker’s presentation. [EJ Carrion](#)—best-selling author, successful entrepreneur, and preeminent thought leader shared his inspiring story of working to be the first in his family to graduate college and moving onto become a successful entrepreneur. Many of the students stuck around insisting to get a selfie with EJ.

New River Community and Technical College’s mascot, the hawk, along with Roar, Concord’s Mt Lion stole the show a few times. Roar upstaged presenters at one time as he shared some specialized dance moves. He was quickly escorted off stage.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal grant designed to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in public and private colleges, universities, and community colleges immediately after high school. GEAR UP SWV will help students from southern West Virginia find the tools they need to attend college or gain other postsecondary education and succeed.

For more information, contact Jessica Lilly, GEAR UP SWV Communications Manager, at [jlilly@concord.edu](mailto:jlilly@concord.edu) or 304-384-5981.



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