



Women of Tomorrow 2015

BUILDING A
WORLD
OF
Excellence

**Thursday, June 25
Sheraton Annapolis Hotel
173 Jennifer Road, Annapolis, MD**

Sponsored by Maryland Commission for Women and the Maryland Department of Human Resources



Maryland Commission for Women

51 Monroe Street, Suite 1034 • Rockville, MD 20850

301-610-4523

www.marylandwomen.org

In 1965, the Maryland Commission for Women was first established and was set in state law in 1971. An office within the Department of Human Resources, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state, recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women's accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state. Commissioners are appointed to four-year terms by the Governor, with confirmation by the Maryland State Senate, and serve without compensation.

Commissioners:

Dr. Kathleen White, *Chair*

Mythili Bachu, *Vice Chair*

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Velvet Johnson

Betsy H. Ramirez

Anita L. Riley

Debbie Risper

Roseanna Vogt

A. Diane Williams

2015 Women of Tomorrow Awards Ceremony

June 25, 2015
Sheraton Annapolis Hotel
5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Kathleen White, *Chair*
Maryland Commission for Women

Greetings

Samantha Blizzard, *Special Assistant to the Secretary*
Maryland Department of Human Resources

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Delanee-Alexis Coley, *2014 Women of Tomorrow Honoree*

Keynote Address

Major General Linda Singh, *Adjutant General*
Maryland National Guard

Introduction of Selection Committee

Lorna Forde, *2015 Women of Tomorrow Co-Chair*

Introduction of Honorees

Delanee-Alexis Coley

Grades 7 – 8

Julia Lizik, *Honoree*
Crestwood Middle School, Frederick County

Payton Steele, *Honorable Mention*
Shiloh Middle School, Carroll County

Grades 9 – 10

Maria DeFeo, *Honoree*
Westminster High School, Carroll County

Samirah Brown, *Honorable Mention*
Northern High School, Calvert County

Grades 11 – 12

Tiffany Alexandra Ramcharan, *Honoree*
Tuscarora High School, Frederick County

Sydney Anderson, *Honorable Mention*
Huntingtown High School, Calvert County

Closing Remarks

Debbie Risper and Lorna Forde, *Co-Chairs*
2015 Women of Tomorrow

Dr. Kathleen White, *Chair*
Maryland Commission for Women

Honoree

Julia Lizik

Julia Lizik resides in Frederick County with her mother and nine-year-old brother. Her father passed away two years ago. She is a 7th grader at Crestwood Middle School and is actively involved in both her community and her school.

Julia volunteers for Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts. Through these groups, she participates in many activities, events and camps that give back to the community as well as helping local youth. She is a member of the Frederick City Halloween in Baker Park Committee that meets most of the year to plan and execute this popular city event. Julia has also volunteered at a local church, Toys for Tots, senior living centers, Asian Heritage Festival, local elementary schools as well as several other activities and organizations.

At school, Julia is a straight-A student. She was accepted to and attended the Gifted and Talented Magnet Program located in Urbana Elementary School. In middle school, Julia was selected for the Highly Able Learner Program in all four core subjects as well as accelerated math classes. Julia began playing flute in 4th grade, continues her music studies in middle school and is now first flute in her school band. Julia enjoys many extra-curricular activities, including Student Council, Televised Announcement Crew, Science Olympiad, Ben's Bells and Rachel's Challenge. Through these activities, she works with her peers with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), politics, and spreading kindness throughout the community.

Awards Julia has earned include being selected as a 2015 Carson Scholar, three President's Volunteer Service awards (2 gold and 1 silver) and the Presidential Academic Achievement Award. She earned her Girl Scout Bronze award with her troop by tearing down an old, dangerous play area at a local church and building a new playground. She just completed her Girl Scout Silver Award by helping to plan, fund and run an outreach camp during spring break that helps underprivileged girls experience Girl Scouts and to learn about science, outdoor skills and leadership as well as lots of fun Girl Scout activities and traditions.

Julia loves science and hopes to attend Princeton University and then pursue her Master's degree and Ph.D. to prepare for a career as a biochemist or geneticist.

"Leaders aren't always the ones at the front, controlling everything. Leaders can be anyone. The leader is the one who keeps things going and never gives up hope. Leaders are always willing to stand up for what they believe in, if no one else will. . . They are the ones that make sure it all gets done, even if they aren't rewarded for it. The leaders are more concerned about others than themselves."

---Julia Lizik---

"I have seen Julia first hand show incredible drive and determination . . . Julia has a passion for learning and wants to challenge herself on a daily basis."

---Christina Brako---



Honorable Mention

Payton Steele



Payton Steele is a 13 year-old seventh grader at Shiloh Middle School in Carroll County. There she takes all honors classes and participates in the Gifted and Talented program. She also participates in the Northrop Grumman STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) club and the school orchestra where she plays first chair viola. Payton was selected as third chair viola in the Carroll County All-County Middle School Orchestra. In addition to all this, Payton plays goalie for the NCRC Storm and M. Malik Stars field hockey teams.

A former Safety Patrol herself, Payton now volunteers at her former elementary school where she helps in the art room and mentors the Safety Patrol. She was honored as outstanding Patroller of the Year in 2013.

An active member of 4-H, Payton is the vice president of Deer Park 4-H Club and is a Junior Ambassador on the Carroll County 4-H Ambassador Team. She enjoys entering competitions at the 4-H Fair, including sewing, baking, woodworking, lost arts, home environment, family life and more. She also participates in wool-sewing competitions through 4-H like Shepherd's Lead (where competitors show a sheep while wearing a wool outfit) and Maryland Made It with Wool (where participants are judged on the construction of a wool outfit they created). Payton participates in public speaking competitions through 4-H. She enjoys speaking about what 4-H has given her and how it helped her overcome her hearing loss. The past year, she won State Communications Champion Intermediate for an extemporaneous speech. In addition, Payton participated in community service projects with her Ambassador Team. She has been in charge of several projects including the Halloween Party for Clovers (the younger 4-Hers), bringing the Healing Hugs project to Shiloh Middle School, and adopting three families in need for the holidays. Payton has volunteered in soup kitchens, food pantries, snacks for soldiers and the Healing Hugs project.

She has been baking with her mother since before she could walk, and aspires to a career as a pastry chef. Her favorite part of baking is its ability to make everyone happy. She plans to major in business in college so that she can manage her own bakery and then hopes to attend the Culinary Institute of America. While there, Payton hopes to study abroad in France or Italy and to do an internship in the Disney Culinary Program.

"A Woman of Tomorrow is strong. She doesn't let anything get in the way of her goals. She perseveres and overcomes with dignity and grace. She looks into the opportunities tomorrow holds and uses them for the benefit of herself and others."

---Payton Steele---

"(Payton Steele) is someone who presents herself with poise, grace, and confidence. She speaks with authority and passion. She sets her goals high and does everything in her power to make those goals become reality. She inspires those around her to do the same."

---Kim Dixon, Carroll County 4-H---



Honoree

Maria Elizabeth DeFeo



Maria Elizabeth DeFeo is a freshman at Westminster High School. She has lived in Westminster, Maryland her whole life with her mother, father and older brother.

She is secretary of her high school class. She has a passion for math and science and wants to be an architect when she is older. She has been an honors student since the 7th grade, with a 3.75 GPA. This year, she completed six honors classes and one Advanced Placement course.

Maria enjoys reading, watching movies, and painting. She contributes many hours as a volunteer at the library, with the Girl Scouts, and at summer theater group. Volunteering has taught her much about leading as she takes on additional and significant responsibilities. In the Girl Scout camp, she and two others are in charge of 20 girls. While watching the girls, she has the opportunity to form relationships with them, but also must ensure their safety and help them to learn. Although the camp assigned Maria much responsibility, she loved working there and has done so for the past two years.

Maria's achievements include two Presidential Awards in English, two in Math, Middle School Honor Role Award, High School 4.0 Award, 8th grade Science Award, Girl Scouts Silver Award and a Service Hours Award. Her Silver Award from the Girl Scouts involved organizing bake sales that raised enough funds to provide 52 Easter Baskets for disadvantaged children in her community through the Sheppard's Staff organization.

"Women of this generation are going to do great things because we believe we can follow our interests. The women of tomorrow award shows that we can do great things. We just need encouragement and someone to believe in us."

---Maria DeFeo---

"Maria's mom will often say Maria is too stubborn for her own good. However, I view this as a good quality because when Maria makes her mind up, she will work endlessly to achieve her goal. . . This drive and dedication will give her the determination to do the unimaginable."

---Shawn Minnier, Westminster High School---



Honorable Mention

Samirah Brown



Samirah Brown is a 9th grade student at Northern High School in Calvert County. She maintains a 3.86 grade point average while taking all Honors courses, participating in several extra-curricular activities, and volunteering within her community. Samirah's father passed away when she was just a child, but she has not allowed the tragedy to hold her back.

Samirah was elected Vice President of the Student Government Association during her 6th grade school year and was voted "Most Likely to Make You Laugh" and "Most Likely to be on TV" by her middle school classmates.

Over the past few years, Samirah has contributed significantly to her community. An active member of the Northern High School Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), she helped raise over \$12,000 for the Special Olympics of Calvert County. She worked to solicit donations from local businesses in the Chesapeake Bay region to be used as silent auction items in the FBLA's annual community fundraising project.

As a member of the National Society of Black Engineer's Junior (NSBE Jr.) chapter, she Chairs the Membership Committee. Samirah networks on behalf of the chapter and encourages African American students to participate in programs that encourage leadership development, personal growth and academic excellence. Samirah persuaded her fellow Delta GEMS mentoring program members to choose a local transitional group home for at-risk women in Southern Maryland as their community service project. Samirah and her group members made cards for the women, prepared personal product gift baskets, and spent a day at the transitional group home in March, 2015. Samirah volunteered many hours during the 2012 Presidential campaign making phone calls, operating a phone bank and doing administrative work to encourage citizens to vote. She used the lessons she learned during that time to assist a local politician run a successful 2014 election campaign for the Calvert County Board of Education.

Samirah is a committed competitor on her high school Track and Field team. She dedicates hours after school to practice and competitions. She won 6th place in the 2015 SMAC Indoor Track and Field Championship in the Girls Shot Put event.

Samirah plans to graduate high school with Honors and attend a four-year university. She hopes to pursue a career as a Doctor of Physical Therapy desiring to help children and adults live long, active, and healthy lifestyles.

"A Woman of Tomorrow...shows the characteristics and traits to be a smart, well rounded, positive role model in the world. A leader is anyone who has influence on other people, positive or negative. Leaders show their learners how to do things and teach them ways to improve."

---Samirah Brown ---

"Samirah is a natural born leader who earns the respect of those individuals with which she interacts . . . I have watched Samirah enter a room, network and make a positive impression on everyone she contacts."

---Inez N. Claggett, Calvert County Commission for Women ---



Honoree

Tiffany Alexandra Ramcharan

Tiffany Alexandra Ramcharan is a graduating senior at Tuscarora High School in Frederick, Maryland. Her parents moved to the United States in the late 1980s from the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. She attributes her work ethic to her family's history. From indentured laborers on a sugar plantation and workers in a sugar factory, gardeners, seamstresses and taxi drivers, Tiffany learned the value and pride in a job well done. Her father comes from a family of six brothers and five sisters. Her mother is from a family of six brothers and four sisters. Tiffany will be the first member of this family to attend college and plans to study Aerospace Engineering.

She has successfully completed AP Calculus AB/BC, Calculus III, AP Biology, AP Physics, AP Macroeconomics, AP Chemistry I and II, and AP Environmental Science, and has earned a Cumulative GPA of 4.0, Cumulative Weighted GPA of 4.7097. She has already completed two college courses, and is ranked #1 in her graduating class.

Tiffany is an active member of the National Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society and the Key Club. She captained the Varsity Cross Country team, running both Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field, and earned a Varsity Letter in Track and Cross Country all four of her high school years. She was presented the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award representing Tuscarora High School and was also named the FCCA Female Senior Scholar Athlete for Tuscarora High School. She has volunteered at the Break Away 5K to End Domestic Violence and to support Frederick's Heartly House. She has tutored many hours in math and volunteered at the Feed My Starving Children Ministry, packing lunches to send to malnourished children internationally. She served as Captain of a Relay for Life team, volunteers in local soup kitchens, blood drives, Unified Track Meets for those with and without disabilities, and many other school, church and community service events.

"An effective leader is someone who actually considers themselves less important than those he/she leads. A leader recognizes the potential of those over which he/she has influence and is altruistically concerned about maximizing each member's individual potential."

---Tiffany Ramcharan---

"Tiffany has kindness, intelligence, and a drive that are well above the norm.. In her life, she puts an emphasis on Family, Faith, Academics, and Service to Others."

---Christopher Babb, Tuscarora High School and Frederick Community College---



Honorable Mention

Sydney Anderson



Sydney Anderson is a senior at Huntingtown High School with a 99.9 GPA. She has been a straight-A student throughout her school career, and ranked #2 in her graduating class.

Sydney was competitively chosen as one of two seniors to represent Calvert County in the Maryland General Assembly as a Student Page. She has been a Girl Scout for 10 years, recently served as a Girl Scout Congressional Aide on Capitol Hill, and has earned both her Silver Award and Gold Award in scouting.

Sydney has been an integral part of her Key Club, serving as the Secretary, Vice-President and President in her senior year, in addition to serving as the Treasurer of Huntingtown's National Honor Society for the past year. She has been an active member of Class Council since her freshman year.

She was a member of the Huntingtown High School varsity swim team as a freshman and has competed as a springboard diver for several years. Sydney has played the viola since the fourth grade and was selected for and performed with the All-County Honors Orchestra for eight years and the Tri-County Honors Orchestras for six years. She also performed as a soloist in the District and State Solo and Ensemble Festivals.

Sydney enjoys assisting with volunteer childcare at Chesapeake Church and is a volunteer with the Patuxent Animal Welfare Society, in addition to organizing and attending many service projects for Key Club. She helped raise funds for project Eliminate, and for the Ronald McDonald House, and participated in highway litter clean-up events. She volunteered to help with the Angel Tree project, Christmas in April, and Toys for Tots.

After graduation this year, Sydney plans to attend Case Western Reserve University and earn a B.A. Degree in International Studies with a minor in Public Policy.

“My personal vision of a Woman of Tomorrow is a motivated, intelligent woman with specific goals, the passion to pursue them successfully, and the compassion to better her community.”
---Sydney Anderson---

“Sydney is one of the most talented and well-rounded students that I have had the pleasure to work with over my past eleven years at Huntingtown High School. She is gifted academically and musically and most importantly a person of the highest character.”
---Rick Weber, Principal, Huntingtown High School---



Keynote Speaker:



Major General Linda Singh was appointed by Governor Larry Hogan in January 2015 to serve as the 29th Adjutant General of the Maryland National Guard, which is comprised of Maryland's Air and Army National Guard forces. She is the first woman ever to hold this position in the state of Maryland. She is a senior advisor to the governor and is responsible for the readiness, administration, and training of more than 6,700 members of the Military Department with an annual budget of more than \$314 million.

General Singh grew up in Frederick County, MD and is a long time Maryland resident where she resides with her husband and two daughters. She received her commission in 1991 through Officer Candidate School at the Maryland Military Academy in Reisterstown, MD. Her military career spans more than 30 years of service in both the enlisted and officer ranks. She has served in staff and command assignments at every level, including deployed assignments in Kosovo and a combat tour in Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Her previous military assignments include Commander of the Maryland Army National Guard and Director of the Joint Staff, Maryland National Guard.

General Singh is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College where she received a master's degree in Strategic Studies. She holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Columbia Union College, a master's degree in Business Administration, Military Management from Touro International University, a master's certificate in Six Sigma from Villanova University, is a graduate of the United States Northern Command Joint Task Force Commander's course and is a fellow from the International Women's Leadership program at Harvard University/INSEAD.



Message from the 2015 Women of Tomorrow Co-Chairs

The Women of Tomorrow Awards was established in 1997 to recognize and to honor extraordinary young women who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, community service and academic excellence. Nominations are received from educators, civic, community and religious leaders across the state. An independent committee reviews all the nominations and makes the very difficult decision of selecting the honorees.

On behalf of the Maryland Commission for Women, we congratulate all of our honorees on their well-deserved award as a Woman of Tomorrow. In all of our honorees, we see strong leaders, active community servants and outstanding students. We look forward to their contributions to our communities, our state and our nation as they take on the challenges tomorrow will bring. We are confident the future will be brighter because of the dedication each has already demonstrated to Building a World of Excellence.

We wish you all the very best,

Debbie Risper, *Co-Chair*

Lorna Forde, *Co-Chair*

2015 Women of Tomorrow Planning Committee

Debbie Risper, *Co-Chair*

Lorna Forde, *Co-Chair*

Mythili Bachu, *Member*

2015 Honoree Selection Committee

Former Commissioner Diane Fink

Former Commissioner Lynn Fitrell

Former Commissioner Cynthia Lifson

Commissioner Betsy Ramirez

Former Commissioner Toni Sandridge

Commissioner Diane Williams

**The Maryland Commission for Women congratulates
each exceptional young woman nominated for this award.**

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