At Kent State, our purpose is to help students find their purpose — so they can cultivate their talents and create a brighter tomorrow. There’s no better way to do that than offering education and opportunity for those who need it most.
SUCCESS STORY
Erin Taylor, Class of 2018

Erin Taylor knew that someday she wanted a job where she could help people. She liked school, always had friends and dreamed of making a difference. She was selected to be part of the Rising Scholars Program in seventh grade and, after a few years in the program, Erin began to see how her life was changing.

Erin attends Kent State’s Salem Campus, majoring in psychology. Following graduation, she would like to work as a child psychologist so she can help kids through tough situations. Erin is also a mentor. “Everyone involved with Rising Scholars kept me focused on deciding what I want to be and supported me,” she said. “I know that I want to help others, and I want to be able to give back.”

“I always wanted to go to college, but I didn’t know how I could do it. The Rising Scholars program made it seem like I was made to go to college, that I was smart enough and that I was good enough,” Erin said.

CREATING A BRIGHTER TOMORROW FOR STUDENTS

The Rising Scholars Program, one on each Kent State campus, combines mentoring with assistance from local communities and businesses to provide support for young adults beginning in seventh grade. The program allows them to maximize their all-important high school years and focus on making well-informed career choices after graduation.

Kent State students who have similar experiences regarding family life or socioeconomic challenges serve as mentors to guide these promising middle and high school students through difficult personal and academic situations. When student participants commit to the program, a free college education awaits them at a Kent State regional campus. They will also become the next generation of mentors who “pay back” their community for this generous support.

INSTILLING A SENSE OF COMMITMENT AND COMMUNITY

The Rising Scholars Program specifically addresses the workforce-ready and brain drain issues that many Ohio communities face. Program activities teach these young adults both the hard and soft skills necessary to succeed in life after high school. The program also instills a strong sense of belonging and promotes a commitment to community service.

This is not just about college access. It is a next step program that engages promising students with curricular and experiential resources to excel. At the end of this program, students will be enrolled, employed or enlisted. This university-wide program represents the diversity of people and communities within our region, and it showcases the unique aspects and challenges found in these areas of Northeast Ohio.
“For our Rising Scholars, mentors make the real difference. By providing a consistent, supportive voice in our scholars’ young lives, they affirm college is more than a dream; it’s a reality within reach.”

- Denise A. Seachrist, Ph.D., Dean and Chief Administrative Officer, Kent State University at Stark

Kent State has regional campuses in seven counties, offering ready access to diverse communities. These campuses are engaged to help promising students find a clear path to success. In addition to the student mentors, the university’s knowledgeable, caring and committed faculty and staff provide support and services to students throughout the program.

Rising Scholars have access to a variety of career and life skills workshops during the school year including Military Careers Workshop, Engineering and Manufacturing Careers Workshop, Horticulture Careers Workshop, Nursing Careers Workshop, Broadcasting Careers Workshop, Leadership Skills Class, ACT Preparation Class and Financial Aid Workshop.

GROWING THE PROGRAM

Philanthropic support from individuals, local businesses and communities has allowed Kent State’s regional campuses (Ashtabula, East Liverpool, Geauga, Salem, Stark, Trumbull, Tuscarawas and Twinsburg) to expand programs or create new programs as part of Rising Scholars.

“When fully implemented, the collective impact of the Rising Scholars Program in Northeast Ohio will be significant,” said David Dees, Ph.D., Dean and Chief Administrative Officer, Kent State University Columbiana Campuses. “Private gifts are critical to fully execute the program. Our regional campuses may be small, but together, our resources, talent and footprint are quite impressive.”

![20% scores on motivation, identity, cultural competence and responsibility*](image)

![30% scores on boundaries, expectations, service and support*](image)

*compared to non-program students

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2019 Rising Scholars Graduation, Columbiana Campus
“We will have the capacity to serve nearly 1,000 underserved students from seventh grade through bachelors’ degrees. We are reaching students long before they enter into college with a program that assures they are ready for college in terms of academic preparation, finances and confidence. This program is a game-changer for our region.”

- David Dees, Ph.D.
Dean and Chief Administrative Officer, Kent State University Columbiana Campuses

For more information or to discuss a philanthropic gift, please contact us at advancement@kent.edu or 330-672-2222.

www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars
“Rising Scholars is important, not just for the individual scholars who will benefit directly from this program, but also for our entire community. **Rising Scholars will raise up individuals, families, businesses and our entire community.** We are wrapping the scholars in a blanket of support. We want them to do well academically and also to develop into well-rounded individuals who will stay in our community to work and live.”

— Susan Stocker, Ph.D.  
*Dean and Chief Administrative Officer*

“The heart of the Ashtabula Rising Scholars Program is acknowledging the internal spark within each of the students and igniting it to nurture the whole person. The scholars, mentors and director combine our strengths to elevate one another. Everyone learns and grows by forming unique bonds that weave a web of support. Our common ground is our heritage. **Our hope is in our future. Together we rise.**”

— Natalie Huya  
*Program Director, Ashtabula Rising Scholars*

**How Can You Help Rising Scholars?**

You can be a part of growing this incredible initiative by giving to the Rising Scholars Program. Your gift will help students across Northeast Ohio realize that a college education is within reach. Please contact us for information or to make a gift, and change a life, today. Email supportashtabula@kent.edu.

www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars
PARTICIPATING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

CRESTVIEW

LEETONIA

SALEM

UNITED

EAST LIVERPOOL

LISBON

SOUTHERN LOCAL

WELLSVILLE

IMpACT

(per school year)

125 scholars

15 mentors

280 scholars

49 mentors

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

ONCE FULLY IMPLEMENTED

“The beauty of Kent State is the regionals are connected and woven into their local communities. We offer great opportunities to have conversations and talk about what problems we can solve together. The best of Kent State is represented in this program - research, teaching and community impact.”

– David Dees, Ph.D.
Dean and Chief Administrative Officer

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www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars

“The students of the Rising Scholars Program are incredibly bright and are capable of exciting possibilities. Our program connects our scholars with resources to explore these possibilities, further develop their skills and navigate past the obstacles they encounter in their social and academic worlds.”

– Jessica Paull, Ph.D.
Program Director,
Columbiana County Rising Scholars

www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars
PARTICIPATING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

CARDINAL LOCAL SCHOOLS

BERKSHIRE LOCAL SCHOOLS

IMPACT
(per school year)

11 scholars

1 mentor

54 scholars

12 mentors

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

ONCE FULLY IMPLEMENTED

“We look forward to pairing participants in the Rising Scholars Program with our current students. The program provides collaborative opportunities for mentees, community leaders and college student mentors to support and learn from each other, creating a sense of connection and possibilities for both interpersonal interaction and exchange of ideas. With the goal that all mentees will eventually become mentors, local youth can continue to make a personal impact on their regional neighborhoods after they graduate.”

— Angela Spalsbury, Ph.D.
Dean and Chief Administrative Officer

“The scholars are very motivated, energetic and generous. They seek to become the best students they can be as well as be engaged in making their communities a better place to live. I am especially proud of KSU students who will serve as mentors to these scholars. They are invested in helping the scholars, and they have formed connections to engage the scholars in the program and achieve the goals that they have set for themselves.”

— Robin Dever, Ph.D.
Program Coordinator, Geauga Rising Scholars

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www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars
PARTICIPATING HIGH SCHOOLS

ALLIANCE  CANTON  CANTON SOUTHERN  FAIRLESS  GLENOAK

IMPACT
(per school year)

75 scholars  1 mentor  150 scholars  15 mentors

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR  ONCE FULLY IMPLEMENTED

“Rising Scholars is all about creating pathways to opportunity for all students. It paves the way as students prepare to make their mark on the world. Through this unique program, we break down barriers to higher education, and we build up students for the journey to more. We know that education changes lives. It changes families, and it changes communities. This program fits Kent State University’s mission perfectly. For anyone wishing to make a true difference, this is it.”

– Denise A. Seachrist, Ph.D.
Dean and Chief Administrative Officer

“One of the many assets of this distinctive program is its diverse pool of students. We celebrate students who are male and female, white, Black, multicultural, Hispanic and Asian with diverse career interests. Our aim is to provide this diverse pool of first-generation, and many low-income, students a pathway to college readiness and success. I believe that this group’s diversity is its superpower.”

– Lester Sanders
Program Coordinator, Stark Rising Scholars

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www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars
PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

INSPIRING MINDS IN CONJUNCTION WITH WARREN CITY SCHOOLS

IMPACT
(per school year)

30 scholars
2 mentors
150 scholars
8 mentors

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

“The Rising Scholars Program supports local youth in preparing for college and careers after high school, and seeks to unleash the full potential of these young people in a transformative manner. In conjunction with our community partner, Inspiring Minds, the program provides mentoring, workshops, educational excursions and other training opportunities to cultivate the diverse talents of Warren-area youth. The program is designed not only to provide crucial support for college and workforce readiness, but also to develop young people who will contribute to the prosperity of their local community.”

– Daniel E. Palmer, Ph.D.
Interim Dean and Chief Administrative Officer

ONCE FULLY IMPLEMENTED

“In collaboration with Inspiring Minds, the Rising Scholars Program helps promising local students who are the first in their family to pursue higher education create their own idea of success and be confident in who they are becoming. We want to continue to do amazing work with the youth and contribute to the overall development of these young people by focusing on areas such as: identity development, social justice exploration and mentorship. These students are the future and, together, we can make a positive difference in this world.”

– Tiffany Tyree
Program Coordinator, Trumbull Rising Scholars

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PARTICIPATING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

CONOTTON VALLEY  INDIAN VALLEY  NEW PHILADELPHIA

IMPACT
(per school year)

12 scholars  3 mentors  100 scholars  12 mentors

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR  ONCE FULLY IMPLEMENTED

“This program focuses on accelerating the development of awareness, interest, skills and knowledge in manufacturing, and increasing the size and quality of the manufacturing talent pipeline for local companies. Our regional employers are experiencing a growing need for advanced-skilled and dedicated employees, especially those who desire to pursue careers in technical and manufacturing fields.”

– Brad Bielski, Ph.D.
Dean and Chief Administrative Officer

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www.kent.edu/supportrisingscholars

“The program is a win for the youth, caregivers, area school districts and local businesses. We hope to increase the number of college and career-ready students who continue their education beyond high school or enter the workforce with skills that will enhance regional economic growth.”

– Paul Dykshoorn
Program Coordinator,
Tuscarawas Rising Scholars
PARTICIPATING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

NORDONIA HILLS

NORDONIA HILLS

TWINSBURG

IMPACT

(per school year)

8 scholars

1 mentor

54 scholars

12 mentors

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

ONCE FULLY IMPLEMENTED

“We look forward to pairing participants in the Rising Scholars Program with our current students. The program provides collaborative opportunities for mentees, community leaders and college student mentors to support and learn from each other, creating a sense of connection and possibilities for both interpersonal interaction and exchange of ideas. With the goal that all mentees will eventually become mentors, local youth can continue to make a personal impact on their regional neighborhoods after they graduate.”

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— Robin Dever, Ph.D.
Program Coordinator,
Twinsburg Rising Scholars

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