



Student Spotlight: Audrey's Story

Some students choose to matriculate to Foothills Education Charter High School because the traditional high school option is just not working for them. Other students find themselves seeking the more flexible option of Foothills due to circumstances outside of their own control.

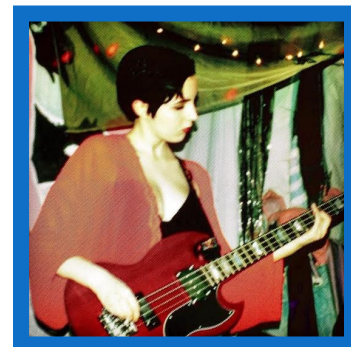
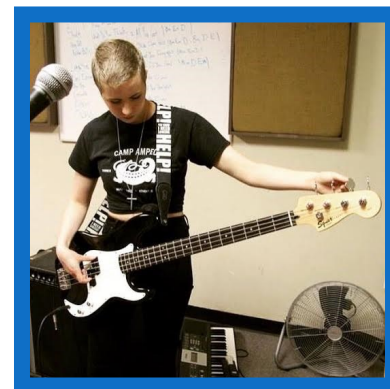
Audrey falls into this latter category. In October 2014, when she was in her junior year of high school, Audrey was diagnosed with cancer. Due to her treatments, she missed a lot of school and fell behind in her coursework. When she was able to return to class, she could not keep up because she had missed most of her junior year of school. She considered attending summer school or dropping out of high school to pursue a GED.

Instead, Audrey found out about Foothills from a friend who had enrolled as well. In Audrey's words, Foothills was a "blessing." The faculty at Foothills proved to be helpful to Audrey, showing her that they "really care about [students] graduating." Audrey was able to retake classes that she failed while she was sick, and she was able to move at her own pace through the curriculum. Another plus for Audrey was that she was able to work on her courses without the day-to-day distractions of the traditional high school environment.

Audrey graduated from Foothills in February of this year—over three months ahead of her peers. She will attend the graduation ceremony at the Clarke Foothills site on May 26th. So, what did Audrey do to fill her time this spring since she didn't have to attend classes? She recently took a trip to Italy with her mom, aunt, and a friend, courtesy of the Make a Wish Foundation. Audrey has a passion for art, and her dream was to see Italian art and visit cathedrals.

Audrey's future plans include taking a "gap year" or two to work in art and music while she saves money to attend college. Audrey's mom is "grateful" that Foothills was an option for Audrey at a time when she needed to take a slightly different path to graduation. And, the Foothills staff is happy that we could be here for her!

Congratulations, Audrey and all of our 2016 Foothills Graduates!



Message from the Superintendent

One of the most rewarding things for us at Foothills is the growing number of graduates that we have this spring! As of this writing, we have 44 graduates and expect more! Each Foothills site will host its own graduation ceremony so that families and community members can join in celebrating this accomplishment in our students' lives.

As our students earn their diplomas, they are changing the trajectory of their lives in so many ways. More importantly, our Foothills students are aware of this. We are planning to document our first graduation ceremonies by hiring a filmmaker who will attend the ceremonies and interview some of our graduates. We also have plans to follow our graduates as they leave us, so that we can keep up with them as they begin their new lives. We are excited to learn from this as they enter the world!

Please plan to attend a Foothills Charter High School Graduation ceremony at the following times:

Arrendale (Lee), Thursday, June 30, 10:00am, Arrendale
Baldwin, Thursday, May 18, 7:00pm, Baldwin County High School
Barrow, Friday, May 27, 7:00pm, Bethlehem Church
Burruss, Thursday, June 23, 10:00am, Burruss
Clarke, Thursday, May 26, 7:00pm, Athens Community Career Center
Jackson, Tuesday, May 24, 6:30pm, East Jackson High School
Madison, Saturday, May 28, 2:00pm, Madison County High School

Dr. Sherrie Gibeney-Sherman Foothills Superintendent

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Supporting Dreams, One Student at a Time

Foothills is setting up a scholarship fund if you are interested in making a donation so that students can apply to earn support for books, tuition, childcare, and transportation as they attend the post-secondary training. Please contact Karen.Patman@foothillscharter.org if you are interested in making a donation.

It is a good day for Foothills; it is a good day for Georgia,

*Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman,
Foothills Superintendent*



**Foothills Education Charter
High School**
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Barrow Foothills Site Math Teachers Deigh Martin and Russell Spicer, with student Laye. Read more about Laye in our March 2016 Student Spotlight.

Math and the Power of Motivation

Math teachers at the Barrow Foothills site noticed that other subject areas had higher course completion rates. Math is a course that is typically difficult for high school students, and is often one of the factors that affects graduation. The math teachers decided that they needed a stronger incentive program for students enrolled in the math course. While the Barrow Foothills site already had a process for rewarding students based on progress, the math teachers knew they needed to keep students motivated more frequently due to the difficulty level of the subject.

The teachers settled on implementing a computer-based, teacher-controlled “bank” system. They set up a system that would award students based on how they did on pre-tests (which allowed them to exempt sections of they showed mastery), and rewarded students based on passing post-tests. Students can earn more points if they pass the post-tests on the first attempt.

The teachers then reached out to the local community for donations to include on the rewards menu. Chick-fil-A and Hardee’s both gave generous donations of free food coupons. In addition, the math teachers donated chips, sodas, and other items that students desired.

The students responded positively to the new incentive system. After only two weeks of implementation, teachers could already see improvement. Students who had struggled to make progress in the math course have made strides and finished many post-tests since the program was implemented.

Dr. Bill Kruskamp serves as a site director at the Barrow Foothills site, along with Jason Smith. Dr. Kruskamp spoke very positively about the incentive program and the outstanding faculty at the Barrow site. “That’s just the kind of people we have,” he said. “They are about really, honestly engaging these kids in the learning.”

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.