

# AmeriCorps Member of the Year

## Malysha MacFarland

### *College Possible Milwaukee*

Governor's  
Service Awards



As a first-generation college student herself, Malysha MacFarland has described that passion for her AmeriCorps service with College Possible Milwaukee comes from wanting to be the person she had needed while she was in school.

Malysha has served as a tech connected college coach the last two years, working with Milwaukee area students attending colleges across the country, supporting their academic success and assisting them with financial aid, career planning, scholarships, and locating additional resources.

As a returning AmeriCorps member, Malysha stepped up to be a leader and provide support to her peers, serving as a mentor to two new college coaches to support them in their work. She has used her experience to see gaps in the resources provided through College Possible Milwaukee and areas in potential need for improvement in sources or support for her fellow AmeriCorps members and the students they serve. She would then take the initiative to address these needs, whether advocating to the leadership team or improving these resources herself without being asked.



The first project Malysha undertook on her own was creating a scholarship bank, creating a repository of scholarships that could be potentially accessed by the high school and college students that College Possible Milwaukee serves. This resource greatly aided her fellow coaches as they assisted their students and proved invaluable to the program coordinator leading tasks surrounding scholarships.

The creation of the scholarship bank served as a jumping off point for creating and revising several other resources that for serving students and supporting her fellow AmeriCorps members. In collaboration with another college coach, Malysha worked to create spaces for students that did not previously exist, such as virtual game nights and in-person study sessions. When College Possible Milwaukee started filming videos for the scholar website featuring coaches speaking about college related topics, she stepped up as one of the two coaches to record the videos. Additionally, she is an active member of their External Relations Committee, not just participating in every project, but also sharing feedback and ideas for how the group and its projects could best function.

In describing the relationships that Malysha has built with the students she serves, Lauren Robinson with College Possible Milwaukee explained that “she has a special commitment to her students, bringing a strong capacity for empathy and understanding, using this to meet her students where they are at effortlessly. She has built strong and genuine connections with her students, many of which she has worked with for two years now. She is very aware of her life experiences and how they may or may not be similar to those of her students and allows this to inform her work. She always hears her students out, uplift their voices, and provides them with the information and resources they need to make an informed decision.”

