



Student Spotlight: Anna Taylor Parker, Morgan

Former Morgan Foothills student Anna Taylor Parker came to Morgan Foothills in August of 2017 as a junior. She was looking for a change of pace from the traditional high school model. Her experiences in her former high school were not what Anna needed, and she was struggling to succeed. She knew she needed a change.

Anna wanted flexibility in her schedule, with the ability to still earn her high school diploma. When a friend told her about Foothills, Anna felt this was the answer she had been searching for. She started attending classes at Foothills, and immediately felt that she belonged. She was more connected to the faculty and staff, often telling others how much she appreciated the one-on-one attention she was getting. At Foothills, Anna earned A's and B's in all her coursework, while also earning Proficient scores of 90 and above on her End-of-Course Tests. She went on to graduate in December 2019 and is currently a student at Athens Technical College in the Registered Nursing program.

The support that the Foothills faculty and staff provides to students and recent graduates creates a level of comfort and trust. These students often continue to communicate with Foothills staff as they take their next steps in life. Anna frequently returns to Foothills to seek assistance from her former teachers and advice from the Foothills support staff. Anna is excited for her future, and she is making her Morgan Foothills family *Foothills Proud!*



Message from the Superintendent

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Much has changed at Foothills and around the world since our last newsletter at the beginning of March. Life has taken on a "new normal," as the world has seen the rise of the COVID-19 virus and the need for us all to practice "social distancing" to combat the spread of this new illness. Schools around the state and nation have had to learn more about how to have school remotely, which often involves responding to the individual and unique needs of students.

While closing our sites has presented some challenges for our Foothills students and staff, Foothills has readily adapted and implemented necessary changes that were needed for our students to continue with their studies at home. Foothills is built on being responsive to the needs of our students and communities, so our underlying philosophy of being flexible serves us well. Our goal is that all of our students remain safe and well, while continuing on their path toward graduation—however they can—while we must remain separated.

Our Foothills staff continues with a heart of service for our students and communities, and we stand ready to support our students, understanding that different students will need different things. That's who we are at Foothills.

Stay safe!

Sherrie



Graduation Note

Like all high schools, Foothills will have to rethink how we hold Spring Graduation Ceremonies due to COVID-19.

It is important to all of us at Foothills that we do recognize and honor our spring graduates. The good thing about Foothills is that flexibility is part of our mission.

Our current plan is to hold virtual graduation ceremonies on the dates that have already been scheduled at each site this spring. Our plans are tentative and subject to change. As our local, state, and national leaders continue to respond to COVID-19, we will continue to heed their orders.

Yet, rest assured. Foothills will celebrate you, Graduates, as soon as we are able to safely do so. You make us proud!



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Welding Success Through Partnerships: Barrow Pilot of Welding Program

This spring, Foothills embarked on an exciting new journey in partnership with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) and WorkForce Innovators of America (WIO America) to offer 21 Foothills students the opportunity to complete a 10-week welding program at the Barrow site. Upon completion of the program, the students earn an American Welding Society WPS Certification, along with Soft Skill Components that include Six Sigma OSHA 10 Certification and CPR Certification.



Students learn that they have been accepted to the welding pilot program

The NEGRC was “very aware of the great work Foothills is doing and the opportunities we provide our students,” states Irene Munn, Foothills Dual Enrollment Specialist. In 2019, the NEGRC purchased a mobile training trailer for welding and industrial mechanical instruction, as well as for increasing community awareness related to jobs in the manufacturing industry. Last fall, the trailer visited Barrow Foothills, and many students expressed interest in learning to weld after touring the trailer.

Foothills and NEGRC joined forces and resources to bring the pilot program to the Barrow site. Foothills provided funds for the personal protective equipment for students and for the instructional costs. NEGRC provided the training trailer, as well as all resources and supplies for the course, background checks for instructors, costs for certification testing, and support with recruiting and job placement for the trainees. Students from the Barrow, Walton, and Social Circle sites were recruited through informational meetings and YouScience, an assessment that matches a person’s unique skills and aptitudes to a specific career field. Site directors at all three sites received information on students whose YouScience assessment showed an aptitude for welding so these students could be encouraged to attend an informational meeting.

In February, twenty-one students from the three sites were notified that they had been selected for the program. Students then entered the program that required them to attend classes each night Monday to Thursday from 5pm to 8pm. This was in addition to any schoolwork needed for other Foothills courses. Because of the broad flexibility provided by their charter, Munn notes that Foothills was “uniquely positioned to provide our Foothills welding course. We are using our broad flexibility to teach the standards from the CTAE intro to welding course in a 10-week period, using instructors from Workforce Innovators of America.” The additional certifications students can earn as part of the program will be beneficial as they seek jobs in the industry.



Hands-on learning takes on a new meaning in the NEGRC training trailer

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Welding Success . . . continued from pg. 2

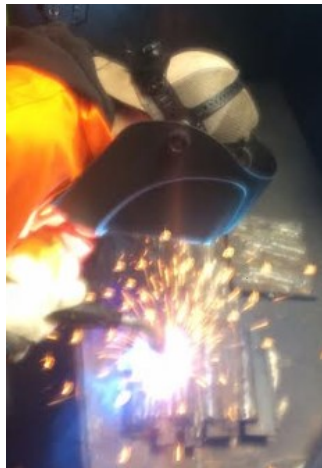


Student receives instruction from WIO America instructor Thomas Grant

As of March 27th, 18 students (15 male and 3 female) were continuing in the program, and had completed the first four weeks of training. All 18 had also completed Lean Six Sigma Intro, CPR/First Aid/AED Training, Welding Safety, and Introduction to MIG Welding. Thirteen of the 18 students had also already completed OSHA10 Training.

The current COVID-19 situation has put the welding portion of the pilot program on pause for now, but students will be completing the additional 6 weeks of the hands-on training when classes can resume. WIO America instructors have been working to move the ongoing soft skills portion of the training (i.e. resume writing, interview skills, problem solving) to an online format and are set to begin offering instruction as soon as April 13th via nightly Zoom meetings with students.

When asked if Foothills will plan to expand the pilot to additional sites or offer similar programs in other career fields, Munn noted that many lessons have been learned from this pilot, including how to maximize the fiscal resources of Foothills and the partner organizations. But, the short answer is yes. An enthusiastic Munn spoke of the value of the partnership with NEGRC and WIO America, and initial thoughts to condense the 10-week program into a 4-week program for recent graduates. This would help to maximize the resources available, including the training trailer that can only house eight students at a time. As for another career field, Munn spoke of healthcare and the potential to offer a 4-week certified nursing assistant program to recent graduates as well. “Instead of sitting through a semester of class,” explained Munn, “students could earn the CNA certification in 4 weeks, begin work, and continue their education if they want.” The ability to quickly earn a certification that would make them employable removes a barrier for recent graduates. It is a recipe for success!



Student practices welding in the NEGRC training trailer.

The Foothills Vision

Foothills Education Charter High School strives to be an accessible, high-quality high school option that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the People of Georgia and its communities.



Student Voices

Joey Cagle:

I love it. It got me thinking about my future and a career in welding. It is a great opportunity for students who cannot afford this type of program. The people want the best for you, but you have to be willing to work and put in the work. I am learning so many other skills, too—resume writing, interviewing, and life skills. We spent 6 hours talking about attitude and confidence. These are skills that will help in any career.

Destiny Evans:

I found out about the program through the announcements, and I went because it sounded interesting and I didn't really have a plan for the future. The program opened my eyes. There is a stigma that welding is a task that “big strong men do.” But, I realized how easy it could be for me, and I am learning skills beyond welding—blueprint reading skills that could help with architecture, time management skills that could help in business. Schools should have more programs like this because not all kids are good with books. Public school offers a “one size fits all,” but society is changing and we need more options.