



A Graduate 50 Years in the Making: William Allen

Every month at Foothills we produce a data report for our board, which includes statistics on the years that our current students started 9th grade. For a while now, the Madison site report has included an eye-raising date for when one of our students, William Allen, started his high school journey—1965. A little over 50 years after beginning that journey, William Allen, a resident of Elbert County, celebrated his high school graduation in December at the age of 71.

When he began his Foothills journey—a little over 50 years after dropping out of high school—Mr. Allen lacked just a few credits to graduate. Michelle Garrison, guidance counselor at the Madison Foothills site, was tasked with tracking down his original high school transcripts and determining what was needed. She eventually tracked the records to 1967 and 3.5 credits were all that Mr. Allen needed to earn a diploma. After finishing a final mathematics course in December, Mr. Allen was able to don his cap and gown and receive his diploma.

Mr. Allen's inspirational story was recently featured in the [Madison County Journal](#), by education writer Margie Richards. Counselor Mrs. Garrison and Madison site directors Dr. Andy Felt and Ms. Quowanna Mattox all speak with admiration of Mr. Allen and what his journey at Foothills has meant to them and to other students. Ms. Mattox shares that Mr. Allen is "a true testament to every student that has not earned their high school diploma; it is never too late! You can achieve anything you set your mind to as long as you are willing to work for it." Dr. Felt agrees, stating, "When I grow up, I want to be like Mr. Allen. He has worked hard for years and accomplished a lot in life, but never stops trying to make himself better. Everyone who comes into contact with him walks away inspired and uplifted!" Mr. Allen has truly inspired the Foothills community!



Mr. William Allen pictured with Madison co-site director Quowanna Mattox

Message from the Superintendent

It is fitting that we begin 2019 with the story of William Allen, one of our recent graduates at the Madison site. As we enter a new year—a year of resolutions and goals to be realized—Mr. Allen is an inspiration and a living example that it is truly "never too late to become what you might have been."

As members of the Madison site staff will tell you, Mr. Allen reminds us of our purpose for this work. Foothills serves as a flexible alternative to the traditional high school model. At age 71, Mr. Allen needed this flexibility, and at Foothills, we needed him and his inspirational drive. While he has lived a fulfilled life, he felt the absence of a diploma. But, no longer!

Congratulations to Mr. Allen and all of our graduates who begin the new year having completed one milestone. We encourage them in the next step of their journey! We also encourage our current students (and perhaps future students) to make 2019 the year when graduation is realized. *It is never too late to become what you might have been.*

Regards,
Sherrie

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Spotlight on the “Positive Energy” of Mentors

Non-traditional students often call for a non-traditional level of support as they navigate the high school journey.

The Foothills Student Services Department is comprised of each site’s guidance counselors, graduation coaches, social workers, career specialists, mentor coordinators, graduation coordinators, scholarship coordinators, dropout recovery coordinators, and mentors.

Mentors are an important part of the support services that Foothills provides to our students. Mentors work one-on-one with students, monitoring their progress toward graduation through individual planning and goal-setting. In addition, it is often the mentors who know the most about students’ needs outside of the classroom, and who work to connect students to additional resources and services.

Marge Dyson, a mentor at the Clarke Foothills site, is one of countless Foothills mentors who stand behind and beside students on their graduation journey. One of her mentees, who graduated this fall, shared a touching tribute of thanks with her recently:

“I just wanted to thank you for pushing me with the positive energy every single day. I couldn’t thank you enough for all the Sessions you set up for me to achieve my goals. I Know it took a little longer than we expected but you never gave up on me and believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. You are a spectacular person who’s full of nothing but love and support. If it wasn’t for your motivation towards seeing me succeed I honestly don’t know where I’d be. I just wanted to thank you for all your time and effort you put into seeing me succeed you are truly a blessing.”



In the Shelter of Each Other: Faith-Based Support for Foothills Students

There is an Irish proverb that says, “It is the shelter of each other that we live.” As noted in our [December Issue](#), our Foothills sites benefit from supportive communities that often provide wraparound services for our students. Many of our students experience a lack of basic needs—food being one—that interfere with their ability to complete their high school coursework.

In Jackson County, three area churches have been providing food on a regular basis to students at the Jackson Foothills site. New Hope Christian Church in Jefferson provides a hot meal for all students once per month. Volunteers at the church prepare the meal and serve it to students.



Local church members in Jackson County provide a hot meal for Foothills Students.

Southside Church in Arcade provides 30 backpacks filled with food each month to be given to students in need. In addition, Nicholson Baptist Church has also committed to providing one meal per month for Foothills students in Jackson County.

As we continue to provide a flexible high school alternative for the students in communities we serve, we are grateful for the support of other organizations in those communities as we seek to remove barriers for our students on their road to graduation.

If you or your organization are interested in helping to support Foothills students through wraparound programs, contact the site director at the [Foothills site in your community](#), or by calling our central office at 706-795-2191 Ext. 1476 .



Foothills Education Charter
High School
www.foothillscharter.org
706-795-2191 x 1476

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.