



# press release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ( December 14, 2023) - For Leadership St. Johns Class of 2022 Unveils THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club Scholarship**

St. Augustine, Fla. – November 28, 2023 – The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce’s Leadership St. Johns (LSJ) Class of 2022 is excited to announce a scholarship for current members or alumni of THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club in St. Augustine up to \$1,500 to attend First Coast Technical College (FCTC). This exciting opportunity is through the generosity and legacy of Leadership St. Johns Class of 2022. Applications may be submitted for upcoming enrollment periods on a rolling basis and as funds are available.

Each Leadership St. Johns cohort is exposed to community leaders across Northeast Florida and learn the diverse aspects of the region’s economy. Each class selects a project to undertake that marks their legacy in the Leadership Program. Isabelle Renault, CEO and President of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce said, “The Leadership St. Johns Class of 2022 made a significant impact in our community with the addition of the STEM room at THE PLAYERS Championship Boys and Girls Club in St. Augustine. These opportunities to learn coding, construct robots, fly drones, and develop an understanding of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math behind these activities is great. The Class of 2022 went further by not only providing technology for the room but now will be providing scholarships for students to utilize at First Coast Technical College to apply those skills and advance their education. “

The student scholarship will truly make a difference in the lives of the young people involved. To continue funding the scholarship, class members will work charitable hours at the St. Augustine Lions Seafood Festival on an annual basis. For every man hour a LSJ Graduate works at the event, the St. Augustine Lions, under the leadership of Dominic Mercurio and Memory Hopkins, donates an hourly rate to the scholarship. This year’s festival is April 6-7, 2024 <https://lionsfestival.com/>.

"We are deeply grateful for the transformative impact of the generous contribution from Leadership St. Johns members, providing several \$1,500 scholarships to attend First Coast Technical College in St. Augustine," said Paul Martinez, CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida. "These scholarships are more than financial support; they represent a bridge to Greater Futures, empowering our youth with educational opportunities that will shape their destinies. Through this remarkable partnership, Leadership St. Johns and First Coast Technical College has not only invested in education but has also invested in the limitless potential of each child, fostering a legacy of empowerment and community upliftment. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Leadership St. Johns for being steadfast advocates of education and for making dreams a reality for our Boys & Girls Club members."

This critical partnership will provide current members or alumni of THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club an amazing opportunity to enhance their lives and shape their future by "fostering growth, learning and empowerment," stated Rona Welch, Unit Director of Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida. "Together, we are creating a pathway that transcends the boundaries of today, enabling these young individuals to build the skills, resilience and character necessary for success in their personal and professional endeavors. This collaboration signifies more than an alliance. It represents a shared commitment to nurturing the potential within each student, equipping them with the tools to navigate challenges and emerge as empowered leaders of tomorrow."

Scholarships primarily cover registration and tuition fees; funds may be spent on additional costs such as books, supplies, uniforms and other fees related to completing the program. "We are grateful for Leadership SJ's passion to connect First Coast Technical College's workforce training opportunities with the Boys & Girls Club family," says Lisa McGowan, Chair of FCTC Education Foundation Scholarship Committee. "With such a dynamic regional job market, this scholarship will help students in their pursuit of their dream career."

Award Requirements will be based on:

1. Recommendation from an instructor or guidance counselor at the applicant's school.
2. Staff verification connecting the student with THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club in St. Augustine.
3. Evidence that applicant desires career training at the First Coast Technical College.
4. A grade point average of 2.5 or higher.
5. Florida residency.
6. A completed application from the student.

#### *Instructions*

- Complete THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club in St. Augustine application.
  - The scholarship page is <https://fctc.edu/financial-aid/scholarships/>
  - The application link is <https://fctc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Application.pdf>
- Include an instructor or guidance counselor recommendation with the scholarship form.
- Hand deliver, mail or email completed application before the deadline to be considered:

*FCTC Education Foundation College Advancement Coordinator*  
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## **About Leadership St. Johns**

The Chamber of Commerce's Leadership St. Johns (LSJ) program strives to connect and develop community leaders to help drive the success of our local economy as St. Johns County confronts the opportunities and challenges of today and tomorrow. Since 2000, more than 350 St. Johns County leaders have graduated from Leadership St. Johns. St. Johns County's business, political and non-profit community ranks include many Leadership St. Johns alumni who have and continue to make a positive difference. As part of this program, each class is tasked with a 'class project' with the goal of connecting and benefiting the local community.

## **About Boys & Girls Club students who will benefit from THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club Scholarship**

The St. Augustine Boys & Girls Club is dedicated to creating great futures for young people in our community. The Club provides a safe place for young people to go after-school and in the summer. Through quality programs and services, Boys & Girls Clubs ensure young people graduate on time with a plan for their future, lead healthy lifestyles and demonstrate good character and citizenship.

*For the 2021 - 2022 school year:*

- 98% of students are on free or reduced lunch.
- 92% of students are from households with annual incomes under \$28,000.

## **The members of the Leadership St. Johns Class of 2022 are:**

Erika Alba, John Choi, Ryan Clark, Darrell Clarkson, Howard "Skip" Cole, Cory Darling, Julie Hindall, Wayne King, Jackie Kotos, Melissa Lime, Scott Maynard, Shane McKay, Teresa Mercurio, Sharon Mitchell, Berta Odom, Cory Sakryd, Gretchen Saunders, Nadyne Sneyd, Elizabeth Tate, Meredith Tekin, Mary Anne Thomas, Cindy Walker, Richard Warner, and Joshua Woolsey.