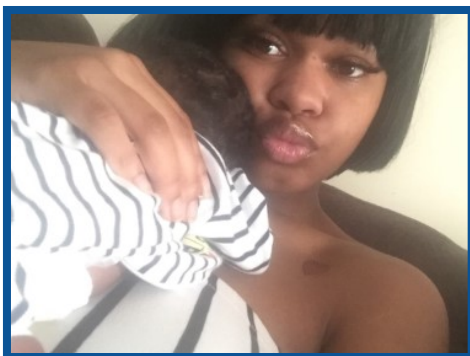




Celebrating the Mountaintop: Graduation Notes

This month, we continue with our celebration of graduates at our Foothills sites. We have seen over 300 students graduate, and we have heard inspiring tales of obstacles overcome and dreams realized. Time and time again, our students have proven that it is “never too late to become what [they] might have been.” This month’s “note” featuring Lauren Kinsey is just one of the inspiring stories of which we feel blessed and humbled to be a part.

Unexpected Turns: Lauren Kinsey’s Story (Submitted by Melanie Brittain)



Lauren Kinsey began her Foothills journey in the Youth ChalleNGe program at Fort Gordon. Wanting to follow in the footsteps of an uncle who retired from the U.S. Air Force, Lauren had a goal of graduating early from high school and joining the Air Force. Yet, Lauren’s story took an unexpected turn when she found out that she was pregnant soon after entering the Youth ChalleNGe program. As a result, she had to return home to Decatur, only 2.5 credits from graduation. Those two credits included 2 math courses and ½ of a British Literature course.

While the closest Foothills site was 45 minutes away, Foothills staff were undeterred and chose to help Lauren achieve her goal of graduation “the Foothills way.” Dolores Williams, a math teacher from the Social Circle site agreed to drive and meet Lauren at a library near her home two times per week. In addition to providing UBER transportation for Lauren to get to the library, Foothills issued her a laptop, hotspot, and calculator so that she could work on her math courses even when she wasn’t meeting with Ms. Williams.

Lauren was working diligently to finish her courses before her due date, but baby Alani had other plans and arrived a few weeks early. Undeterred, Lauren got back to work after a few weeks off, and she was able to exempt several Algebra II modules and finish her last course in mid-June. She will walk in the August graduation ceremony, a few weeks after she turns 17.

Because of Alani and giving birth via c-section, Lauren will have to wait a full year before joining the Air Force. In the meantime, she plans to continue to work. When asked how she did it, Lauren said, “The main thing is to just keep going!” She said that you have to have the mental stamina to not give up! Lauren truly exemplifies what Foothills is all about! We can’t wait to see her walk across the stage and receive her diploma in August!

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Foothills' Top Graduates

Foothills recognizes a Valedictorian and Salutatorian, but we also honor the top 2 graduates at each site. Congratulations to our Top Graduates across all of our Foothills sites.

Top Honor Graduates

Baldwin—Nathan Crooks

Barrow—Hannah Jeffries

Clarke—Kevin Viskups

Jackson—

Abagayle Waters (Salutatorian)

Madison/Ogle—

Sierra Thomas (Valedictorian)

Morgan—Connar Pullin

Walton/SC—Lydia Hankinson

Arrendale—Kristin Strickland

Burruss—Jamarli Thomas

Phillips—Brian Tavire

Second Honor Graduates

Baldwin—Preston Johns

Barrow—Chloe Murrell

Clarke—Satonya Sims

Jackson—Wyatt Poe

Madison/Ogle—Hannah Henderson

Morgan—Clay Cruce

Walton/SC—Alyssa Whitaker

Arrendale—Arauna Outley

Burruss—Benjamin Howard

Phillips—Aqualo Thrett

The View From Graduation



Message from the Superintendent

I have been amazed and humbled as I have traveled around to each graduation ceremony across our Foothills sites. We have graduated 326 students this spring, and there will be even more, like Lauren Kinsey, who will walk at our ceremony in August.

As I think about all of the inspiring stories, the smiling faces, and the proud families; two moments stand out sharply. The first is being witness to a phone call made by Phillips site director Nick Aurer to let an inmate's family know that he had graduated from high school and to invite them to graduation. The second is watching the young ladies graduating at Arrendale proudly wear their class rings and pose for a picture that I will never forget. So many of our graduates overcome obstacles to graduate, and nowhere is that felt more keenly than at Arrendale, Burruss, and Phillips. When we talk about changing the trajectory of a life through education, this is what we mean.

Thank you for being a part of the Foothills story, and for being part of the lives that have been impacted and changed. In a world often filled with stories of negativity, the view from graduation is pretty sweet.



Regards,

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.