



Student Spotlights: Catching Up with Dawson Teatino, Cody Parker, and Josie Scordato Submitted by Tad MacMillan

More than 50 years ago, Yale child psychology professor James Comer wrote, “No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.” At Foothills Regional High School, all of our success is based on the idea that our students need to know that every time they come to school, they will encounter a significant, supportive relationship with an adult. One of the many wonderful things about the Foothills approach is our continued commitment to students, even after they graduate. Many mentors continue to check in with their former mentees, and sites report that our graduates stay in touch with former teachers and mentors. We prepare our graduates for a variety of things: enlistment in the military, going to college, employment, and more. This month’s SPOTLIGHT features an update on three former Foothills students who were featured in our newsletter previously and who are going to college. We will feature graduates who chose to take a different path in a future newsletter. We just wanted to check back in and see how things were going.

Dawson Teatino, a Barrow Foothills graduate (May 2022), immediately started at Athens Tech, studying radiology, when he graduated. He has since transferred to Emmanuel University and he loves it. Emmanuel University, a school of about 900 students, is in Franklin Springs, Georgia. When we last talked with Dawson, he was interested in the medical field and that interest has not waned. He is currently majoring in biology and hopes to apply to medical school when he graduates. Dawson likes living in the dorm and in addition to studying biology, Dawson is learning to play the guitar and has his sights set on participating in an Emmanuel University choral group in the future. He still has fond memories of Foothills and expresses his gratitude for how going to school at Foothills prepared him. His advice to students is that you have to realize that you have to put in effort if you want to accomplish anything. When talking to Dawson, he mentioned that college life at Emmanuel University was just so much fun and that everyone was super friendly. We are happy to hear such a positive update from him and wish him the best.



Message from the Superintendent

How exciting it is to read about the widely varied paths to success for our Foothills students! As you will see in this month’s *Foothills Review* Spotlights on Dawson Teatino, Cody Parker, and Josie Scordato, there is not a typical Foothills student. We are proud of these young people who came to Foothills to follow their dreams. We are a choice school, and the students who choose to be part of us have so much to offer and such exciting future prospects ahead of them. Our job is to help them to identify their dreams and passions, so they can find their way. As you read about the amazing things these young folks are doing, I know your hearts will swell with pride, as mine did—even more more incentive for us to keep up the great work. Thanks for all you do. - Sherrie

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Student Spotlights—Dawson, Cody, and Josie

Cody Parker, a 2021 graduate from the Oglethorpe Foothills site, is currently a junior at the University of North Georgia. Since we last checked in with Cody, he has accomplished a lot. In addition to his studies at UNG, he has spent the past two summers doing intensive Chinese language studies. He spent this past summer in Taiwan, at the National Taiwan University in Taipei, immersing himself in the study of the Chinese language. As a Chinese language major at UNG, he sees many opportunities in his future.

(See Cody in Taiwan, at right—>)

He could become a language analyst for the CIA or continue his studies, getting an advanced degree focusing on Chinese and language acquisition. Cody is currently researching a program at UNG called the McNair Scholars Program in which an undergraduate student is paired up with a professor to learn more about what graduate school would be like. McNair Scholars are mentored by a professor and actually conduct research as if they were in graduate school. As Cody weighs his options, he has also been researching the Language Acquisition Masters at Indiana University. He is not ready to decide about either going to graduate school or possibly working for the CIA, but he is exploring his options. It seems like he has many, many options. Cody has some great advice for students. He stresses how important it is to ask questions. He says he has found out about so many programs and opportunities just by asking. He also stresses that it is important to follow your passion. Cody says you should explore studies and careers related to what you like to do in your free time. He says, "I have always loved learning languages and learning about languages so it made sense that I would explore careers related to language learning and language acquisition." It is clear that Cody's love of language AND hard work are opening doors for him. Can't wait to see where his path leads.



And we also checked in with **Josie Scordato**. We featured her when she was a freshman at Wesleyan in Macon and now she is a senior. Josie was a 2020 graduate from Baldwin Foothills. Josie started out as a neuroscience major and will graduate majoring in biology. Josie says that Wesleyan has "been a good fit for me." The campus is small so it is easy to get around and it is small enough that you really get to know your professors. Josie's big passion was and still is being on the equestrian team at Wesleyan. She continues to compete in both Intercollegiate Horse Show competitions as well as Intercollegiate Dressage competitions. At Wesleyan, you have to have a 3.4 or higher GPA to compete as an athlete, and Josie says that has helped motivate her to keep her grades up, even though she has to take very rigorous biology coursework.

She says her passion for equestrian competitions has made her want to do well in school. She adds that going to Wesleyan and being on the equestrian team has opened up so many opportunities for her. Although she is not sure on what her next steps are, she knows that she would love to both travel and work with horses in the near future. Josie says, "There was a point in time that I did not know if I would even graduate from high school." Foothills helped change that. She advises students to not compare yourself to others and just focus on YOU. She says, "I met myself where I was and focused on being the person I wanted to be." Sounds like good advice for all of us: let's focus on being the person we want to be.

(Josie, doing what she loves —>)

Thanks to Josie and Cody and Dawson for letting us check back in with them. We are so proud of them and look forward to hearing about their journey. It is also so wonderful that Foothills Regional High School played a big part in supporting them on that journey.



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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.