news of his academic achievements, including
testing out of his ESE designation, meeting
all his graduation testing requirements early
and getting early acceptance into Schiller
International University. He will attend the
campus in Madrid Spain to pursue his dream
of going into diplomacy and having the
opportunity to study abroad.

“Gabriel exemplifies what hard work and focus
can do to overcome any academic obstacle one
may have,”
said case manager Leslie Pagan.

“He is a wonderful example for his four younger
siblings and his peers, especially students new
to the US that may feel they cannot accomplish
their dreams here.”

11th grader
Diana
torres
uses all the tools
and resources available
through the GEAR UP
program. She enrolled
in fall SAT Prep class
run by KAPLAN; gets
academic tutoring
assistance when she
needs it and attends
Saturday program workshops with her
mother. Diana's hard work has resulted in
her being selected as one of the 2007/2008
GEAR UP scholarship recipients. Both she
and her mother participated in the parent/
student overnight college tour to FAMU and
Florida State University in March 2007.
“I don't have words to tell how grateful I am,” said Ms. Torres, who moved to the United States from Colombia. “During our trip to Tallahassee, it was so nice to see how much the case managers get involved with the future of the kids. They provide connections, guidance, teach them how to find resources for scholarships and change the lives for the students. There should be a GEAR UP program in all high schools.”

Seniors Breanna Smith and Malachi Adebayo have also benefited from participation in GEAR UP’s tutoring services and FCAT testing preparation. Breanna has been awarded a GEAR UP Florida Prepaid Scholarship and will attend Hillsborough Community College (HCC)/Ybor campus. Malachi will be attending the HCC/Dale Mabry campus through a Sallie Mae Fund scholarship.

“Breanna has proven herself as an outstanding student,” said case manager Roderick Barnes. “She possesses qualities that have contributed to the overall success of the students we serve and unselfishly gives of her time and energy to ensure that her peers are also successful in their education.”

With a current district GPA of 3.2, Breanna also participates in the CDC of Tampa-Prodigy Program, Future Business Leaders of America, high school track, Champions of Christ, Girls Football, and Sophisticated Ladies.

AT HHS, Malachi is a member of Distinguished Gentlemen, Basketball and Track Teams. He recently received a “Most Valuable Player” award, and also provides leadership and mentoring services for younger students.

For more information about the GEAR UP program in Tampa, contact Ms. Ruby Joseph at 813-974-9339.

http://gearup.fmhi.usf.edu

“Upon meeting Malachi, I was struck by his genuine desire to pursue his educational dream,” said Mr. Barnes. Malachi has already determined that he wants to major in sociology and work in family social work.

Recently, Diana Torres brought several friends to the GEAR UP office to sign them up for next year. She was told there was a chance the program wouldn't be available because of funding issues. “I really want GEAR Up to be here my senior year,” added Diana. “All the seniors will be affected if we don’t have that support.”

Diana, similar to Malachi, wants to be a child psychologist. Perhaps one day soon, they will play roles similar to the Gear Up staff—influencing youth in many positive ways and helping them achieve all that they can be.

“It has taken a lot of hard work,” said director Ruby Joseph. “We’ve had consistent support from Hillsborough High School administrators, teachers and support staff who’ve helped make Dr. Sengova’s job as program manager go smoothly. They have all assisted Eloise Boterf, our parent liaison/mentoring coordinator in running an effective mentoring program. Our case managers should be proud of their dedication and the positive changes they have made in so many adolescent lives. We’ve also had lots of support from other staff who work on the USF campus. Kenyatta Daniel, our accountant and Cathy Maldonado, our data entry staff have provided necessary administrative support. It’s been a true team effort.”

Hillsborough High School Principal Dr. William Orr has seen improvements in the GEAR UP students. He compared FCAT scores of GEAR UP students with a general group of students.

“After time in the GEAR UP program, kids did better on testing,” said HHS Principal Dr. William Orr. “That tells me something is working, and if you can get them to perform better, that gets them better prepared for college.”