



## Elias Young—Keepin' On Truckin'

By Tad MacMillan, Alumni Transition

Confucius is reported to have said, “Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.” It seems like the winner of the Mama Jo Spirit of Foothills Scholarship, Elias Young, has done exactly that. If you attended any of the Foothills graduations, you had the pleasure of hearing Elias talk about school, work, and life. Elias, a May graduate of the Oglethorpe Foothills, talks about welding in reverent tones. When asked why he liked welding so much, he said that “Welding is like art. Cutting it, cleaning it, joining it—it is like artwork to me and finishing a welding project all the way is like creating art. AND when your welding teacher, who is a master welder himself, praises your work, it just brings immense joy.” Elias talks about welding also in a meditative way, saying that although he has severe ADHD, “the minute I drop my welder’s hood and focus on that light, I become more patient and more focused than ever.”



Elias, who is two semesters away from getting his Welding and Joining Technology diploma from Athens Tech, is excited about the opportunities his degree will bring. He realizes that he still has a lot of work to do, but his longer range goal is to become a journeyman welder, owning his own truck and equipment and being his own boss. One day, he would love to be a pipe welder, which he describes as the “cream of the crop.” Elias says “anyone can weld, it takes a true artist to weld pipe.” As he is learning and developing his trade, Elias is fully aware of the work involved.

*(Continued, next page...)*

---

### Message from the Superintendent

New school year, new name, same goal: to do all we can to provide great future options for our students. Yes, as we head into summer 2023, we are now Foothills Regional High School, and in response to legislative changes, we have done some reorganizing, but our focus on students and our dedication to ensuring that they have best possible support and variety of options remains unchanged. Need proof? Just look at that great photo (above) or Elias Young—don’t you just love it? He stands proud, happy, and confident about the direction of his life, personally and professionally. As you will read in the article, without Foothills that would not always have been the case for him. Yes, that is what we are about—saving lives and reshaping futures.—*Sherrie*

#### In This Issue

- Student Spotlight: Elias Young
- Message from the Superintendent

## Elias Young, continued...

He has already had four job offers, making more than \$28 an hour, but he realizes that he will have to travel to work. He says, “A welder’s money is on the road” and he is prepared to go where the work is. In fact, he is kinda looking forward to the variety of assignments on the road as well as the generous per diem that welders get paid.

Elias describes the Option B diploma that he received as a perfect fit for him. He was able to immediately start learning about welding and working as an apprentice while attending Foothills and Athens Tech. He said that although you do get the opportunity to weld early in your program, there still is a lot of book work. However, he says that the book work is relevant to welding and so it was easier to stay focused on it. Since he is so enamored with welding, he said he “found the book work entertaining.” He recommends the Option B diploma to anyone who likes working with their hands and wants to work in the trades. He says, “You immediately are getting good experience.” Elias also appreciatively discussed the fact that many of the financial requirements are covered via the Option B diploma.

When asked if he had advice for current Foothills students, he said that students need to realize that going to school can be hard, but you “only have to do it once.” He suggested setting an aspirational goal for yourself that even if you don’t accomplish, it gets you closer to your ultimate goal. As an example, he set the goal of finishing a class in one month and although it took him closer to two months, his initial aspirational goal helped him make progress. And, Elias does not mince words when discussing what Foothills means to him. “If I had NOT gone to Foothills, I would be working a dead-end job and hating my life. Foothills helped me find a love both for academics and a love of a trade.” Elias also praises the many people who helped him at Foothills, singling out Mike Kulp. He says, “I have an exorbitant amount of love for Mike Kulp. He helped me inside and outside of school. His continual texts motivated me, and he was just a great support at Foothills as well as once I started at Athens Tech.” Elias also says that Angela Bruce helped him so much with filling out paperwork and helping him with his applications. And finally, he says that “Mr. Palmer is just a friendly spirit. The minute you see him, you feel good about being at Foothills.”

We all feel good about Elias and his accomplishments as well as his next steps. There is no doubt that this hard working, philosophical young man is on the way to many great things. When talking with him, it is hard not to be proud of him —FOOTHILLS PROUD.



Foothills Regional High School  
www.foothillsrhs.org  
2415 Suite B Jefferson Road  
Athens, GA 30607  
706-395-9775

### *The Foothills Vision*

*Foothills Regional 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.*