



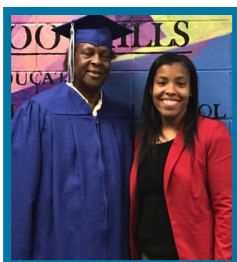
Student Spotlight: Stories of Resolve

A new year is a time when most of us reflect on our journey and set new goals for success. We call these new goals “resolutions.”

Over the past year, we have featured several Foothills students and graduates who are examples of what happens when a “resolution” turns into “resolve” and determination to achieve the goal. As we begin a new year at Foothills, let their stories re-inspire you to continue the journey toward who you were meant to be.

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William Allen, A Graduate 50 Years in the Making

We featured Mr. Allen in our January 2019 newsletter. Mr. Allen began his high school career in 1965, and finished it a little over 50 years later in December of 2018 at the age of 71. He is the living example that “it’s never too late to become what you might have been.” Madison site director Quowanna Mattox reflected that he shows others that they can “achieve whatever you want as long as you are willing to work for it.”



David Walls, Welded to His Goals for the Future

We featured David in our March 2019 newsletter. David was working on his third (yes, third!) Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) at Athens Tech, attending Foothills to complete his high school credits, and working each day starting at 7am. Walton Foothills staff noted David’s work ethic, intelligence, and determination. Site director Rusty Linder noted, “He is the very student that Foothills and technical colleges were invented to serve. He is going to be truly successful because of his work ethic.”



Shaquida Smith, The Spirit of Foothills

In June, we featured more than one Foothills graduate with an inspirational story. Our hearts were captured by Shaquida Smith, who was the first recipient of the new “Spirit of Foothills” award. At 18, Shaquida’s life changed when she became a mother and became a mother to her sister’s children when her sister passed away. While working to complete her diploma at Foothills, Shaquida worked multiple jobs, took care of her sister’s children and her own children, and kept up with her studies. She described the support of the Foothills staff, and her own determination, in her essay: “I knew I had a goal to meet . . . I have no help from family or friends, so I carry all the weight on my shoulders. Some nights I cry with tears flowing . . . [A]ll my supporters weren’t having it! They were hard on me in order to motivate me to complete my goal until the end.”

These Foothills students are examples of what it takes to turn a “resolution” from words to actions. They *resolved* to meet the goal. It took determination, work ethic, and perseverance. As Shaquida highlights, it also took some help and encouragement from their supporters—often the Foothills staff.

What will you resolve to do in 2020? The Foothills staff stands ready to support our students as they turn goals and resolutions into dreams achieved. What are you waiting for?

Welcome, Bibb!

Here we grow, again! Our newest site in Bibb County will officially begin classes on January 13th. Twenty-one students are already enrolled at the Bibb site, and site directors Grady Caldwell and LaTrina Nash, who have previous Foothills experience, are finalizing preparations to welcome them.

The Bibb site is the latest Foothills site, and for the next six months, it will be the 17th Foothills site.

The Bibb site is the start of another planned replication of the Foothills model. Foothills, a replication of the Mountain Education Charter High School model, is dedicated to serving the north-east Georgia area. A previous replication of the model, Coastal Plains Education Charter High School, serves the area from Liberty to Lowndes County. Bibb is the beginning of a planned replication that will serve the heartland of Georgia. The charter for Heartland Education Charter High School will hopefully be established in July 2020.

Those interested in enrolling at the Bibb Foothills site should visit <http://foothillscharter.ss10.sharpschool.com/cms/one.aspx?portalId=94737&pageId=22710149>

Future Focus: Strategic Planning for SEL

Each year, Foothills holds a strategic planning session. Leaders and stakeholders provide input related to goals and performance, and the team plans next steps to continue the Foothills mission.

This year, the team recognized the impact of social and emotional needs of students and created a section of the strategic plan that specifically addresses the development of a comprehensive Social Emotional Learning Program at Foothills.

The [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL) defines Social Emotional Learning as “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” CASEL also recognizes the impact that SEL competencies have on a student’s “capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges.”

As a non-traditional high school, Foothills welcomes many students who face challenges and obstacles, and who need help in developing SEL competencies to face challenges, manage emotions, and set and achieve goals. Foothills will begin the process of developing an SEL program through researching best practices for SEL, gathering input from stakeholders regarding prioritized needs, and providing resources and training for staff.

An outline of the entire Foothills Strategic Plan can be found on our [Simbli](#) site.

Superintendent’s Message

What an exciting time of reflection and renewal as we start 2020! Our newsletter this month reflects our **resolve** to continue the work of Foothills and focus on the future for our district and our 2000+ students.

Be inspired by the stories of some of our Student Spotlights from 2019. Notice how their goals became realities with some hard work, determination, and support from Foothills staff. Celebrate the opening of a new site at Bibb with us, and the start of a replication in the heartland of Georgia, as we continue to move forward into a future where students around the state have access to a flexible high school option. Reflect with us on the impact of social and emotional needs of students as we plan for a comprehensive SEL program at Foothills. This is the next right step as we seek to think about the obstacles our students face and their needs beyond the classroom.

As we move into a new year, the work continues. Goals become realities when we take the next right steps in the journey. Resolutions become resolve when coupled with hard work and perseverance. The Foothills resolve has led us from 7 sites to 17, and has birthed one replication and the plans for another. Where will your resolve lead you in 2020? If it is to Foothills, welcome to the journey to become what you might have been!

Sherrie



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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.