

# Papitto Opportunity Connection

August 2024

## A Day To Celebrate Dominican Culture

A colorful parade, music and dancing in the street marked the annual celebration of the Dominican Festival, one of the largest festivals in New England. Presented by [Quisqueya en Accion](#) (QEA), the annual, day-long celebration honors and celebrates Dominican culture and heritage through a vibrant parade and festival.



Image courtesy of Quisqueya en Accion.

Held on August 13, the festivities kicked off with a lively parade that traveled through South Providence, down Broad Street en route to Roger Williams Park. There, the celebration included music, authentic Dominican food and family-friendly activities, drawing thousands. Proceeds from the Dominican Festival benefit QEA's educational programs.

## Future Gen Cancer Scholars Program

While most Rhode Island high school students are having fun, 36 high school students from Pawtucket, Providence and Central Falls, traded their bathing suits for white lab coats and are spending their summer in the lab as part of the [Future Gen Cancer Scholars](#) program — a two-year, six-week paid summer fellowship that allows students from the urban core to shadow some of the nation's leading cancer doctors at Rhode Island, The Miriam, and Hasbro Children's hospitals.

Supported by Papitto Opportunity Connection and in partnership with [Lifespan Cancer Institute](#) (LCI), the unique initiative trains high school students from RI's diverse communities for careers in cancer medicine. The effort aims to build the next generation of cancer physicians and researchers reflective of the communities they serve.



Pictured above: First & Second Year Future Gen Students take part in the White Coat Ceremony.  
Pictured L to R: Jaya Richard, Kaylyn Woods, Ivana Urena, Dr. Anthony Mega, Linda Samayoa, Melissa Paula, Joseline Soberanis, Raquel Ortiz, Dr. Thomas Ollila, John Tarantino, Dara Cifuentes, Barbara Papitto, Dr. Howard Safran, Joseline Rodriguez, Ehilyn Novas, Gabriell Leon, Jaymeson Taylor, Gabriella De La Cruz, Monoluwa Adeniyi, Daniel Oduro, Seoanne Almada, Rexella Bishop, Alexander Herrera, Victoria Correia, Ariana Orellana, Angelina Maldonado, Denise Lawrence, Jenifer Tipaz, Alexander Sucuqui, Melissa Gamez, Melany Reyes, Andreina Ramos, Aidile Gomes, Idalmy Noriega

Future Gen Scholar Gabriell Leon, who has returned for her second year, offers advice to the 16 members of the 2024-2025 Future Gen cohort, who were selected from more than 100 applications.

"This program has definitely steered me towards a path in medicine and made me truly realize that one day, I would like to be a doctor," said Gabriell. "My advice for new students

is to go into everything with an open mind as it is truly a great learning experience, but also to have fun. This program is not only a hands-on way to learn so much about the medical field, what it is like to be a doctor, learn skills crucial to building any career path and more, but it is also an experience where you get to meet new people, make new friends, and make memories that will last for a lifetime.”

**The following students have been accepted into the program for 2024-25:**

Names in alphabetical order:

- Monoluwa Adeniyi, [Classical High School](#)
- Victoria Correia, [Providence Career & Technical Academy](#)
- Gabriella De La Cruz, [St. Mary Academy—Bay View / Riverside](#)
- Melissa Gamez, [Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School](#)
- Denise Lawrence, [Central Falls High School](#)
- Idalmy Noriega, [Hope High School](#)
- Ehilyn Novas, [Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School](#)
- Raquel Ortiz, [Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex](#)
- Melissa Paula, [E-Cubed Academy / Providence](#)
- Victor Peña Perez, [Central High School / Providence](#)
- Jaya Richard, [Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex](#)
- Ivana Rosario Ureña, [RI Nurses Institute Middle College Charter School](#)
- Joseline Soberanis, [Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex](#)
- Linda Samayoa, [Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School](#)
- Jaymeson Taylor, [Saint Raphael Academy / Pawtucket](#)
- Kaylyn Woods, [Davies Career & Technical High School / Lincoln](#)



Pictured above: Dr. Thomas Ollila and Future Gen student Gabriell Leon

Now in its second year, the program begins in July following high school students' sophomore year. In addition to shadowing doctors, scholars have access to state-of-the-art laboratories at LCI and the Cancer Center at Brown University with cancer research space serving as a classroom. Students receive a stipend of \$2,500 per summer and transportation expenses may be reimbursed.

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**Lifespan's Pathway to Employment Program: Applications Are Now Being Accepted**

[Lifespan Workforce Development](#) is now seeking applicants for its Pathway to Employment (PTE) reentry program! PTE hires individuals involved with the justice system to work at RI Hospital for 16-weeks, receive intensive work readiness training and case management, and have access to opportunities for permanent employment at Lifespan upon successful completion.



Image provided by Lifespan

Applications are due by 5pm on Friday, August 23. For more information: [Pathway to Employment Program / Lifespan.](#)

### RI Write On Sports Helps Youth Gain Confidence In Their Writing Skills

William Sanbo, 11, readily admits he never really liked to write. But after spending a few days at [Rhode Island Write on Sports \(RIWOS\)](#) camp his attitude towards writing changed.

Unlike at school, where he is assigned a specific topic to write about, at RIWOS, he can choose what he writes about and is eager to write about his favorite soccer player. Now, he doesn't mind writing and admits the experience will help him when he returns to Paul Cuffee Middle School in the fall.

That's the goal.



Pictured above: Members of the Providence College basketball team paid a visit to the RI Write on Sports camp this summer. The students in attendance held a mock interview with PC Friars.

Led by former [The Providence Journal](#) sportswriter Steve Krasner, [Rhode Island Write on Sports](#) is a free camp for middle school students from communities most in need that uses sports writing as a vehicle for them to gain confidence in their writing skills.



"It would be great to turn out a new set of sports writers each year, but that's not the goal," said Krasner. "The goal is being more comfortable and confident in writing, which will lead to success in the classroom."

Supported by Papitto Opportunity Connection, RI Write on Sports also exposes students to college campuses. Now in its 11th year, this year's camp was held at [Providence College](#). The students were able to tour the campus and have lunch in the cafeteria.

More than 32 students from 14 different schools had the opportunity to practice their interview skills during a mock press conference with members of the PC men's basketball team.

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