



NEWS RELEASE

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Five BCPS students to be honored in inaugural “18 Under 18” awards program for outstanding youth

Students will be featured at event, in Baltimore magazine profile in May

Towson, Md. – Five BCPS students are among the [“18 Under 18”](#) students to be honored by Junior Achievement of Central Maryland, in partnership with *Baltimore* magazine. The inaugural award program is designed to highlight youth, ages 5 to 18, from Anne Arundel, Carroll, Baltimore, and Harford counties and Baltimore City, who are future leaders, change makers, and innovators.

The BCPS students being recognized are:

- Maja Durkovic, Grade 12, Eastern Technical High School
- Beloved Joshua Simons, Grade 9, Lansdowne High School
- Halee Simons, Grade 12, Chesapeake High School
- Kasey Tarburton, Grade 8, Stemmers Run Middle School
- Emma Wilson, Grade 12, George Washington Carver Center for the Arts and Technology

The honorees will be featured in the May 2023 edition of *Baltimore* magazine, profiled on the Junior Achievement of Central Maryland website, have opportunities to network with executives and leaders in the greater Baltimore area, and be recognized for their accomplishments at a [formal awards ceremony](#). The awards ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 10, at 7 p.m. at the JA Youth and Workforce and Innovation Center.

Brief biographies of the BCPS honorees follow:

Maja Durkovic, age 17, is president of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, a student page for the Maryland General Assembly’s 2023 legislative session, a member of the Maryland Youth Advisory

Council, co-founder of the Eastern Tech chapter of Maryland High School Democrats, legislative affairs coordinator of Baltimore County Student Councils, an intern at the Baltimore County Bar Association, and a participant in the 61st annual United States Senate Youth Program. For the past two years, she chaired the Eastern Tech chapter of Maryland High School Democrats, an organization she co-founded as a sophomore. She tutors through the math and social studies honor societies.

Beloved Joshua Simons, age 14, founded Beloved J Public Speaking Firm, LLC, which is now a member of the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce and Maryland State Chamber of Commerce. His business offers speaking, audio/visual editing, transitioning, graphic design, and voiceover services, and he has launched a Beloved J. Business Academy to help aspiring and novice business owners launch and elevate their business. Enrolled in both BCPS and the Community College of Baltimore County, he plans to major in engineering with a minor in business. In addition, Simons is active with the NAACP and The International Association of Black Triathletes and is a contributing writer for Urban Market Magazine.

Halee Simons, age 16, founded Halz S. Enterprises, LLC, which provides photography services. She is an active member of the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce and Maryland State Chamber of Commerce. She also operates a business academy to help aspiring and novice business owners. Simons is taking business courses at CCBC. In the community, she is involved with the NAACP and The International Association of Black Triathletes. A speaker, podcast host, and writer, Simons also is a College Board – Big Future Ambassador and takes part in community programs through DTD Sports Leadership Academy.

Kasey Tarburton, age 13, has volunteered many hours at the White Marsh Volunteer Fire Department and is now a cadet there. She hopes ultimately to become an emergency medical technician or a nurse. At the fire department, Tarburton has assisted with food truck Tuesdays, trunk or treat, Christmas tree sales, the train garden, breakfast with Santa, and parades. So far, with her fellow cadets, she has learned about the different areas of fire trucks and ambulances, search and rescue, pulled lines, rolled lines, charged lines, forced entry, mass casualties, and how to assemble and disassemble air tanks.

Emma Wilson, age 18, represents her school in the Outstanding Young Women Leaders Program at Towson University. She initiated a music theory tutoring program at Carver Center and is president of the Tri-M Music Honor Society and Science National Honor Society. She has increased member engagement in both organizations and helped coordinate the Tri-M Winter Concerts and Singer Songwriter Concerts. She helped create a mental health resource that will be distributed to every BCPS high school student. She also has an Instagram account devoted to mental health advocacy and literacy. An active volunteer, she has logged more than 380 volunteer hours, often organizing food drives.

(Editors: Photos of the honorees can be found in a [BCPS Flickr album](#).)

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation's 22nd largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).