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**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Choose New Jersey Announces *Smart Students Choose New Jersey* Scholars**

(Princeton, New Jersey) – Choose New Jersey, Inc., along with prominent business, education and community leaders, are pleased to announce the recipients of the inaugural *Smart Students Choose New Jersey* scholarship and internship awards. The program was created to encourage New Jersey’s most accomplished students to remain in New Jersey for their post-secondary education and professional careers.

Piloted in high schools in Newark and Camden in 2016, the program recognized the highest academically-ranked senior from each participating high school that chose to attend a New Jersey college or university. The 27 Newark and 10 Camden *Smart Students* represent public, private and charter high schools throughout the cities. Each student was awarded a one-time unrestricted scholarship of \$2,000 and a paid summer internship for three consecutive summers, after their freshman, sophomore and junior years. This year’s Newark *Smart Students* are:

- Maymouna Amar, Central High School/Rowan University
- Brianna Amos, Newark Prep Charter School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Newark
- Grace Appiah, Barringer Academy of STEAM/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Newark
- Isaiah Arrington, Immaculate Conception High School/Union County College – Cranford
- Jasmine Barrow, Bloomfield Technical High School/Monmouth University
- Nana Bempah, Barringer Academy of Arts & Humanities/New Jersey City University
- Grace Burga, Science Park High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Samantha Cabrera, East Side High School/Seton Hall University
- Cecelia Chollette-Dickson, University High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Clervens Clerjuste, Malcolm X Shabazz High School/Union County College – Cranford
- Erick Correa, Arts High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Brittney Daniels, North 13<sup>th</sup> Street Technical High School/Seton Hall University
- Kelly Fields, Newark Collegiate Academy High School/Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Tiana Gatewood, Paulo Freire Charter School/William Paterson University
- Diana Glah, North Star Academy-College Preparatory High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Tyshon Johnson, People’s Preparatory Charter School/New Jersey City University
- Harshat Kaur, American History High School/New Jersey City University
- Taariq Lumford, Weequahic High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Abraham Marquez, Newark Prep Charter School/New Jersey City University
- Briana Martinez, Saint Vincent Academy/Kean University

- Ne’Chelle McFadden, Newark Early College High School at West Side/Montclair State University
- Joshua Mprah, Fast Track Success Academy/Essex County College
- Michael Owusu-Baah, Bard Early College High School/Montclair State University
- Katherine Penafiel, Technology High School/Kean University
- Gloria Rodriguez, West Caldwell Technical High School/Essex County College
- Dominick Silva, Saint Benedict Preparatory School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Newark
- Trashawn White-Hines, Newark Vocational CTE at West Side/New Jersey City University

This year’s *Smart Students Choose New Jersey* scholars from Camden are:

- Aneesha Ames, Dr. Charles Brimm Medical Arts High School/ Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Maggie Battle, Camden High School/Rowan University
- Aniya Clark, Camden Catholic High School/Montclair State University
- Josiah Covington, Creative Arts Morgan Village Academy/Bloomfield College
- Dominique Dazilme, Camden County Technical School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Angel Espinal, Urban Promise Academy/Rowan University
- Ashly Estevez Perez, Camden Academy Charter High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Camden
- Katherine Jaquez, MetEast High School/New Jersey City University
- Jean Carlos Pelegrin, Leap Academy University Charter School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Camden
- Gabriela Torres-Gonzales, Woodrow Wilson High School/Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Camden

“We applaud the academic achievements of this year’s *Smart Students*. We look forward to working with them as they enter college and begin to build successful careers in New Jersey through their internship experiences,” said Michele Brown, president and CEO of Choose New Jersey, Inc. “We also thank leadership in the City of Newark, the City of Camden, and the sponsors and supporters that helped us launch this important initiative to keep our best and brightest here in New Jersey.”

*Smart Students Choose New Jersey* is being advanced in response to statistics about the out-migration of New Jersey’s high school students to out-of-state-colleges. According to a report published by the Chronicle of Higher Education, more than half of our graduating seniors leave New Jersey to pursue their college careers in another State.

“New Jersey invests heavily in educating its students, which is reflected in its national education rankings and high school graduation rates. They are among the highest in the country,” said Ralph LaRossa, president and chief operating officer of PSE&G and chairman of Choose New Jersey. “New Jersey’s highly educated workforce is a key reason why businesses choose to locate and expand in the State. It’s important that we work to keep our best and brightest here in New Jersey so they can become leaders and innovators who contribute to the state’s economic growth.”

Newark's Lead Program Sponsor is Audible, Inc. *Smart Students Choose New Jersey* also is supported by PSEG, Atlantic City Electric, PNC Bank, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Hackensack University Health Network, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, International Union of Operating Engineers – Local 825, Jersey Central Power & Light, Laborers International Union of North America, New Jersey American Water, NJM Insurance Group, New Jersey Resources, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Prudential Financial Inc., South Jersey Gas, Suez in North America, Wakefern Food Corporation, New Jersey Institute of Technology and Campbell Soup Company.

Choose New Jersey invites companies interested in providing internship opportunities for one or more *Smart Students* during the summer of 2017 to contact Cathy Scangarella, senior vice president of development at 609-297-2200 or [cscangarella@choosenj.com](mailto:cscangarella@choosenj.com).

To meet this year's *Smart Students* via video or for more information about the *Smart Students Choose New Jersey* scholarship and internship program, visit [www.choosenj.com/smart](http://www.choosenj.com/smart).

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***About Choose New Jersey, Inc.***

*Choose New Jersey, Inc. is a privately funded 501(c)(3) corporation charged with encouraging and nurturing economic growth throughout New Jersey with a focus on its urban centers. Through marketing, business attraction and lead generation activities, Choose New Jersey markets New Jersey as a premiere business location to both domestic and international businesses. Choose New Jersey is a member of the Partnership for Action (PFA), which is led by Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno and also includes the New Jersey Business Action Center, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. For more information, visit [www.choosenj.com](http://www.choosenj.com).*