



## Gerious Bell, Making the Most of Dual Enrollment Submitted by Tad MacMillan, Foothills Alumni Transition Coordinator

Foothills offers our students so many opportunities. In addition to all the support that each site offers as students work to earn their high school diploma, our students have opportunities like Dual Enrollment, Option B, on-site skill training (Weld-Ready, Construction-Ready, CNA, etc.) and more. As a school system, the staff at Foothills are working together to figure out the best way to help our students know about these options and support them if they decide to take advantage of them. Gerious Bell, a Baldwin Foothills student, is one student that is taking full advantage of all that Foothills has to offer. He is currently pursuing an Option B diploma. Gerious has always been interested in welding and when he learned that he could earn his Technical College certificates in welding and his diploma at the same time, he was ready to sign up.

Gerious is very positive about the training he is receiving while also finishing up his coursework at Foothills. He has learned about MIG, TIG and STICK welding and admits that it can be difficult at first, but that “you just have to stick with it until you get the hang of it.” Gerious has been interested in learning to weld since he was in 8th grade. His plan is to graduate on May 31st and get a job welding, but he does not discount additional education. After working for a while, he plans to go back to college and get his welding degree or some additional certification. When talking with Gerious, he can’t contain his excitement about welding and the opportunities it will open up.

Additionally, Gerious is quick to thank the staff at the Baldwin Foothills. He says, “They made me keep pushing myself.” He credits all of the teachers and staff, but highlights **Ms. Curtis, Mr. Reeves, Ms. Noris, Ms. Wolf, Mrs. Schubert, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. West, and Mr. Mason**. He also is grateful for the support of his family. Clearly, that admiration goes both ways. Mr. Reeves, Gerious’ social studies teacher, writes that, “Mr. Gerious Bell is one of the most driven students I have had the pleasure to teach. Intelligent, an avid learner, dedicated, respectable, and a true gentleman are vivid descriptions of Mr. Bell. He is confident, has a thirst for knowledge, and has a very optimistic view of life; which is unique because he has been through so much adversity. A teacher encounters many students along the path of his or her teaching career. Mr. Bell is the unforgettable student who will always have a special place in the teacher’s heart. No one is more proud of his recent accomplishments than I.”

*Gerious’ story continues on page 2...*



## Message from the Superintendent

I’m a superintendent, but stories like the ones featured here about Gerious Bell and Chevelle Jett make me feel like a proud mama. I am thrilled for the success of the young folks featured in this month’s issue of the Foothills Review, and I am gratified to see that once again we have been able to create safe, caring, and effective spaces that can meet the unique needs of our students. Gerious took advantage of dual enrollment opportunities to work towards graduation and begin pursuing lifelong goals and dreams and a career in welding. Chevelle needed the support offered by Foothills to complete her high school education, define her interests, secure a position at the University of Georgia Veterinary Clinic, and map out a pathway to college.

As Belinda Nichols writes on page 2, “Our Foothills Alumni Transition Team is here to assist Foothills graduates as they transition to ‘whatever is next.’ We help students explore the many options available, whether they are interested in technical school, a four-year college, apprenticeships, the military or the workforce.”

Even more important, perhaps, both of this month’s featured students are quick to point out the circle of support provided by caring teachers and staff—something we believe Foothills is uniquely positioned to do. Yes, these are the things that make me—and all of us—proud!

—*Sherrie*

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*(Gerious Bell, continued)*...Similarly, **Ms. Wolf** writes, “I am so proud that Gerious will be graduating from Foothills. While he has been through extreme challenges in the past few years, he refused to let obstacles hold him back. He was faced with a life and death experience that changed his perspective and the path of his life. While many individuals would have given up, Gerious persevered. I have no doubts that he will go on to great things after graduation. I hope that he will one day serve as a mentor to younger students because I believe he will make a difference in the lives of others.” It is clear that Gerious is a special, talented young man and that he has made as much of an impact on the Baldwin Foothills as they made on him. **Site Director Susan Curtis** writes, “We are thrilled Gerious is being spotlighted. He is a lovely human being.”

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## Student Spotlight: Chevelle Jett—Ready to Graduate

Submitted by Belinda Nichols, Barrow Foothills Public Relations

What a lively, fun loving young woman Chevelle is! Barrow Foothills staff fell in love with Chevelle from day one.

Chevelle came to Foothills in March of 2020 with 20 credits earned and needing 6.5 to graduate. Her plan to be independent involved working as many hours as possible, and then attending school in the evenings at Foothills. Shortly after turning 18, Chevelle decided to move out and be on her own. Life threw some curveballs and she soon realized just what “adulting” entails. While it did take Chevelle longer than she had planned, she is now officially a graduate and will be walking across the stage at the May graduation.



When asked about her experience with Foothills, Chevelle said, “Everything feels so personal and real at Foothills. Adults talk to you like a person. They listened to my personal struggles of juggling a full-time job and driving an hour to the school. They listened, they didn’t dismiss me. Always encouraging me even though it was taking me longer to complete the courses just as a result of logistics.”

When that final class was done and Chevelle felt like she had accomplished something huge, little did she know just how much richer life was about to feel to her. **Ms. Mary Kelly, a member of the Foothills Regional Transition Team**, reached out to Chevelle to ask her what her future goals looked like and if there was anything that Foothills could help her with. They talked about her interest in animals, and of course, the curse of college tuition. Ms Kelly sent Chevelle a video. It was a woman speaking on behalf of a UGA program. Chevelle immediately put that lead in motion and applied. She is now employed full-time with the UGA Veterinary Clinic working as a veterinary lab technician. You would think this would be the sum of her graduation experience, but the lead she received from Ms. Kelly has provided a clear pathway to college. With Chevelle’s job at UGA, maintaining her employment for six months, she will have her entire UGA tuition paid for. This job will also take care of her internship.

Our Foothills Alumni Transition Team is here to assist Foothills graduates as they transition to “whatever is next.” We help students explore the many options available, whether they are interested in technical school, a four-year college, apprenticeships, the military or the workforce. We are in touch with many resources, ranging from how to find the right job, to making college affordable. We like to start working with students when they are seniors and getting ready to graduate and then we support them after graduation. We may not have all the answers, but we know where to find them.



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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.*