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July 19, 2017

**Media Advisory**  
**for Friday, July 21, 2017**

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### **DCFS to Honor College-Bound Youth**

53 Scholarship Winners from Across Illinois Will Be Recognized at an Awards Luncheon

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is pleased to announce that it will honor 53 college-bound youth on Friday, July 21 from noon to 3 p.m. at Alhambra Palace, 1240 W. Randolph Street, in Chicago. **PHOTO-OP: Winners will receive their awards at approximately 2 p.m.**

“I would like to congratulate the scholarship recipients for their accomplishments,” said DCFS Acting Director BJ Walker. “It’s been said that education is the most powerful tool you can have that can change the world and I agree. I am extremely proud of our graduates and I am confident they will continue to follow their dreams and make their community and our world a better place.”

Invited guests include the four-year scholarship recipients and their families, and keynote speaker, Darius Atkins. Darius was born and raised in the North Lawndale community on the west side of Chicago and was a 2012 DCFS scholarship recipient. He attended Mason Elementary School and Curie Metro High School before graduating with distinction from Morehouse College. Currently, Darrius is a summer associate at Jones Day and is pursuing a Juris Doctor degree at The University of Chicago Law School, where he is the vice president of First Generation Professionals and a Debra A. Cafaro Scholar.

The scholarship winners were selected from nearly 250 applicants from across the state based on academic achievement, community involvement and an essay.

“We are all so impressed by the applicants,” said Molly Uhe-Edmonds, deputy director of the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services. “These students are persistent and resilient. We look forward to their future successes.”

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This year's scholarship honorees are from:

Alton	Farmer City	Midlothian
Antioch	*Florissant, MO	Mt. Vernon
Berkeley	Ford Heights	Naperville
Big Rock	Galesburg	Peru
Burbank	*Gretna, LA	Plainfield
Canton	*Helena, AL	Sandwich
Chicago	Herscher	South Elgin
*College Park, GA	Itasca	Springfield
Collinsville	Joliet	Spring Grove
Crystal Lake	Lake in the Hills	Trout Valley
Dawson	Lincoln	Warrenville
Dix	Lynwood	Westmont
East Dubuque	Machesney Park	Woodstock
Elgin	Marion	

\*Denotes recipient currently resides out of state

### **About the DCFS Scholarship**

The DCFS Scholarship Program provides a minimum of 53 scholarships each year, four of which are awarded to children of veterans. Youth who the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility for, youth who aged out of the Department's care at age 18 or older, youth that the Department had legal responsibility for prior to the youth's adoption being finalized, or youth that are in the Subsidized Guardianship or KinGap Program are eligible to apply for a DCFS Scholarship. Scholarship recipients receive up to five consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state community colleges and universities, a monthly grant and a medical card. Youth that graduated from high school in previous years or youth who are currently enrolled in college are eligible to apply for a Department scholarship, as long as they will be under the age of 21 on the scholarship application deadline of March 31 each year.

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