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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
Friday, May 6

Local student named U.S. Presidential Scholar semifinalist

For the tenth time in eleven years, an Alachua County Public Schools’ student has been named a semifinalist in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, one of the most selective and prestigious recognition programs for high school students.

Navya Tripathi, a senior at Buchholz High School, is one of just 620 semifinalists in the nation, 27 of them from Florida. She was invited to apply for the program based on her high college entrance exam scores. She then had to complete a rigorous application process by submitting responses to several probing essay questions, self-assessments, details of her extra-curricular activities and her academic transcripts.

Tripathi said it was an eye-opening experience

“It really gives you an opportunity to learn more about yourself and where you’ve come from,” said Tripathi. “It was so interesting to think more about the things I do and why I like them.”

Tripathi has a strong extra-curricular resume to go with her academic record. At school, she is involved with several clubs and serves in leadership positions. She’s vice president of CoderGirls, a club that introduces young girls to coding and participates in computer science competitions. She’s also the vice president of the North Florida chapter of Elevate the Future, which has chapters worldwide aimed at increasing access to business and computer science. As a member of the award-winning Buchholz math team, Tripathi has volunteered hundreds of hours teaching math to younger students during the summer. Overall, she has racked up more than 750 hours of community service during her high school career.

Outside of school, Tripathi has conducted extensive research on public health, the drug epidemic and COVID-19, with a particular focus on the use of GIS (Geographic Information System) to track trends. She’s presented her research at several international conferences and has had her work on the overlap of deaths due to COVID and drug overdoses published in a professional journal.

Tripathi has been accepted to Duke University and plans to pursue a career in medicine, likely with a focus on public health.

“Those are my real passions, and that’s been constant throughout my life,” said Tripathi. “Over the years I’ve been introduced to different ways of diving deeper into healthcare and public health, and that’s been really interesting. I’m always picking up new ideas and new perspectives.”

According to information from the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established nearly 60 years ago “to recognize the nation’s most distinguished graduating seniors for their accomplishments in academics, leadership and service to school and community.”

The Commission on Presidential Scholars, which is made up of about 30 people appointed by the President will select the finalists, with the Scholars to be announced in mid-May.

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