



# Meet the 2024-25 Hungry for Education Winners!





# Partners For Youth With Disabilities

HIGH SCHOOL



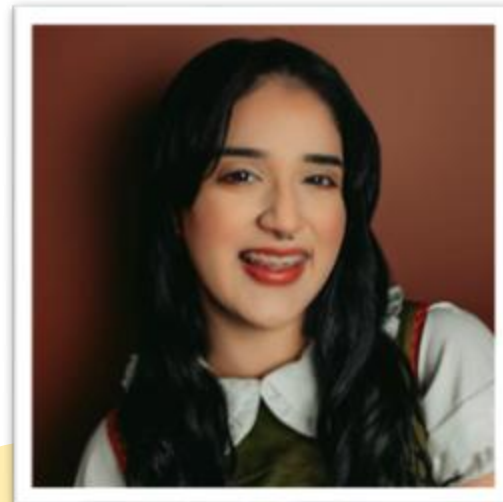
**JACE DOMINGUEZ**  
Clovis, CA  
University of Miami

*“Denny’s can use its spaces to support local artists, musicians, and small business owners. Hosting open-mic nights, art shows, or pop-up shops can give local talent a platform to showcase their work, bringing people together in a relaxed, social environment.”*



**DANE BRISCOE**  
Washington, DC  
St. John’s University

*“By offering family-friendly activities such as board game nights or kids’ story hours, or even providing free meeting space for local groups, the diner can strengthen its reputation as a community hub. Denny’s has the power to bring people together over a shared meal and shared purpose.”*



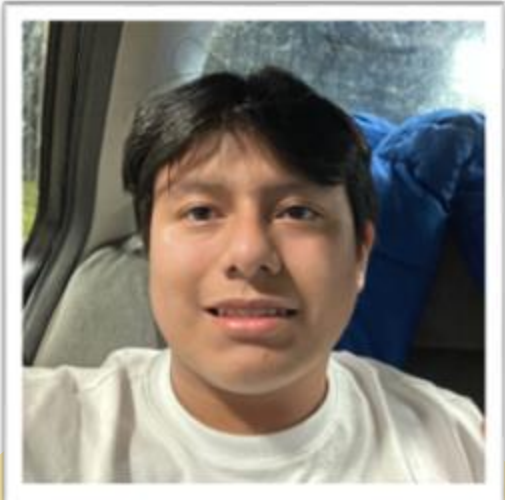
**GABRIELLA SANCHEZ**  
Eugene, OR  
University of Oregon

*“Denny’s could sponsor workshops or performances that highlight the contributions of underrepresented communities. As someone interested in teacher education and theatre, I know how impactful these experiences can be in shaping young minds and promoting empathy.”*



# Greater Spartanburg Divine 9

HIGH SCHOOL



**ALAN SANCHEZ**  
Spartanburg, SC  
Presbyterian College

*"Denny's is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week so that people may get together for a meal at any time of day or night. This makes it a convenient location for a variety of social gatherings."*



**LAUREN KUSTERER**  
Chesnee, SC  
University of South Carolina  
Upstate

*"Denny's can unify diverse communities through the creation of the Spartanburg County Annual Olympics. This annual event [allows] space for families and neighbors to gather. Nobody in our community is excluded."*



**ADIYA MARTIN**  
Spartanburg, SC  
Spelman College

*"By maintaining its status as a welcoming, 24-hour destination, Denny's becomes a place where friendships are made, stories are shared, and communities are strengthened."*



**TRISTAN PENDERGRAPH**  
Spartanburg, SC  
Winthrop

*"Denny's could do even more by getting young people involved in volunteering. If they encouraged kids and teens to participate with local nonprofits, it would help instill a sense of responsibility and caring in the younger generation."*



# Greater Spartanburg Divine 9

HIGH SCHOOL

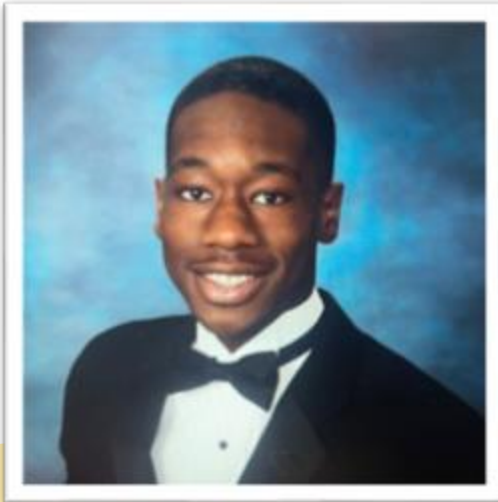


**JUSTIN RICE**

**Spartanburg, SC**

**University of South Carolina**

*"By hosting community breakfasts and partnering with local shelters and organizations, Denny's could provide meals to those in need and serve as platforms to connect individuals with resources for housing, healthcare, and job training."*



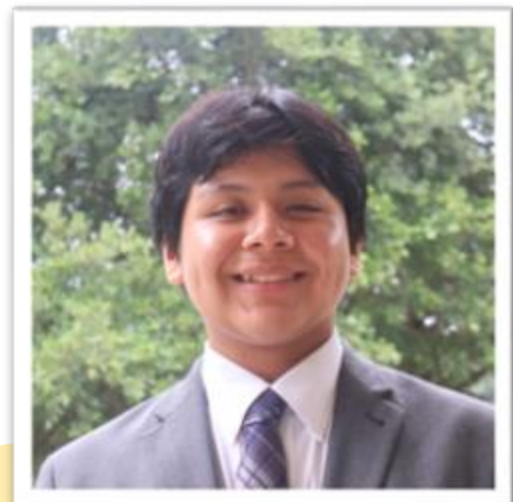
**CHASE CARTER**

**Orangeburg, SC**

**University of South Carolina**

**Upstate**

*"Hosting community events that celebrate different cultures and traditions would bring people together and create an environment where everyone feels valued."*



**ALEXANDER TUFINO**

**Spartanburg, SC**

**University of South Carolina**

**Upstate**

*"Denny's can keep communities stable by investing in the education of individuals who seek out college degrees to change the trajectory of their lives."*



# National Urban League

HIGH SCHOOL



**MACKENZIE GLOVER**  
Columbia, SC  
Virginia Tech

*"Denny's fosters a sense of belonging and comfort, offering a space for people to reconnect, laugh, and share experiences. I learned that a warm meal and good company can bring people together, no matter the distance or time apart."*



**JOCELYN ELDEMIRE**  
Elyria, OH  
University of Akron

*"Denny's ability to bring communities together stems from its inclusive environment, diverse menu, and round-the-clock availability. By creating a welcoming space where people can come together to share meals and experiences, Denny's creates a sense of community and belonging that is essential in today's world."*



**TANIYA KELLER**  
Columbia, SC  
Johnson C. Smith University

*"As a location that serves meals day and night, it celebrates daily life's simple joys while facilitating connections among community members. By powering connections one meal at a time, Denny's reaffirms the importance of food as a vital catalyst for community building."*



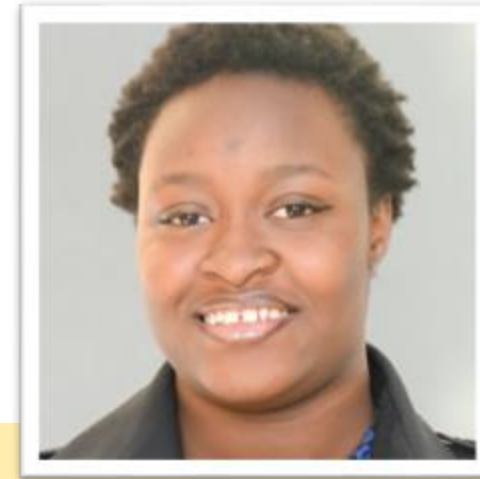
# National Urban League

HIGH SCHOOL



**KESHAWN CROCKROM**  
Chicago, IL  
Virginia State University

*“Beyond just food, Denny’s engages in community-focused initiatives, such as supporting local charities and hosting fundraising events. These efforts strengthen ties within neighborhoods, encouraging people to come together for a common cause.”*



**OLUWAYEMISI YUSUF**  
Indianapolis, IN  
Indiana University of Bloomington

*“Dennys can help bring our communities together in different ways like hosting community events like talent shows, charity fundraisers for small organizations that can help unite the community around a common goal and support those in need, and events for festive seasons to celebrate.”*



# National Veteran Business Development Council

HIGH SCHOOL



**MAKYLA LONGINO**  
Atlanta, GA  
Florida A&M University

*"My ultimate motivation lies in giving back to my community. I aspire to not only treat patients but also advocate for health equity and work to bridge the gaps in access to care."*



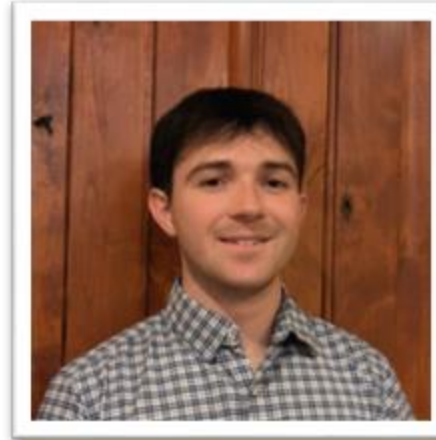
**STEVEN SHEARIN**  
Fairchance, PA  
Duquesne University

*"a free or reduced-price breakfast day once a month, where, in exchange, tables in the building are pushed together into large groups that can't be separated. While this may seem awkward, it would encourage communication between people in local communities."*



**K MCLENDON DUKES**  
Atlanta, GA  
Morehouse College

*"A contest for artists might involve Denny's displaying art from the top entrants. Families would come out to view all of the art vote for the best pieces, which represent the local community in a national Denny's art contest."*



**OWEN JARRETT**  
Castroville, TX  
Texas A&M University

*"Denny's can bring communities together by providing food and service opportunities to make a real difference in so many people's lives. They could serve food for special occasions like Thanksgiving and Christmas."*



**MIA ROCHA**  
Marco Island, FL  
Florida Gulf Coast University

*"The environment at Denny's opened its arms for me so I am more than ready to open my arms and integrate others in my life into those arms."*



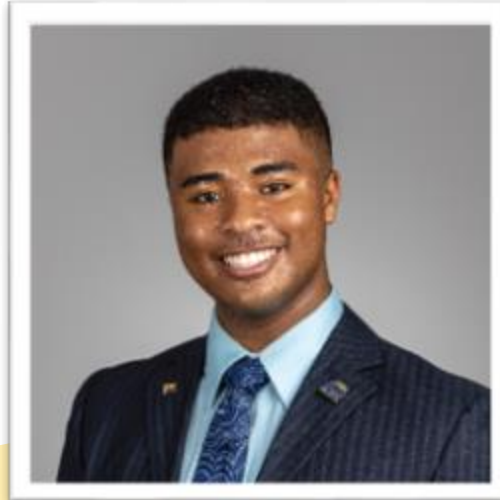
# US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce

HIGH SCHOOL



**Virthiha Selvamuthukumaran**  
Cumming, GA  
TBD

*"I propose the A Table for All: Powered by Your Community initiative. [...] For a few hours on the last day of each month, locations could transform part of their restaurants into a dedicated community space, bringing people together through experiences that matter most to them."*



**James Obasiolu**  
Columbia, MD  
TBD

*"By transforming from simply a restaurant chain to a intentional community hub, Denny's could help ensure that no community stands alone against today's challenges-creating the kind of gathering spaces where environmental justice, cross-cultural understanding, and authentic human connection flourish naturally."*



**Jimmy Gallegos**  
Jarrell, TX  
TBD

*"Denny's as a sponsor could allow service opportunities to have a greater impact as they could be better promoted and reach more people, allowing service projects to impact the community to a greater extent positively. [...] Denny's can become an anchor for local efforts, fostering connections, promoting service, and creating a more unified community."*



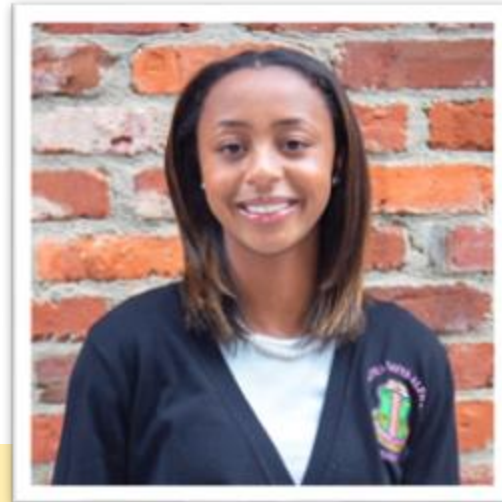


# Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, South Atlantic Region



**SAMIAH LEWIS**  
Spartanburg, SC  
Spelman College

*“Denny’s can help bring communities together is through corporate social responsibility programs. By encouraging employees to participate in volunteer efforts, Denny’s can empower its staff to be leaders in their communities, fostering a culture of service and engagement.”*



**CHARITY CLOUD**  
Fayetteville, GA  
Oglethorpe University

*“Using the local partnerships that involve educators and professionals, Denny’s could create a network of support that helps students succeed academically and socially. Rewarding students’ creativity and propelling them to make a change while receiving their education allows them to chase their dreams, which is what the program is about.”*



# Tom Joyner Foundation



**AZIYAH HARPS**  
Atlanta, GA  
Spelman College

*“Denny’s—a gathering place where people from all walks of life find connection through a shared meal. Denny’s can build on this by creating intentional opportunities for community engagement. - hosting “Unity Table Nights,” where diverse groups are invited to share a meal and meaningful conversations.”*



**NYAH NUNNALLY**  
Severna Park, MD  
Morgan State University

*“Host “Open Houses” during the holiday season. On special days like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and New Year’s, Denny’s could open its doors to anyone in the community who needs a warm meal or a safe place to gather.”*



**FAVOUR  
BADEVOLE**  
Nashville, TN  
Fisk University

*“Denny’s may grow its educational programs, such as having more scholarship opportunities provided and giving seminars and training sessions to empower people with the tools they need to be successful in their area.”*



**ALEXANDRIA DAVIS**  
Greensboro, NC  
North Carolina A&T  
State University

*“Denny’s can become more than just a restaurant by offering accessible areas, supporting local companies, promoting job opportunities, and campaigning for social justice.”*



**NAHLA BUSH**  
Atlanta, GA  
Spelman College

*“Partnering with local organizations to provide meal kits or healthy cooking workshops can extend Denny’s commitment to community well-being. I have seen how access to nutritious meals can uplift entire families, providing them with the energy and confidence needed to thrive.”*



# Partners For Youth With Disabilities

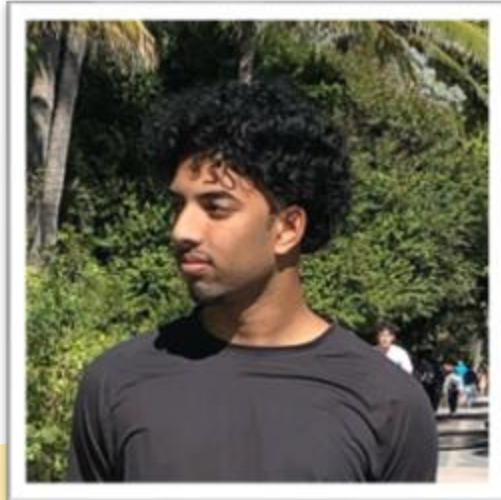


**EWIDJI VINCENT**

Boston, MA

MassBay Community College  
Transitional Scholars Program

*“People with disabilities have been told by others that they can not go to school because of their disability. Denny’s is giving individuals like me the hope for tomorrow, and that will also help an individual’s family for the next generation as well.”*



**RAHUL REBELLO**

Brookline, MA

University of Massachusetts Boston

*“Denny’s has a generous and empathetic leadership team that believes in justice, equality, and helping people which in my opinion are the most important qualities a company needs to succeed. They have set an example that other restaurant chains should follow.”*



**SRIDATTA BAPATLA**

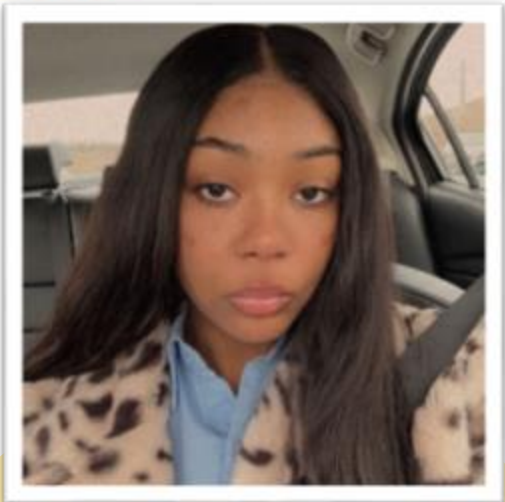
Brookline, MA

University of Massachusetts

*“Denny’s can support community gardens locally. There can be many volunteers who love gardening, and I am one of them. Denny’s can invite and encourage local teens or adults to volunteer their time to build those community gardens that can cultivate fresh produce which can be used in the meal preparation to distribute.”*

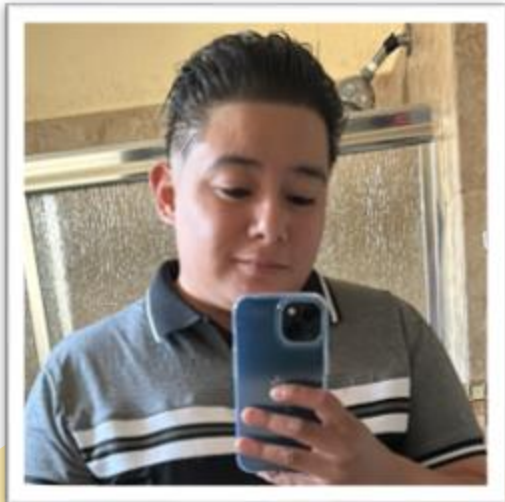


# National LGBT Chamber of Commerce



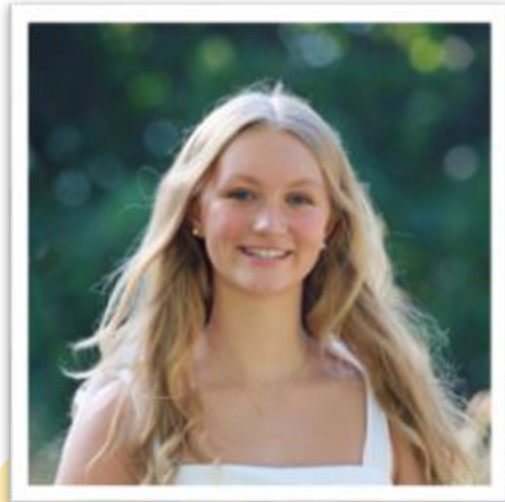
**AURIS WOODS**  
White Marsh, MD  
Towson University

*"By employing people from various backgrounds, Denny's can ensure their staff is representative of the local population, making customers feel more comfortable and understood."*



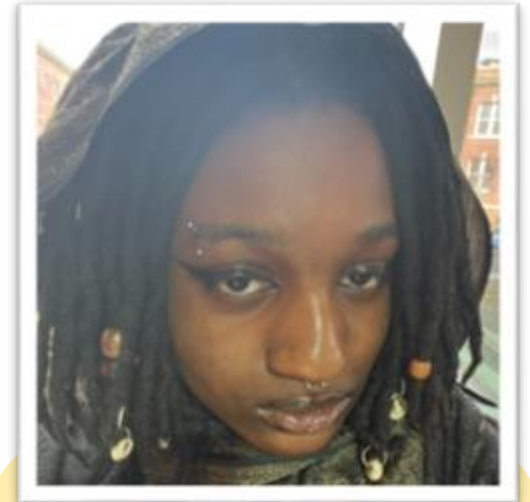
**ZOILA SANCHEZ-SAENZ**  
Richmond, CA  
CA State University, East Bay

*"Denny's can partner with local organizations that support marginalized communities. By collaborating with LGBTQ+ centers or cultural organizations, Denny's can offer its space for meetings or events, providing a safe and welcoming environment for people to gather."*



**RYLEE GAITHER**  
Bixby, OK  
University of Central Oklahoma

*"Affordable prices make dining out accessible to a broad demographic, allowing people of different economic backgrounds to share the same space."*



**TAIWO ANGEL ADEBOWALE**  
Reisterstown, MD  
Howard University

*"To promote intersectionality in queer representation, Denny's could create an advertising campaign featuring black queer couples enjoying their time at the diner in various states."*



# Greater Spartanburg Divine 9

COLLEGE



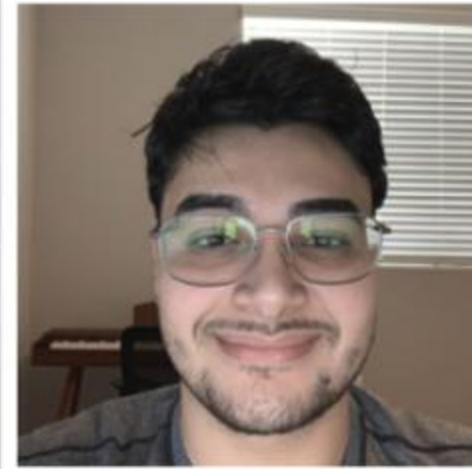
**ANIYA PURYEAR**  
Philadelphia, PA  
Temple University

*"The diner often adjusts its menu and hosts special events that reflect local customs and traditions. By embracing this diversity, Denny's attracts a wide range of customers and fosters a spirit of inclusion."*



**BRIELLE LANE**  
Rosedale, MD  
The Community College of  
Baltimore County

*"Denny's helps bring communities together through the affordability of their menu. Considering their value meal deal- which ranges from \$2-\$8, I believe that affordability helps the restaurant out a lot because everyone can buy their food for a reasonable price."*



**JACOB CASTRO**  
Bakersfield, CA  
California State University of  
Fresno

*"I saw Denny's play a crucial role during holidays or difficult times when people may have felt lonely. Denny's doors are open 24/7, which provides a place for individuals to gather, share a meal, and find comfort in other's company."*



**JAMYA CRAWFORD**  
Moore, SC  
Clemson University

*"Denny's can bring communities together by providing mental health, time management, and networking classes to high school students. The transition into college affects students' mental health negatively due to them trying to uphold high standards that are instilled in them."*



# Greater Spartanburg Divine 9

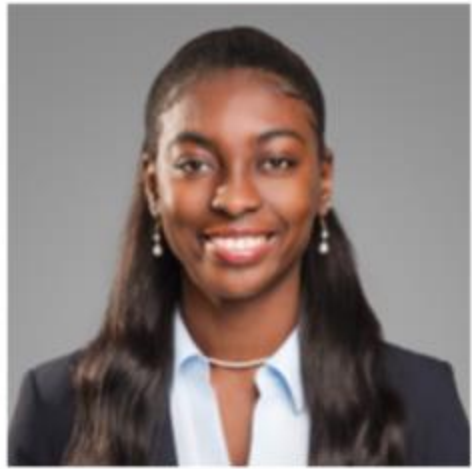


**JOHN BROWN**

Hampton, GA

Georgia State University

*“Denny's can bring communities together is by hosting events that cater to various age groups and interests. For example, the restaurant could organize family game nights, which allow families to enjoy time together while engaging in fun activities.”*



**KAITLYN PAULDO**

Macon, GA

Albany State University

*“Providing meeting spaces for student organizations could create valuable opportunities for collaboration. At Albany State University, we often seek out accessible venues for events that encourage mentorship and civic engagement.”*

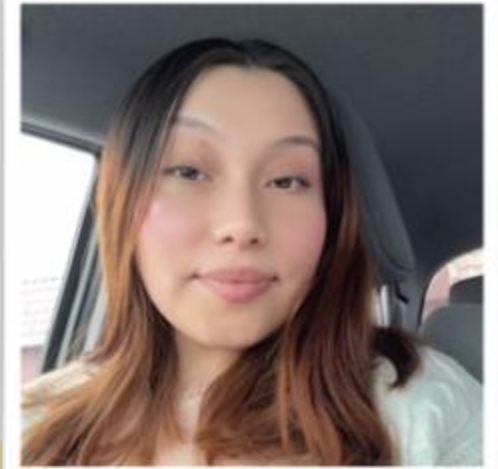


**KENNEDY SARPONG**

Washington DC

North Carolina A&T State University

*“Through accommodating various dietary needs and supporting community initiatives, the restaurant fosters harmony.”*



**MAYRANI FALCON**

Albuquerque, NM

Central New Mexico Community College

*“By hosting events, partnering with local organizations, offering discounts, and providing meeting spaces, Denny's can help create a more connected and supportive community.”*



# Greater Spartanburg Divine 9



**NATAVIA GUIDRY**

Concord, NC

North Carolina A&T State University

*"By hosting events like community forums or storytelling nights, Denny's can create opportunities for people to engage with one another in a neutral and welcoming environment. Imagine a "Table Talk" initiative, where customers can join discussions."*



**QUINTON JONES**

Kansas City, MO

William Jewell College

*"Denny's offers an atmosphere that encourages social interaction. The diner setting provides a sense of comfort and nostalgia, which can make it easier for people to connect, relax, and open up to one another - a place where people from different social and economic backgrounds can meet on equal footing."*



**RYLEIGH BENNETT**

Rexburg, Idaho

Brigham Young University of Idaho

*"What's great about Denny's is that it's always open. It's a place where anyone can stop in, whether it's early in the morning or late at night, and feel like they belong. It's a spot that connects people, whether they're regulars who know each other or strangers who end up striking up a conversation over breakfast."*



# United States Hispanic Leadership Institute

COLLEGE



**JOVANI CABELLERO DURAN**  
Colorado Springs, CO  
Colorado School of Mines

*“Just like in a pantry Denny’s can bring many people together for the same reasons. Life goes fast and sometimes it’s better to take time and let life slow for a bit. Denny’s can do that for the fact that its food, food can help anyone out and help the many decide to bring everyone together.”*



**LEONARDO GONZALEZ**  
Laredo, TX  
Texas A&M College Station

*“Initiatives like family nights, cultural celebrations, and partnerships with local businesses foster connection. Accessible pricing, community-driven campaigns, and engaging social media further strengthen bonds, making Denny’s a welcoming hub for all.”*



**MOLLY BURKE**  
New Berlin, WI  
Ave Maria University

*“Service is something that causes us to sacrifice. Whether it is time, energy, money, or more, the act of giving to a cause bigger than yourself is something that everyone should strive to include in their communities.”*



**VIVIANA OLIVERA**  
Port Hueneme, CA  
Oxnard College

*“Denny’s can bring a community together by possibly hosting a similar event or a studying event. I personally use Denny’s to study late at night. [...] Having other students expecting me to show up at Denny’s gives me a sense of accountability. I know that this has brought people together because I have been able to meet new people and have a great sense of support around me.”*





# University of South Carolina Upstate



**MATTHEW DEVAL**  
Greer, SC  
USC Upstate

*“In a world where many LGBTQ individuals have experienced exclusion or discrimination, finding public spaces that feel accepting is invaluable. Denny’s commitment to diversity and inclusivity ensures that everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, feels welcome at its establishments.”*



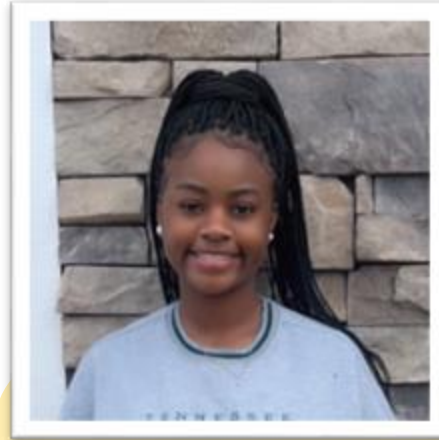
**LIANA BOGOSLOV**  
Boiling Spring, SC  
USC Upstate

*“Denny’s is the place where the act of eating together creates lasting memories and strengthens community ties. The idea of using food to connect people goes beyond just family and friends; it has the power to bring together entire communities.”*



**ERIN MURPHY**  
Simpsonville, SC  
USC Upstate

*“Many hardworking employees stop by Denny’s for lunch during the day. A great way to recognize them could include a “Business of the Month” pick, offering a catered meal to a local small business.”*



**AJAHNAE BRIGMON**  
Orangeburg, SC  
USC Upstate

*“Denny’s has an unique potential to serve as a hub for the community by hosting community events, supporting local initiatives, and leveraging its brand image to promote positive social interactions within the spaces it occupies.”*



**SUNASIA MORGAN**  
Spartanburg, SC  
USC Upstate

*“In an increasingly digital world, having a physical space where people can meet face-to-face is invaluable. Denny’s offers just that—a space where human connections can thrive, regardless of the time of day.”*



# Denmark Technical College

COLLEGE



**JAKE WIGHT**

Myrtle Beach, SC

Denmark Technical College

*“Overall, Denny’s has a special ability to bring people together in a way that other places don’t. It’s open, affordable, welcoming, and has something for everyone.”*



**KAIMANI MURDOCK**

Mount Pleasant, SC

Denmark Technical College

*“By serving as a central meeting point, hosting community events, collaborating with local organizations, promoting inclusivity, and creating a sense of shared identity, Denny’s can play a vital role in fostering community spirit and cohesion.”*



**MILES LETT**

Melbourne, FL

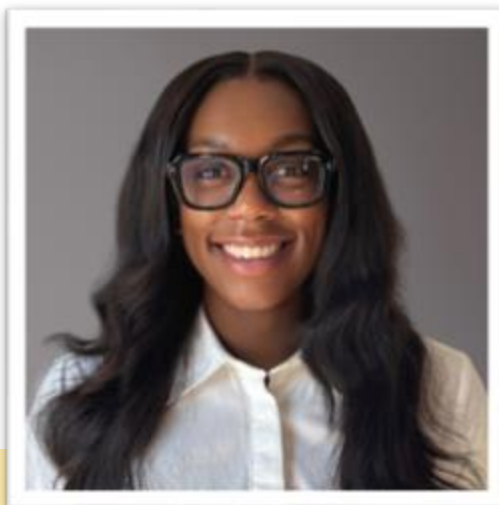
Denmark Technical College

*“I remember my local Denny’s having a meals and menu items to celebrate different groups of people from time to time. Small gestures like this can bring people together because if there is one thing unanimously loved in the world, it is food.”*



# Meharry Medical College

COLLEGE



**Keyanna Bradford**  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Meharry Medical College

*"Introducing special menu items inspired by local cuisines or hosting events for cultural holidays can make Denny's a space where everyone feels acknowledged and appreciated. For instance, featuring regional dishes or organizing events for Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, or LGBTQ+ Pride can draw in diverse groups, fostering connections through a shared celebration of their unique identities and differences."*



# Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, South Atlantic Region

BUSINESS GRANT



**BERNADETTE BIRCH**  
Conyers, GA  
Over & B'yond Events

*"The Denny's HFE Business Grant would not only support Over & B'yond Events in expanding its reach and sustainability, but it would also empower me to deepen my commitment to social good. By providing resources to host impactful events, integrate sustainable practices, and build partnerships with local vendors, this grant would ensure that Over & B'yond Events continues to make a meaningful difference."*



**LINDA LONG**  
West Palm Beach, FL  
Sojourners With Healing Hearts

*"Sojourners is proposing to expand our current financial support for early detection screenings to cover women of color ages 25 to 40. We host free monthly breast screening events for uninsured women and financial support for those women undergoing cancer treatment and/or recovery. With grants like this, we can increase our impact by how many women we help."*



# Carolinas-Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council

BUSINESS GRANT



**Nikita Allen**  
Growmetix, Charlotte NC

*“Denny's Hungry for Education grant would enable Growmetix® to protect the unique learning content we've developed through trademarks and copyrights and expand our reach, by creating a licensing and train-the-trainer program to share the Luna Launchpad curriculum with other entrepreneurial support organizations who are hungry for programming that resonates with and produces tangible outcomes, with measurable results for women of color in business.”*



**Tracey Richardson**  
Lillies of Charleston, Charleston SC

*“Within the last 2 years we've developed new sauces, seasonings and introduced a snack product called, Gullah Pop! It's a gourmet, seasoned popcorn which uses our own proprietary seasonings. The introduction of this new product line has been a huge success and tremendous boost to our sales. The popcorn line has been a great avenue for us to promote our seasonings as well as launch into the snack category. If awarded the scholarship money, we would use it for product production and media promotion for the 4 different flavor varieties we have to offer.”*