I am nominating Faith Christian, Tates Creek High School AmeriCorps Kentucky College Coach, for the 2018 Excellence in AmeriCorps Award in the category of Most Impactful Service. My name is Keith Ritchie ([kritchie@kheaa.com](mailto:kritchie@kheaa.com)) and I have served as Faith’s Program Advisor. Kentucky College Coaches focus on mentoring high school students who might not envision themselves going to college, first generation college students, and/or populations with low rates of college enrollment. Coaches are placed in high schools around Kentucky that have been identified as needing assistance based on their low college-going rate, high poverty rate and for being underserved by other community-based services.

Coaches mentor students through difficult situations, encouraging the pursuit of post-secondary education opportunities. In fulfilling this mission, coaches help with career exploration, college essays, admission applications, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshops, campus tours, and even financial literacy activities. Since the program’s start in the 2010-11 school year, the AmeriCorps Kentucky College Coaches Program has substantially increased college-going rates, at an average of 12.8%, for coached students relative to students in the same school who did not receive coaching services.

According to the 2017 Kentucky High School Feedback College Going Public Access Data File, 41 percent of students at Tates Creek High School are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, which means the maximum earnings for a four person household would not exceed $31,980 (free lunch) to $45,510 (reduced-price lunch) a year.

Faith works diligently to help students overcome barriers, such as financial aid issues and verification. She has worked very hard at developing a network of contacts from colleges to further help students. Through her partnerships, she has organized multiple presentations, workshops, and college fairs for at-need students. On a regular basis, Faith has demonstrated that she goes the extra mile to serve students, often times meeting with college and university representatives to assist with issues that come up with students.

In the fall, Faith was asked to speak to freshmen and sophomore classes at the University of Kentucky about the importance of volunteerism and serving the community, state and nation. Because of her outspoken promotion of AmeriCorps, she is considered a UK alum contact for students considering AmeriCorps service positions. In April, Faith promoted national service and student mentoring as a panelist at the Kentucky Student Success Summit.

Faith is a leader of the Kentucky College Coaches Program. In an effort to increase coach collaboration, Faith helps administer the Kentucky College Coach Facebook page. Coaches utilize this resource on a daily basis to brainstorm mentoring strategies.

Although Faith keeps an extremely busy schedule mentoring students, she still finds time to volunteer for an array of community efforts around Kentucky. In her spare time, Faith has volunteered for charitable 5k races, as well as the Crisis Text Line.

Faith is a great representative of the Kentucky College Coach Program. She inspires those around her to give back to the community, and has a relentless passion to help those in need.