

Amazing CHA Teen Wins National Honor

Catira McCaskill has a lot to be thankful for. A mom who is a great role model. Brothers who love her, and a best friend who, without her knowing it, signed her up for the Junior Reserved Officer Training Corps (JROTC) in high school.

“I didn’t want to take that (meaning JROTC),” she said, “but my best friend signed me up when I was not paying attention so we could do it together. When the schedule came out, I was surprised, but decided to just do it that one year.”

“My first semester in JROTC, I didn’t do much,” she added. I viewed it as an easy A class, that was all.” But somewhere along the way, things changed. She began to see the benefits of the program, and she began to get involved.

As a graduating high school senior at Rocky River High School, Catira is now the Executive Officer of the JROTC at her high school and has won multiple awards for her exemplary leadership of more than 200 cadets.

Carita’s JROTC service, her grades and her other activities has now led to her selection as the national recipient of a \$7,000 college scholarship from the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA).

A committee reviewed applications from all around the country, and believed that her’s was the most deserving of this prestigious honor. Catira and her mother, Samantha McKinney, will travel to Las Vegas, Nevada to the annual PHADA summer conference where they will award the scholarship in person.

An excellent student, Catira will graduate from high school with a better than 4.0 GPA and a long list of volunteer accomplishments. She says she found her inspiration for helping others from watching her instructors at Rocky River High School

In the fall, Catira plans to attend Wingate College where she will major in Pre-Pharmacy and Biology. She plans to get her Doctorate in Pharmacy.

Ms. McKinney says she is proud of her daughter and finds her graduation “bittersweet,” but she is ready for Catira to start her journey and find out who she is.

Between her mother and father, Catira is the oldest of seven children. brothers, Shymere, 14 and Nasir, 11 (photo above) and Wiley, Makayla, Kalup and Devon. Like most younger siblings while they are proud of their big sister, they are also excited to see her go!

Catira’s advice to others: don’t get caught up in the drama for the wrong reasons because it could bring you down. She says people shouldn’t get upset if “you’re not getting your shine,” because, at the end of the day, “you’ll get your moment,” you just have to wait.

Catira is having her well-earned moment now!