

Good evening everyone, my name is Ashanti Jackson and I am a graduate from Rutland High School. I will be attending Georgia Southwestern in the fall to major in nursing and become a pediatric nurse practitioner. I have been attending Next Level since the 4th grade in both the after school program and the summer camp and this year I am a member of the ELITE leadership academy. I have enjoyed every year I've spent at this program. I was able to make a lot of friends, go on trips, participate in our exciting step competition, create a song with a music video, and of course learn. My camp experience was a little different this year being a member of ELITE. I had the opportunity to work this summer at Dr. Cavaliere's office in downtown Macon and I really enjoyed it. Although I did not get much experience dealing with patients due to COVID-19, it was still a great exposure to the career I plan to pursue. Originally I thought ELITE was only active during the summer months but I learned quickly that it was active all year round. We would complete various community service projects as well as have monthly meetings to complete our abstinence and leadership lessons. After participating in ELITE this year, I really wish I had joined sooner. I benefited greatly by working with Mrs. Ruby, Mr. Harvey and Mrs. Eileen. After every lesson I left learning something new about myself and that really helped in becoming the best me. We completed many group tasks which helped improve my working with other skills. I think my favorite memory from ELITE was attending Banning Mills. I was so scared to do the zip lines but the team was so encouraging so I faced my fear and I enjoyed every moment of it. The program as a whole is a great place to learn. As I progressed through the program, I grew as an individual along the way. I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to attend such a wonderful program and I am truly blessed to have met everywhere who works or has worked at Next Level. This place has and will forever have a large impact on my life.