



Council of the Great City Schools  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DATE: May 15, 2013

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***Council of the Great City Schools Selects 2013 Math and Science Scholars***  
*Urban students receive scholarships from ExxonMobil Foundation and Dr. Bernard Harris*

WASHINGTON, DC (Business Wire) — Four high school seniors have been named recipients of the 2013 ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarship by the [Council of the Great City Schools](#) (CGCS). Students were selected from several hundred applicants for their academic performance, leadership qualities and community involvement.

The scholarship program was created by former NASA astronaut [Dr. Bernard Harris Jr.](#), the first African American to walk in space, and the [ExxonMobil Foundation](#) to help underrepresented students pursue science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies and increase diversity in the STEM workforce.

The awards are given annually to two African-American and two Hispanic seniors from high schools in the 67 urban school districts represented by CGCS.

“We are extremely proud of the winners of this highly competitive scholarship program,” said Michael Casserly, executive director, Council of the Great City Schools. “These young men and women will have an opportunity to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow thanks to the generous support of ExxonMobil and the encouragement of Dr. Harris.”

Each scholar will receive \$5,000 for continued education in a STEM-related field. This year’s award winners are:

- Lorena Benitez, Atlantic Community High School, Palm Beach County School District
- Malik Hollingsworth, Central High School, Memphis City Schools,
- Rachel Katz, Lincoln High School, Portland Public Schools, Oregon
- Sergio Puleri, Dr. Phillips High School, Orange County Public Schools, Orlando

In the fall, Ms. Benitez will attend Harvard University to study biology. Mr. Hollingsworth is going to Vanderbilt University to pursue a career in design engineering, and Ms. Katz will study engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mr. Puleri plans to major in computer programming or engineering at University of Florida.

“These scholarships are one way of empowering promising youth for math and science achievement both inside and outside the classroom,” said Dr. Harris. “I am proud to support the development of innovative young minds and honor these students as they create a brighter future for themselves and our nation.”

Administration of the scholarship program, including the application process, pre-selection and presentation of awards, is provided by the CGCS. Dr. Harris participates in the final selection of the recipients.

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### **About The Council of the Great City Schools**

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 67 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information, and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth. [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org)

### **About ExxonMobil Foundation**

The ExxonMobil Foundation is the primary philanthropic arm of Exxon Mobil Corporation in the United States. The foundation and the corporation engage in a range of philanthropic activities that advance education, health and science in the communities where ExxonMobil has significant operations. In the United States, ExxonMobil supports initiatives to improve math and science education at the K-12 and higher education levels. In 2012, together with its employees and retirees, Exxon Mobil Corporation (NYSE:XOM), its divisions and affiliates, and the ExxonMobil Foundation provided \$256 million in contributions worldwide, of which \$116 million was dedicated to education. [www.exxonmobil.com/community](http://www.exxonmobil.com/community).

### **About The Harris Foundation**

Founded in 1998, The Harris Foundation is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization based in Houston, Texas, whose overall mission is to invest in community-based initiatives to support education, health and wealth. The foundation supports programs that empower individuals, in particular minorities and economically and/or socially disadvantaged, to recognize their potential and pursue their dreams.

The Education Mission of The Harris Foundation is to enable youth to develop and achieve their full potential through the support of social, recreational, and educational programs. The Harris Foundation believes that students can be prepared now for the careers of the future through a structured education program and the use of positive role models. More than 15,000 students annually participate and benefit from THF programs. [www.theharrisfoundation.org](http://www.theharrisfoundation.org)