

# VALLEY SCHOLARS

## SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER



# SENIOR EDITION





# UREC OUTDOOR SKILLS

## WHAT BETTER WAY TO KICK OFF THE SUMMER THAN WITH A LITTLE FUN IN THE SUN AND LEARNING NEW SKILLS?

The first week of summer programming included a two-night stay in the Shenandoah National Park. Rising 12th-grade Valley Scholars learned essential skills for living in the outdoors. This was the first experience in a camp setting for many students. In preparation, students practiced how to set up tents, and were introduced to outdoor cooking skills. Using portable double-burner stoves, and small pots and pans, groups of 3-4 students planned the dinner they would prepare using this equipment.

Chicken stir-fry and tacos were popular choices! Once in the park, students persevered through strenuous hikes, wind storms, and each other's cooking!

A few weeks later, Valley Scholars partnered with the UREC Adventure Team, to learn and practice both team-building and water-sport skills. First, rising 11th-grade students built a foundation for the week by learning to trust each other while defying heights and overcoming nerves at the UREC TEAM Challenge Course high ropes. Next, students enjoyed the UREC climbing center and learned essentials for rock climbing. Finally, UREC staff members taught the students essential water-safety skills, including how to exit an overturned kayak in case of emergency. To top off the week, students put their newly-acquired skills into practice when they went paddleboarding at Switzer Lake.

## THINKING. LEARNING. ASKING.

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This Summer, rising 9th-grade Valley Scholars had the opportunity to visit the homes of Thomas Jefferson (Monticello) and James Madison (Montpelier). This was the first time most students had visited these historic sites. Scholars were given guided tours of both homes and the surrounding grounds. Before the tours began, students were given a list of questions they would be expected to dig into. Students were excited to explore the homes, outbuildings, and gardens and to learn about the artifacts, stories, and plants that filled them. In the gardens at Monticello, one scholar even chatted with "Thomas Jefferson" about the The Constitution.

On the third day of camp, led by Shaun Mooney (Executive Director of First-Generation Student Success) and Kevin Johnson (Teaching Assistant), students analyzed, compared, contrasted, and unpacked all the information they had gathered. Valley Scholars were tasked with creating their own tours of Monticello and Montpelier. Students identified numerous critiques, including shortening or lengthening tours, adding more information about specific historic figures, and even creating whole tours dedicated exclusively to those figures. At the end of the day, Valley Scholars gave presentations on what "their" tour of Monticello and Montpelier might look like. Students were excited to have the opportunity to travel through and learn from a living history.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN HISTORY





## 2ND ANNUAL FOUNDERS MARK

### WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS PITCH? WHAT PROBLEM IS IT GOING TO SOLVE?

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For the second year, rising 11th and 12th-grade Valley Scholars teamed up with students in the Dukes Venture Accelerator program in the Gilliam Center for Entrepreneurship. Leaders utilized the Founders Mark curriculum to guide students on how to create their own businesses step-by-step. In addition, students were introduced to the mindset of an entrepreneur.

Valley Scholars had great ideas: a car-detailing business, a nail salon, a cybersecurity firm, a tutoring program, and a home-cleaning business. The process included mapping out their visions, designing logos, naming their companies, and working on supply chains and budgets for their services/products.

On the final day, students presented their business pitches to the JMU community in the College of Business. One student presented a pitch on **Artivism**. "This business's goal is to sell art pieces that are visually appealing to buyers, while also metaphorically symbolizing deeper societal issues that are not commonly brought to light." All Valley Scholars did great work!



## CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2023!

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It's hard to believe the Valley Scholars Program was established nine years ago in 2014 with 35 participants. This year, many from that first cohort of first-generation students graduated from JMU, UVA, and Virginia State!

Who is a first-generation college student?

A student whose parent or guardian did not graduate from a four-year institution is considered a first-generation student. Members of this first cohort of scholars became the first in their families to achieve the dream of a college education, overcoming significant challenges and navigating the many unknowns that come with college attendance. In recognition of this significant achievement, the Valley Scholars

## VALLEY SCHOLARS' FIRST COHORT COLLEGE GRADUATES

Program celebrated at a reception with graduates and University partners, donors, family members, and friends who offered support along the way. Thank you to these students for paving the way for future Valley Scholar graduates! They have proven that hard work and dedication can lead to realizing the dream of a college education! The Valley Scholars Program is proud of each and every one of them.

# CONGRATULATIONS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2023!

WE ARE EXCITED TO CONGRATULATE THE 9TH COHORT OF VALLEY SCHOLARS ON THEIR GRADUATION AND SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE VALLEY SCHOLARS PROGRAM. THIS FALL, 26 STUDENTS WILL BE ATTENDING JMU, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 7 ATTENDING OTHER COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES.





**TRISTAN**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**AYLIN**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**ANDREA**

**LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE**



**DARREN**



**CHARLIE**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**KAYLEE**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**DANIELA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**SETH**

**BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE**





**SEAN**



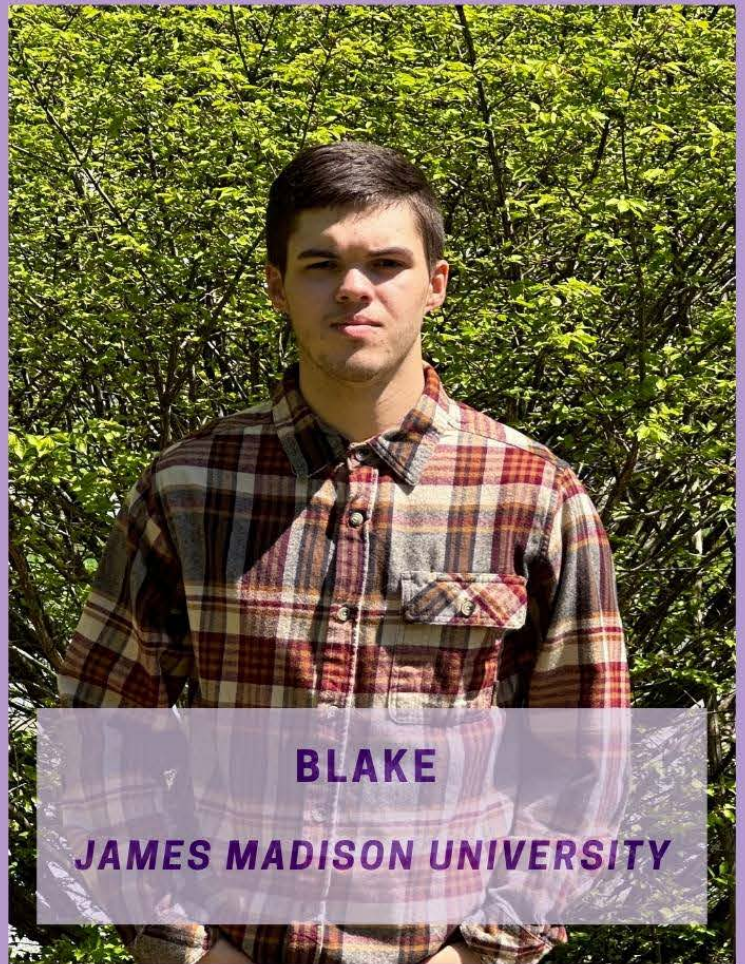
**DAKSH**

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**



**ALANA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**BLAKE**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**SARAH**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**SANA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**MIA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**JACOB**

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**



**BRENDA**



**NICHOLE**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**MARIANA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**VIRGINIA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**DORELI**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**HANNA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**HADAR**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



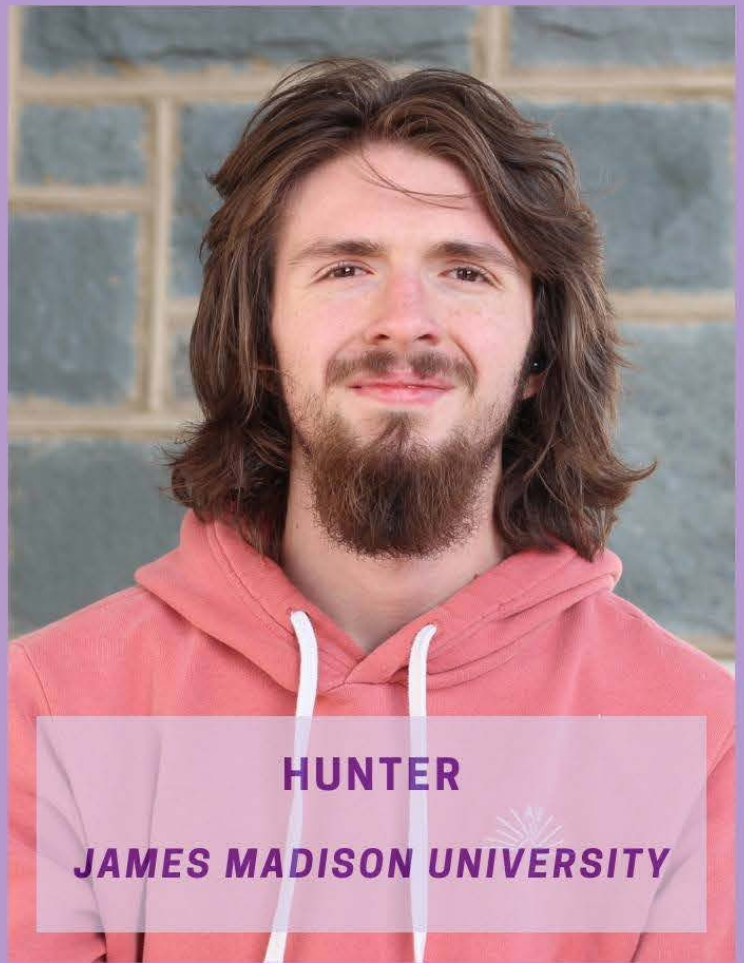
**JACOB**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**GIOVANI**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**HUNTER**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**KRISTY**

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**



**DEVIN**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**EMMA**

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**



**EMILY**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



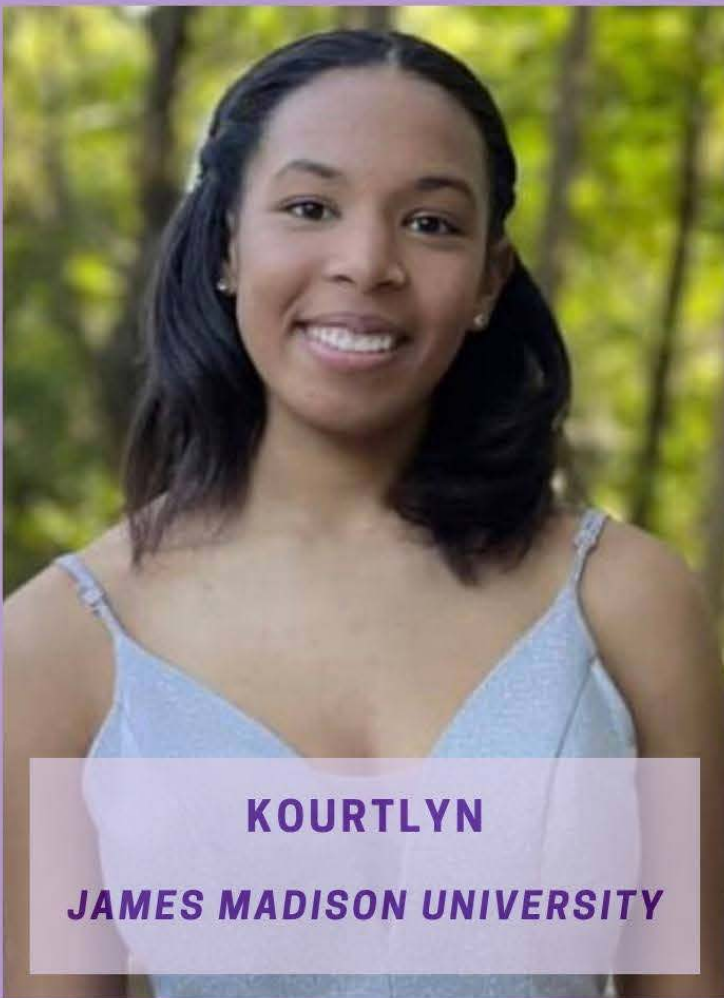
**HAYLIE**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**SAMANTHA**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**KOURTLYN**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**GRACIE**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**KELLY**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



**HANNAH**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS, CAMPUS PARTNERS, PROGRAM PARTNERS, AND VOLUNTEERS WHO MAKE VALLEY SCHOLARS AND OUR UNIQUE PROGRAMMING POSSIBLE!

