Christian Carter has been enrolled in Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP (KKGU) since he was in middle school. He is now a junior at East High School. Christian has been faced with many obstacles in his life and has remained strong.

Christian's story mirrors the stories of other foster care children across the nation that spend time in the system. He grew up in many different homes, learning something new in them all. He learned to adapt to a lot of situations. He also learned to live life and try as many things as possible. In his spare time, Christian mentors middle school students in WyldLife.

Christian has an entrepreneurial spirit and has started his own business selling products on his personal website. He has a passion for music, writing songs, and engineering. He has been to several campus visits with KKGU and is considering going to Fort Hays State University upon graduation. He also attends the weekly meetings during lunch at school to gain more knowledge to help prepare him for his future.

Christian is a shining example of how perseverance and determination can conquer heartache and obstacles. He has seen more than his fair share of both and refuses to give up. The KKGU staff are proud to call him a Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP student, and are excited to see how he will go out and change the world.

Rick Richardson spent his childhood years in and around Springfield, IL and in Hutchinson, KS. He participated in many sports activities in his high school years. In 1976, Rick joined the U.S. Navy as a boatswain mate, including helmsman on the USSS Davidson. After being honorably discharged in 1977, he returned to Kansas to stay with his family until he could decide what career path to take.

Rick has operated a successful business in the pest control field. In 1989, he relocated to the San Antonio, TX area, where he got his license and continued in the pest control business. He married and has a son and a daughter. In 2005, Rick returned to serving his country when he was contracted with Halliburton, where he worked in Iraq as a vector control agent. He was the head officer handling animal and pest control for many bases in the Iraq area.

Rick is currently a retired veteran living in Kechi, KS. He recently joined the Veterans Upward Bound program (VUB) as a participant. He is planning to begin higher education studies through Butler Community College in spring 2016. Rick's career interests include business management.

Rick is a typical VUB participant who has served his nation, managed a family and career, and now has set high ambitions for himself to earn a college degree.