SUPPORTING FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE DREAMS

UPWARD BOUND NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026

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MATH: Kelly Vandeginste

AIRPORT HS
ENGLISH: Meagan Rupert, Holly Himick
MATH: Megan Rupert

JEFFERSON HS
ENGLISH: April Schultz



This winter has certainly made its presence known! Michigan faced some of the coldest temperatures of the season as air plunged south, bringing a deep freeze across the state.

But even with school doors briefly closed, UB students kept climbing! This issue celebrates your resilience, focus, and the warmth you bring to our program – even when the weather outside says otherwise.

UB Success Tips for a Strong Winter & Spring Semesters

Try these quick boosters to stay on track through the cold:

- Set three (3) manageable goals for the month
  - -These can be school-related, personal, or wellness goals.
  - -Keep them small enough to feel achievable.
- Create a study routine that works wherever you are
  - -This could be at school, a community center, a library, a UB tutoring session, or a quiet corner with headphones.
  - -Consistency is the only requirement.
- Review notes for just 5 minutes a day
  - -Short, simple check-ins help your brain stay familiar with what you are learning.
  - -A photo on your phone works too!
- Stay connected | Reach out when you need support
  - -UB staff and tutors are here for you. Whether you need help with homework, supplies, encouragement or someone to listen, you never have to do this alone.

Remember: Success grows from small steps, not perfect conditions. You are capable, resourceful, and supported… Every Single Day.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

https://www.monroeccc.edu/academic-calendars/summer

Registration Begins	Monday, March 23, 2026
UB HONORS NIGHT	Wednesday, May 6, 2026
Summer Semesters | Classes Begin	Monday, May 18, 2026
MCCC Closed | MEMORIAL DAY	Monday, May 25, 2026
UB 2026 SUMMER PROGRAM begins	Monday, June 22, 2026
UB Program Closed | INDEPENDENCE DAY	Friday, July 3, 2026
MCCC Closed | INDEPENDENCE DAY	Monday, July 6, 2026
UB 2026 SUMMER PROGRAM ends	Friday, July 31, 2026
UB 2026 End of Summer Trip	Mon. Aug 3 – Thu. Aug 6, 2026
Summer Semester | Classes End	Saturday, August 8, 2026

Director's Desk – Dr. Anthony Quinn



Upward Bound 2026 graduates will be eligible to apply for the Bridge Scholarship Program. Students who are selected will have the opportunity to enroll for the 2026 summer semester at Monroe County Community College. Students selected in this program will have the chance to complete up to six credit hours free of charge. Application is due on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. This scholarship includes:

A. Tuition at MCCC for up to six credit hours of approved courses.
B. Books and supplies not to exceed $100.00
C. Tutoring and monitoring by Upward Bound Staff In order to be considered for a scholarship you must fulfill the following requirements:

1. A 75% attendance rate at tutorial sessions over the course of your junior and senior years.
2. A 75% attendance rate at optional activities (field trips, college visits, etc.) over the course of your junior and senior years.
3. **Must** graduate from high school with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better
4. **Must** have completed all senior year requirements by the required deadlines.
5. **Must** complete an MCCC application and Bridge Application provided by your Coordinator for admission.
6. Students must have completed Upward Bound's summer program in the past two years in good standing.



Celebrating National TRIO Day February 24, 2026



This winter, Upward Bound students across all sites joined together in celebrating National TRIO Day, a nationwide recognition of the opportunities, access, and college dreams TRIO programs have supported for over 60 years.

National TRIO Day honors the impact TRIO programs have made in helping students get to college, stay in college, and graduate—especially first-generation college students, low-income students, and those needing additional academic support. Upward Bound at Monroe County Community College proudly continued that tradition. Since 2007, our program has served students from Monroe, Airport, and Jefferson High Schools, supporting their academic growth, leadership skills, college exploration, and future planning.

How We Celebrated

On February 24, each Upward Bound site marked the occasion with special treats and a commemorative insert highlighting TRIO's history and mission. To recognize the 40th anniversary of National TRIO Day, students participated in a fun photo activity:
These photos are shared in this newsletter to showcase our amazing students and the energy they brought to this year's celebration.

Why TRIO Day Matters

National TRIO Day is more than a celebration—it is a reminder of the promise that TRIO programs offer: that students' dreams matter, that college is attainable, and that when students succeed, communities thrive.

We are proud of every Upward Bound student who took part in this year's celebration.

Thank you for continuing to represent the heart of TRIO—opportunity, access, and college dreams.

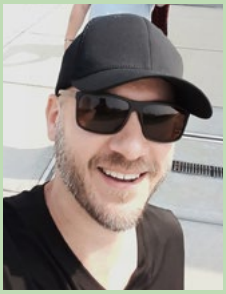






COORDINATOR CORNER
Monroe High School Updates

From the desk of:



Dr. Justin Wisniewski
Academic Coordinator
Monroe High School

Here's a brief glimpse of what you can expect this spring at MHS as we head into the summer:

Upcoming UB Field Trips
School Year Trips
Our field trips are MI-CAPP Student Leadership Summit in Lansing trip for seniors, February 27th - March 1st. As well as, Detroit Pistons in Detroit in mid – late March, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland Ohio in April.

Summer Program
Monroe County Community College begins June 22nd and runs to July 31st,. We have a field trip every Friday during the summer program except July 3rd, ending with our annual trip to Cedar Point.

Big End of Summer Trip we are looking at several destinations this year New York City, Nashville, Memphis, St. Louis or Pittsburgh. I will inform you of the final decision has been made, and we get closer to summer. ;)

MHS Graduation & New Students
This year's UB graduating class will be a big one for MHS! Around 17 students, which is very exciting news for our program! MHS Graduation will be May 29th. This also Vmeans there will be plenty of slots to fill during the upcoming Fall 26 school year! If you happen to have younger siblings, or any friends who you'd like to hang out with during after school tutoring next year, as well as travel the country with ;) be sure to reach out to them, and encourage them to apply. They just need to be in 9th or 11th grade next year, and have serious plans about hopefully one day going to college. Feel free to have any prospective MHS students you'd like to hang out with more next year grab a UB flier from outside B-221, so their families can help them complete the UB application.

We are also always looking for energetic volunteers to help design and decorate poster boards and other displays for our 8th Grade Open House and club table for Mindfulness Day at MHS. Contact me during tutoring if you'd like to help with either of these annual recruitment events, which can count toward your service hours for UB and NHS.

Tutoring
As a reminder, our UB Math tutor, Mrs. Vandeginste, is available every Tuesday and Thursday 2;15-4:15, should you need help with Algebra, Geometry, or Stats. And our UB English and Writing tutor, Ms. Waldecker, can be found in B-221 every Wednesday. Ms. Waldecker is also head of the MHS Writer's Guild which meets on Tuesdays, and she welcomes brief visits to her classroom on those days as well, if you're in a real pinch with your English or writing assignments.

Seniors
Senior Survey

If you're a graduation senior and haven't completed it yet, please be sure to complete the following survey form so we can stay in touch with you after graduation:

https://forms.gle/tFfxzJruGWFZkqk16

A number of our UB students come back for summer jobs to help teach workshops at our summer program between the college school year. So please fill out the form so we can stay in touch with you and your family as you begin to embark on your exciting college journey.

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MHS Honor Cord Criteria

- Must be an active member of Upward Bound at the time of graduation
- Must have joined the Upward Bound Program no later than the end of sophomore year
- Must attend a minimum of two Upward Bound Summer Programs
- Must be a member in good standing at the time of graduation

- A member in good standing has:
  - -A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00
  - -Regular attendance at the Upward Bound after-school program, or
  - -Regular check-ins with the Academic Skills Coordinator, as allowed for excused absences (sports, etc.)

- Must have completed all program requirements during their senior year. Program requirements include:
  - -Complete at least three college applications
  - -Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Bridge Scholarship

The Bridge Program mentioned above includes payment for tuition at MCCC for up to six (6) credit hours of approved courses (college math & English) and books and supplies up to $100. You do not have to be attending MCCC in the fall to apply. So if you are planning on going somewhere besides MCCC in the fall, you are still eligible for this scholarship, and can transfer your credits to your future college/university. The Bridge Program is competitive and students are expected to submit a complete, organized, and typed application, inclusive of all required materials, and which reflects their best efforts to present themselves as motivated students who are willing to work to succeed in a postsecondary degree program and who are positive and appropriate role models for their peers. Interested seniors should contact me for an application. The application deadline is March 31st.

This has been an impressively productive year so far, and I am very proud of you guys. You each have come a very long way. I look forward to witnessing you bring the remainder of this academic year in to a successfully close, and watching you guys progress closer to increasingly bigger and brighter futures! ;) It's truly been a joy.

Keep up the good work!

Best,

-jw

Airport High School Updates

UPWARD BOUND
PROGRAM AT AIRPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

From the desk of:



Charles Friedline
Academic Skills Coordinator Airport High School

Time for a shoutout to all the boys in the MCCC Upward Bound Programs. Just so you know…we see you!

The other day, I had to buy a new box of tissues for my office because I was out. I joked with my wife about how quickly I go through tissues because there is always a girl in my office crying. Although I meant to be funny, I was not making light of the very real crises experienced by those girls, who feel safe and comfortable enough to share those vulnerable moments with me. I cherish the informal counseling role that comes as part of my job description. It is a privilege—and I am happy that I can be there for them when they just need someone to listen.

But then it occurred to me. In 14 years, it has been very—very—rare for a boy to come to my

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office to tell me about problems he was having—problems at home, with a relationship, with a teacher, or a class. And never—ever—has there been a boy in my office in need of a tissue.

Now, why is that? Why is it that, as the song says, "boys don't cry?" Why is it that boys don't feel comfortable sharing their feelings—and most especially difficult, messy feelings? Surely boys are exposed to the same pressures as girls are, to the same bullying and mockery. Surely, they share some of the same fears—of failure, ridicule, and rejection. So, why is it that they so rarely choose to share that with anyone? My door is open to all of my students; why do the boys choose not to step through?

Having grown up as a boy, I have some insight. Among my friend group, we never talked about our feelings or our fears. We never—ever—cried in each other's presence. Here is the message we got—and we got it loud and clear: Don't share your feelings with anyone—and most especially, not your difficult messy feelings. Always act like you have everything under control. Always be cool as a cucumber on the outside, no matter what is happening on the inside. I am disappointed that so little seems to have changed in the decades since I was in high school.

I know that high school can feel like a constant struggle. You have to keep up your grades or get in trouble at home (and maybe lose privileges). You have friendships and relationships to manage. You have an image to maintain. You feel pressure to have a plan for the future, and you feel like a loser if you don't. On top of that, boys feel pressured to juggle all of this while looking strong, cool, and unaffected.

The good news is you don't have to handle all of that by yourself. There is a lot of help out there for you. All you have to do is reach out for it. Does even that sound like a lot when you already have so much on your plate? How do you reach out? To whom?

Well, let's break it down. First, admit that you even have feelings. You can't do anything about something if you deny that it even exists. Of course you have feelings—sometimes very strong feelings. Often, feelings are good—happiness or excitement about something good that has happened (or you hope is going to happen), the pride of doing well on an assignment or test. But feelings can be negative too: anxiety about something bad that may happen, fear of looking stupid or being inferior—and these feelings can weigh on you, especially if you think you are all on your own with them.

Next, find a safe person with whom you can share your feelings. It can be a friend, a parent, a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, a teacher, or a counselor. It doesn't matter who, but find at least one. Tell them how you feel—the positive and the negative. You don't necessarily need advice—and the person or people you share with probably aren't qualified to give it anyway! But just sharing and talking about things can be a huge relief all by itself.

Finally, if you are struggling through something and you have shared it with someone you trust, but you still feel that the problem or situation is not resolved, you may need help. Don't be afraid to ask for it.

If you take nothing else from this article, take this: **asking for help is not weakness.** It takes strength to admit when something is wrong and to seek help rather than pretend that everything is fine and that you can handle it by yourself. Avoiding help can actually make your problems worse. It can affect your physical health (headaches, stomach problems, or worse), your relationships can become strained or toxic, you can burn out or break down. Seeking help is a sign of responsibility and emotional maturity.

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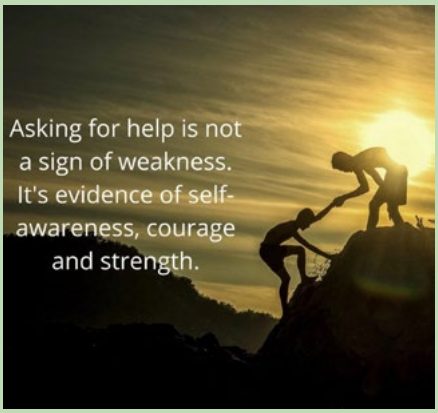
Everyone needs help sometimes. None of us know everything about everything. Even world class athletes need a coach! So, ask. Reach out. If you don't know who to reach out to, start with me. I am probably not qualified to help, but I promise you this: I will help you find someone who is.

AHS Reminders:

•Students: If you have not already done so, take a moment to sign up for Remind notices.
Just text @dk863b8 to 81010 or 734-344-5422

•Families: If you would like to join the UB Families 2025-2026 Group, text @ubfamil to 81010 or 734-344-5422

•Check us out on Facebook at "Airport High School Upward Bound" (https://www.facebook.com/Airport-High-School-Upward-Bound-552651211432316/)



Jefferson High School Updates

From the desk of:



McKade Shultz
Academic Coordinator
Jefferson High School

Hello Jefferson Upward Bound students and families!

I hope your spring semester is off to a great start. Although I have been out of the office for part of the winter semester, I want to reassure everyone that Upward Bound at Jefferson High School continues to run smoothly. I'm eager to get back, reconnect with students, and dive into the exciting plans we have for the remainder of the year.

A very special thank you to April Schultz and Dr. Quinn for helping keep tutoring and academic support seamless during my absence. Their dedication ensures that students continue receiving the guidance and consistency they need to thrive academically.

Our after school program remains in full swing, with tutoring, academic support, and plenty of opportunities for students to stay engaged. Remember, Upward Bound is more than coursework. Students can make new friends, earn stipend points, prepare for college, and participate in special activities and trips throughout the year.

We are also looking ahead to welcome new members into our UB family. If you know an 8th, 9th, or 10th grader who would benefit from academic support, mentorship, and college preparation, please encourage them to apply. Current UB students who refer an accepted applicant will earn 10 stipend points!

Quick Reminders for JHS Students:

•Continue checking your email and Google Classroom for important updates.

•Stay connected by following: "Jefferson High School Upward Bound" on Facebook.

Thank you all for your patience and continued support. I look forward to returning and finishing the year strong together!

— Mr. McKade Shultz

MI-CAPP Student Leadership Summit

A Weekend of Leadership, Pride & TRIO Spirit!

At the end of February, a selected group of Upward Bound students from Monroe High School, Airport High School, and Jefferson High School participated in the 2026 MI-CAPP Student Leadership Summit, held February 27 – March 1 in Lansing, MI.

This year's summit embraced the powerful theme "LOUDER. PROUDER. TRIO STRONG.", inspiring students to step boldly into their roles as leaders and changemakers. Throughout the weekend, our students took part in hands-on team-building activities and connected with peers from across the state. They attended dynamic workshops focused on leadership development, goal setting, stress management, and financial strategies for preparing for college — each designed to help students strengthen their confidence and vision for the future.

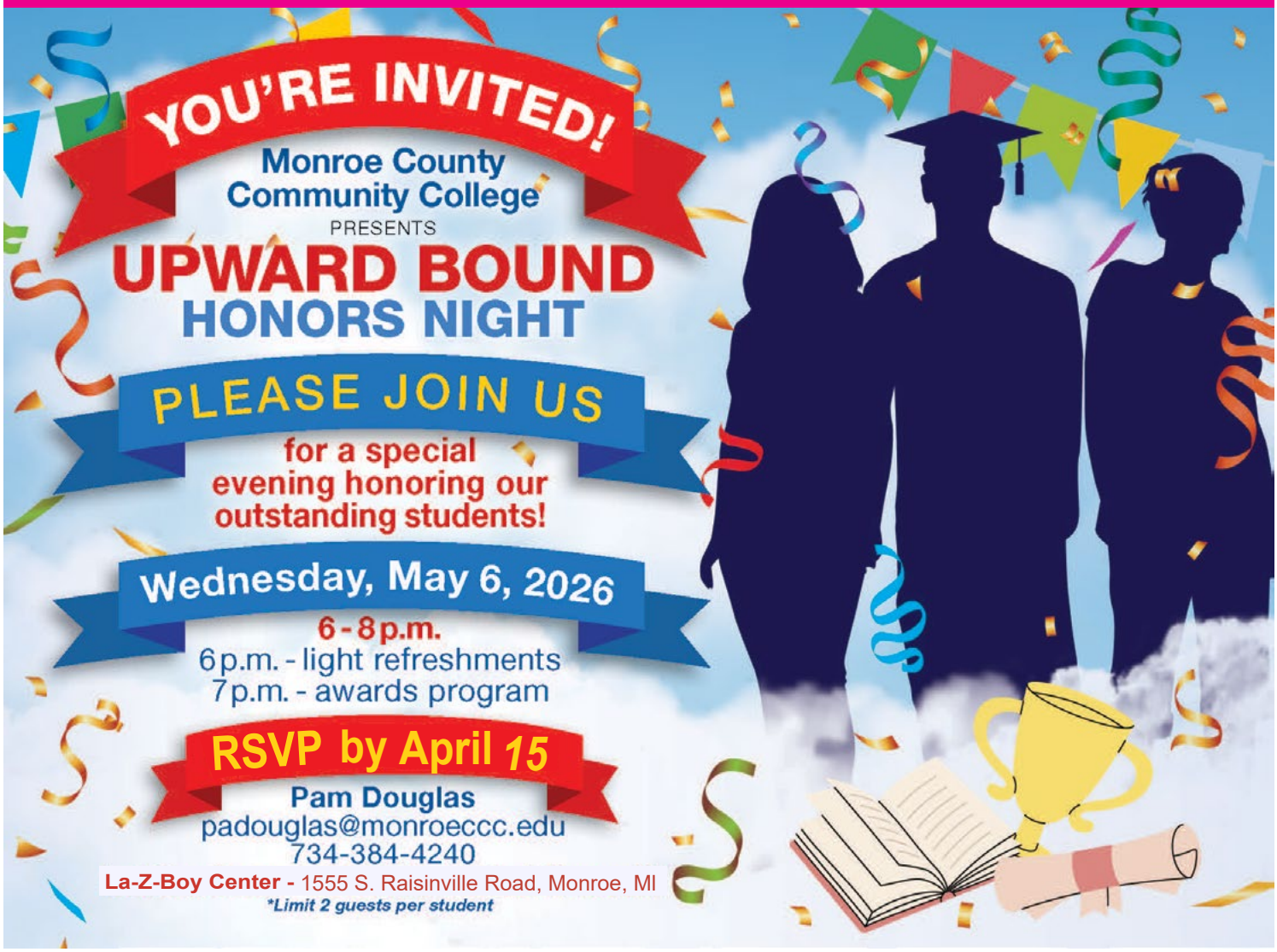
A standout moment of the summit was celebrating **Briana Nichols from Airport High School**, who was honored as the 2025–2026 recipient of the Education Endowment Award. Her dedication, hard work, and positive influence reflect the true spirit of TRIO, and we could not be prouder of her accomplishment.

The event concluded with a formal Dinner Banquet and Scholarship Ceremony, followed by a lively student dance that capped off a memorable and inspiring weekend. Our students returned energized, motivated, and truly TRIO STRONG.



Briana Nichols
Airport HS-MICAPP Endowment Academic Progress Award winner





2026 UPWARD BOUND HONORS NIGHT

SAVE THE DATE

We are excited to invite all Upward Bound families to our annual Upward Bound Honors Night—a special evening dedicated to celebrating the hard work, achievements, and growth of our outstanding students!

Please join us on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Monroe County Community College. The evening will include light refreshments, followed by our awards program recognizing academic accomplishments, personal milestones, and the dedication our students show throughout the year.

This is one of our favorite events of the season, and we look forward to celebrating with you.

We encourage families to RSVP by April 15 to Pam Douglas, Administrative Assistant via email.
-**Pam Douglas**, PADouglas@monroeccc.edu

We can't wait to honor our amazing students together!

2026 UPWARD BOUND SUMMER TRIP

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, August 3 – Thursday, August 6, 2026

Trip destination is still being worked on but the details will be available soon! Look for announcements at the Upward Bound Honors Night.



Trip Eligibility for All Students Must:

-Carry a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better for the previous academic year.
-Commit to attend the summer program **with no more than four excused & ZERO unexcused absences**
-Display Excellent Behavior both in and out of the classroom
-Follow their home school's Code of Conduct/Disciplinary Code.
-Have a Positive Attitude, Be Kind, and Demonstrate Respect and Responsibility

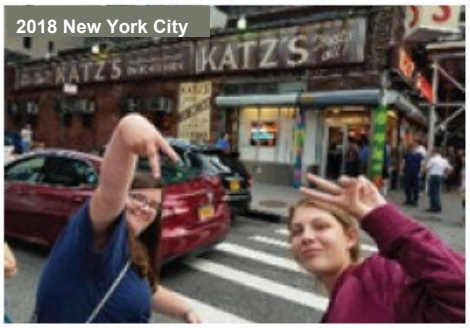

2015 Italian Market area of Philadelphia, PA


2016 Lunch at Portillo's, Chicago


2024- Philadelphia



2017 Grand Ole Opry, Nashville

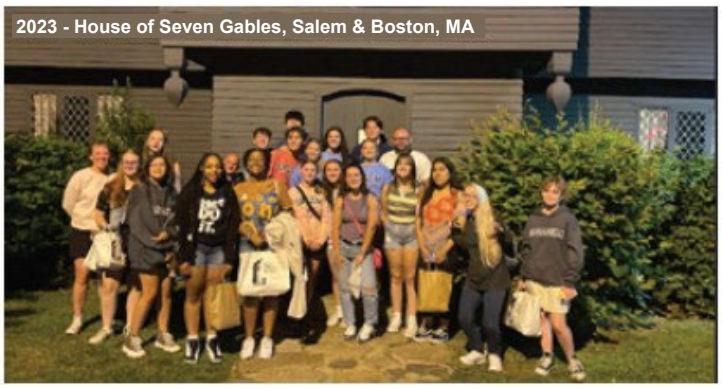


2018 New York City



2019 Charleston, SC


2022 - Diagon Alley - Universal Orlando Resort


2023 - House of Seven Gables, Salem & Boston, MA

2025 FALL + WINTER RECAP

October 2025, Digital Divas



December 2025, Lights Before Christmas, Toledo Zoo





December 2025, Nutcracker





SENIOR PREP HUB

Your go-to place for deadlines, reminders, and all things “almost graduates”!



SPRING PREP: What’s Coming Up

Spring is busy — but you’ve got this! Be sure to stay ahead with these key tasks:

✓ National Decision Day is approaching!
- -Take time to review your college acceptances, financial aid packages, and what feels right for YOU.

✓ Register for your college’s new-student orientation
- -Orientation spots fill quickly, so lock yours in as soon as possible.

✓ Keep applying for scholarships
- -Even small amounts add up — free money is always worth the effort!

HONORS NIGHT REMINDERS

Don’t forget to turn in your required forms so we can celebrate you properly!
- -Senior Spotlight
- -Senior Survey
- -Volunteer Forms

If you haven’t submitted these yet — now is the time!

Still Time to Earn Your Upward Bound Graduation Cord!

If you haven’t secured your UB cord yet, there’s still time!
Here’s the official list of criteria to earn your special cord at graduation:
Eligibility & Participation
- -Joined Upward Bound no later than the end of sophomore year
- -Attended the Summer Program after sophomore year
- -Attended a minimum of two UB Summer Programs
- -An active member of UB at the time of graduation
- -A member in good standing

Good Standing Means:
- -Minimum 2.00 GPA
- -Regular attendance at after-school UB sessions or
- -Regular check-ins with the Academic Skills Coordinator (sports/activities excused)

Senior Year Requirements:
- -Community Service (MHS + JHS 10-hours | AHS 5-hours)
- -At least three college applications completed
- -FAFSA submitted

Peer Mentors:
- -Students serving as peer mentors must continue mentoring through the end of senior year.
- -If you're close but not quite there, talk to UB staff — we’re here to help you finish strong!

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Upward Bound Class of 2026 GRADUATES



-Even after graduation, you'll always be part of UB!
-The U.S. Department of Education requires us to stay in contact with our seniors for six years after graduation — and honestly, we're glad to do it. Watching your success continue is the best part of our job.

Help Us Stay Connected

-Notify UB staff if any of your contact info changes
-Visit the Alumni Information Page:
https://www.monroeccc.edu/upward-bound/alumni-contact-form
Complete the Alumni Form every September after graduation
(Your information goes directly to Dr. Quinn)

A Message to Our Soon-To-Be Alumni

-Your story matters — to us, to your community, and to future Upward Bound students looking up to you. Staying connected helps us celebrate your wins and continue providing services for the next generation of scholars.



MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
enriching lives

Monroe County Community College
1555 S. Raisinville Road
Monroe, MI 48161

UPWARD BOUND
PROGRAM AT AIRPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Airport High School
11330 Grafton Road
Carleton, MI 48117

Jefferson High School
5707 Williams Rd,
Newport, MI 48166

MONROE HIGH SCHOOL
MHS

Monroe High School
901 Herr Road
Monroe, MI 48161