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## FIRST COMMUNITY CAPTAINS GRADUATE

STUDENTS MAKE HISTORY BY WALKING ACROSS THE STAGE.

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | December 19, 2024*Read time: about 2 min*

Four students have earned a special place in Christopher Newport University history as the first graduates of the [Community Captains program](#).

With the turn of their tassels, Tejah Butler, Krystal Langhorne, Briana Terry and Miranda Williamson will transform this week from Community Captains to [Captains For Life](#).

"They are graduating from CNU after only three and a half years," President William G. Kelly said in his [Commencement Address](#). "We are so proud of them, their teachers and counselors in high school, and their families and supporters."

The graduates' journeys as Community Captains began when they were sophomores in high school. The high-performing students, two of whom graduated from Heritage High School and the other two from An Achievable Dream High School, were invited to apply to a brand new college-preparatory program at Christopher Newport created in collaboration with Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) and the City of Newport News.

The Community Captains program offered them early access to a college class, events that introduced them to college life, and the promise of support every step of the way – academically, developmentally and socially. The four students, and many others since, realized it was an opportunity they couldn't turn down.

"I just thought it was really cool getting a feel for college culture. I was drawn to the program due to the college exposure," said Langhorne, who majored in [Psychology](#). "I knew the program was a good fit. How they described

the program was intriguing and seemed like it was going to set me up for success.”

Butler, Langhorne, Terry and Williamson completed the high school portion of Community Captains and then chose to attend Christopher Newport. The four students not only embraced life on campus, they also realized their goal of a bachelor’s degree in 3.5 years.

“It feels GREAT!,” said Butler, who majored in [Finance](#) and plans to stay at CNU to earn a [Master of Financial Analysis \(MFinA\)](#). “Finishing school early has allowed me to start my career way before I ever imagined, as I began in October. I am also able to begin the MFinA program at CNU next semester and will be done by the time I’m 22!”

Butler will work as a full-time accountant at Huntington Ingalls Industries as she works toward earning her MFinA.

Choosing CNU, the students said, proved to be the right choice.

“I chose to pursue my education at CNU solely because of the Community Captains program; being in the program allowed me to tour the campus and see CNU for myself and every time I went, it just felt like home to me,” said Terry, who majored in [Global Commerce and Culture](#). “I really liked the small campus, how everyone held doors and the small ratio of students in a classroom. The campus is just really beautiful to me.”

Langhorne was equally impressed.

“It just provided a lot of close-to-home opportunities that were affordable to me while still being an amazing experience,” she said.

Langhorne spent much of her time on campus conducting undergraduate research. She hopes to continue her research in graduate school and one day become a clinical psychologist.

Completing a semester early simply adds to Langhorne’s joy.

“I could not be happier. I’m just proud of my fellow Community Captains and early graduates in general and just happy to be done,” she said.

Since the program’s inception, more than 350 students from NNPS have been served by Community Captains. Brandon Jones, director of the program, said he is excited for the graduates and looking forward to watching them flourish in the world.

“All four of these students are such competent, hard-working and deeply-feeling adults,” he said. “I think, on behalf of the team, that we hope they all realize they are cared for, that they are competent and, by relying on the program advance and experiences they have had, that all will be well.”