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**For Immediate Release**

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**Nearly \$400,000 in college scholarships earmarked for seventh- and eighth-grade students**

**Gainesville, FL**— The Education Foundation of Alachua County has opened its *Take Stock in Children* program applications for seventh- and eighth-grade students.

Take Stock in Children is a scholarship and mentoring program that provides students with high school success and college readiness services. Each student is matched with a volunteer mentor who meets with them two times per month and a college success coach who meets with them on a semesterly basis to review grades, behavior and attendance. Upon high school graduation and the completion of Take Stock in Children program requirements, each student receives a two-year Florida Prepaid college scholarship to use at any college, university or technical school.

"Take Stock in Children has always been the support system that I lacked growing up," said Asia Clark, Take Stock in Children alumni, class of 2018. "The bonds I made and memories I've shared with this program makes me that much more thankful I had this program to guide me through some of the best and worst times in my life. From my amazing mentor to the dedicated Take Stock in Children team, I always had someone cheering me on even when it seemed like no one was," said Clark, who is currently a junior at Bethune-Cookman University studying hospitality management and business administration.

The Education Foundation is looking to induct 50 new students by December 2020 – totaling nearly \$400,000 in scholarship opportunities.

Local middle school students are invited to apply for *Take Stock in Children*, provided that they qualify for free or reduced lunch, have at least a 2.5 GPA, and are in good standing with the Alachua County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct. Once selected for *Take Stock in Children*, the students sign a contract stating that they will maintain their grades, adhere to school attendance and behavior standards, and stay drug and crime-free throughout middle and high school.

To be eligible for Take Stock in Children, students must attend an Alachua County Public School, be in the seventh or eighth grade, and family income lower than these [guidelines](#).

Applications are due Friday, October 23, 2020.

For more information and to apply, please visit <http://edfoundationac.org/take-stock-in-children/>.

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The Education Foundation of Alachua County, Inc. is a 501(C)3 organization founded in 1986 to support the Alachua County Public Schools. The Foundation has three programs: Senior Scholarship, Take Stock in Children and Catalyst for Change. For more information, please visit <http://edfoundationac.org/about-us/>.