

Building a Brighter Future: Nevaeh K.'s Journey from Foster Care to College and the Impact of Ohio Reach

By Avery Roof, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Ohio Children's Alliance



From a childhood marked by instability and loss, Nevaeh K. has transformed hardship into purpose. With the support of Ohio Reach, she has created a life that reflects resilience, determination, and an unwavering commitment to turning personal setbacks into lasting impact for others.

Growing up in a family struggling with addiction, she often took on the role of caretaker for her younger brother, finding strength and motivation in his well-being. Despite years of uncertainty – moving between couches, floors, and motels – she held tightly to a vision of a brighter future through education.

“I watched as my entire family struggled, and I knew getting my degree was the answer... My younger brother Joshie is the reason I am alive and has been the motivating factor that kept me going in my hardest times. I always set out to live my life to be an example and a support for my brother. It was only a couple of years ago when I started to live for [myself],” Nevaeh explained.

Now a student at Kent State, she has discovered a passion for criminology and peace and conflict studies, focusing her work on supporting youth impacted by foster care and re-entry challenges. Motivated by her own difficult experience in a foster home, she hopes to create a nonprofit that provides genuine support and a sense of family for foster youth ages thirteen to eighteen. “From this dark time in my life, I learned that it is my mission to create a real space for foster youth to feel loved, worthy, and supported,” Nevaeh shared.

Although she has made great progress in finding her calling, Nevaeh continues to face multiple challenges, including financial instability and health concerns. As she prepares to graduate, she is balancing the demands of her studies with the realities of a limited income. After three years serving as a Resident Assistant, she will soon lose the housing benefits that the role provided, creating uncertainty about how she will afford basic needs and tuition.

To help ease these challenges, Nevaeh turned to Ohio Reach, a program dedicated to higher education by providing financial support and resources. Ohio Reach empowers

young adults to persist and succeed in college no matter what challenges they face. Nevaeh applied to the Ohio Reach Scholarship to help cover essential needs and stay focused on her studies, seeing it as an opportunity to find stability and continue working toward her goals.

Today, Nevaeh is preparing to graduate in the Spring semester of 2026 with a bachelor's degree in criminology and a minor in peace and conflict Studies. As she put it, "...After my first criminology class, I knew what I wanted to do. My passion for re-entry into society was illuminated." This passion continues to drive her forward as she works toward her long-term goals – earning her degree, creating positive change for youth impacted by foster care, and establishing a place of her own where she can begin a new chapter with stability and independence.

Nevaeh's determination to overcome adversity and build a future rooted in purpose embodies the very spirit of the Ohio Reach program. By providing financial assistance, guidance, and a sense of community, Ohio Reach helps students like Nevaeh stay focused on their goals and their resilience into lasting success.