Receiving the Spread Your Wings Scholarship has been very meaningful to me and it has brought me one step closer to achieving my long-held dream of going to college. I grew up in Ward 7 of the District of Columbia, so I know the importance of having someone who can believe in you and encourage your ambitions. College offers many opportunities, but it is an expensive undertaking. This scholarship has lifted some weight from my parents and has allowed me to focus on the next chapter of my life. "It's more than money, it's a validation of all my efforts.

What makes this scholarship even more special is that it encapsulates everything that is dear to me such as leadership and service. I have been trying throughout my four years of high school to have a positive impact on the lives of my peers and the community as a whole through leadership positions, service work, and helping others to be the best that they can be. I have always tried to give back to the community that made me who I am today, from helping the community, to being a leader amongst my peers as a team captain, to helping other people through various other activities.

Jaala Brown
Benjamin Banneker High School