

# the Warrior Bulletin

A Newsletter for Parents, Alumni, Friends and Family

Grace Christian School • Summer 2015

## Unique Graduation Ceremony Warms the Hearts of All

On Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at 3:30 p.m., twenty-two new graduates with caps tipped and tassels turned glided up the aisle of Calvary Baptist Church. In the two hours prior to their celebratory final walk, the class of 2015 listened attentively to the engaging speeches of their peers and mentors.



Headmaster John Morrison congratulates Gabbie Miskell.

Valedictorian Micah Mallory challenged his classmates to rise above a self-seeking culture, saying, “As we go out into the world, my heart is for all of us to actively engage in community - unafraid of being vulnerable and genuine - living in the truth we know.” He concluded, “And that we would value and be concerned with the people around us - not being self-important but genuinely caring and loving.”

Alumni and teacher Brian Fitzgerald delivered the commencement address, encouraging the new grads to grab ahold of life’s greatest opportunity - being disciplined by Jesus. “Discipleship requires a counting of the cost...count the cost and make a choice. Will you be a disciple and apprentice of Jesus or a disciple and apprentice of our culture?” he asked. “As you go from here, do whatever it is that God has laid in your heart to do, but do it as an apprentice of Jesus. Follow Him and you won’t be disappointed,” he added.

As is tradition at Grace, the soon-to-be grads and their parents took an active role in the ceremony. Dwayne Riffo, parent of graduate Laura Riffo, noted the intentionality and specialness of the proceedings. “Being involved as a parent meant a lot, especially when Laura gave her mother the rose and when the other fathers and I gathered to light our children’s candles,” he shared. “We’ve been personally involved with her education at Grace since kindergarten, so it was a privilege to be included in her graduation ceremony, as well,” Mr. Riffo added.

As the graduates head off into the world, they do so with a diverse array of plans, gifts and abilities. The class has secured more than \$295,000 in academic scholarships alone. Nineteen plan to attend college in the fall, ranging from in-state schools which include James Madison University, Bridgewater College, Regent University and Liberty University, to out-of-state schools such as Geneva College and Messiah College. Some will begin their studies at nearby community colleges, while others will go directly into the work force, mission field and military. Their wide range of chosen fields, including nursing, athletic training, engineering, counseling, music, education, chemistry, business, criminal justice, forestry and computer science, continues to showcase each student’s uniqueness and God-given gifts.



Standing: Noah Hebert, Paige Campbell, Shaddi Abdelwahab, Julia Michael, Laura Riffo, Adam Clem, Gabriella Miskell, Grayson Hensley, Breanna Decker, Timothy Grow, Katie Quarles, David Heishman, Nicholas Piccinino, Artem Rich, Nicholas Whisman, Daniel Royals and Noah Clarke. Sitting: Jared Bowles, Isaac Grant, Devon Boyers, Jackson Lohr and Micah Mallory.



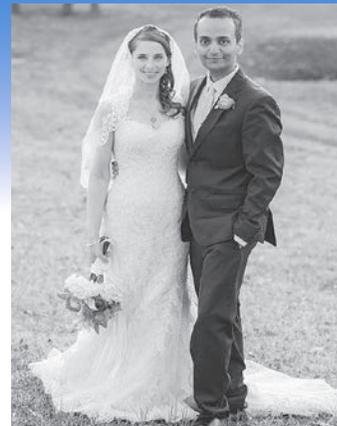
**Christa (Malcolm) & Gitchell Williams**



**Caroline (Rhodes), Kirk and Kebar Kalmbacher**



**Erich & Samantha Roscher**



**Meggie (Lam) & Samuel Chapade**

# Graduates in the News

## 1997

**Krista (Summers) Singleton** and husband, Matt, announce the birth of their son, Charles, born in February. He joins siblings Wade (8), Caroline (6), Thatcher (4) and Wyatt (2). The family resides in Palm City, Florida.

## 2001

**Jason Bailey**, who has served as the GCS high school principal for the past three years, has accepted a position as Shepherding Director at Holy Cross Presbyterian Church in Staunton. Jason and wife, Kiley, have three children, Spencer (4 and GCS Pre-K student), Evie (3), and Atticus (1).

**Laura (Knopp) Avnaim** and her husband, Tony, live in Studio City, California, where Laura is pursuing her acting career. She is taking acting classes and attending agent and casting director workshops.

**George McNair** received his Master's in Teaching from Liberty University with an emphasis in Secondary Education. George is beginning his third year teaching at Grace Christian School and will be assuming the role of assistant principal of the high school.

## 2003

**Drew Shawver** passed his Architectural Registration Exam and is now a licensed architect. He designs custom homes for MW Works

Architecture & Design. Drew and his wife, Katie, live in Seattle, Washington.

**Brian Fitzgerald** has accepted the position of high school principal of Grace Christian School, where he has taught for the past four years. Brian and his wife, **Jenny (GCS Class of 2004)** live in Staunton with their three children, Adelaide (7 and GCS 1<sup>st</sup> grader), Ezekiel (5 and GCS Kindergarten) and Levi (3).

## 2004

**Meggie Lam** and Samuel Chopade were married on March 21. Meggie is the Assistant Director of Engagement and Annual Giving at the University of Virginia and volunteers on the International Women's Ministry Team with Advancing Native Missions. The couple live in Charlottesville, Virginia.

**Erin Betlej** is serving as the Youth and Young Adult Minister at Oak Ridge United Methodist Church in Greensboro, NC. She graduated in May from Pfeiffer University with a Master of Arts in Practical Theology with Certifications in Christian Education and Youth Ministry. Erin also holds a Masters of Social Work from UNC-Chapel Hill.

## 2005

**Caroline (Rhodes) Kalmbacher**, husband, Kirk, and son Kebar (1 1/2) are living in Juneau, Alaska, where Kirk

serves with the United States Coast Guard. In addition to being a stay-at-home mom, Caroline leads a youth group for middle and high school girls.

## 2006

**Stephanie Marshall** has accepted a position as Marketing Coordinator with nTelos Wireless in Waynesboro, Virginia.

**Erich Roscher** and wife, Samantha, live in Blacksburg, Virginia. Erich is the Program Administrator of Erosion and Sediment Control/Stormwater Management for Virginia Tech University. The couple recently biked 524 miles from Boston to Washington, D.C. for the National EMS Memorial Bike Ride to honor fallen members.

## 2007

**Carly Kinder** is living in Florida where she works as a paramedic. She just earned an additional certification upgrading her title from Florida Paramedic to National Registry Paramedic.

## 2008

**Mary Masincup** and Yaw Adu-Gyamfi were married on June 28. The couple lives in Ames, Iowa, where Yaw works as a Civil Engineer for Iowa State University. Mary, who taught at Grace Christian Elementary School for the past three years, is completing her master's degree through Mary Baldwin University's Online Program.

**David Hrovat** is attending law school at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is spending the summer interning in New York City with the Legal Aid Society in the Immigration Unit, working with those who are detained and in removal proceedings.

**Erica Hackman** relocated to Austin, Texas, from Kansas City this past year. Erica is employed by Chipotle where she provides managerial support to several stores and assists management teams in the planning of future restaurant locations.

**Charles Shrewsbury** and Morgan Lee Basce were married on June 27. Charles graduated from Tusculum College with a degree in Biology. He is working for Augusta County Service Authority as a plant operator. The couple lives in Staunton, Virginia.

## 2009

**Megan (Cullinan) Cagle** is working as a registered nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at St. Mary's Hospital. She and her husband, Casey, live in Richmond, Virginia.

**Christa Malcolm** was united in marriage to Getchell Williams on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The couple resides in Antioch, Tennessee, where Christa works as a Sales Content Writer at Service Source. Christa graduated from Trevecca Nazarene University with a degree in Psychology.

# Graduate News

## Top 10 Highlights of the School Year

### 2010

**Jaime Ballew** graduated from Liberty University in May. She received a Bachelor of Science in Government, with a Health Promotion minor. Jaime spent last semester in Washington, D.C. interning with Congressman Bob Goodlatte. She is currently serving as the Executive Assistant/Online Communications Strategist for Concerned Women for America in Washington.

**Emily Masineup** is attending graduate school at Cardiff University in Wales, studying Musicology. She received her undergraduate degree in Music Performance from Messiah University.

### 2011

**Chris Knight** received a degree in Business Administration/Human Resource Management from Liberty University. While at Liberty, he served as the Secretary of the Society for Human Resource Management Club. Chris is the Human Resources Director for MGW and Lingo Networks in Staunton, Virginia.

**Holly Wenger** graduated Suma Cum Laude from Marymount College with a degree in Criminal Justice. She is interning at Interpol in Washington, D.C. this summer and is applying to various police departments in the Washington and Northern Virginia areas.

**Ben Stoll** graduated Suma Cum Laude with a B.A. in Theatre and Dance and a concentration in Musical Theater from James Madison University. He is working at an outdoor summer theater in Ohio and will travel to Indiana in the fall to perform on a four-month stint at a theatre company.

### 2012

**Allegra Morrison** graduated Suma Cum Laude from Blue Ridge Community College and was inducted into the Alpha Xi Xi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. She is transferring to Bridgewater College in the fall where she will major in history.

**Joscelyn Seaton** is interning with F. Hoffmann-LaRoche Pharmaceuticals in Basel, Switzerland this summer. Her research project is studying anti-sense oligonucleotides and their possible roles in medicinal therapy. Joscelyn is a rising senior majoring in biochemistry at Grove City College.

The Warrior Bulletin is a publication of Grace Christian School.

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High School Principal: Brian Fitzgerald

Elementary & Middle School Principal: Joanne Kinder

Supervisor of Instruction: Mary Ellen Barrett

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#### 1. GCS's First All-American Athlete

Junior, Sam Skillman earned an 8<sup>th</sup> place finish at the National Prep Wrestling Tournament.

#### 2. Kings Dominion Music Festival Competition

The Elementary and Middle School Choirs received a Superior Rating and a First Place Trophy as they competed against other choirs from around the state.

#### 3. World View Conference

Dr. Christian Overman of *Worldview Matters*, presented a two-day conference for students, parents and staff focusing on how Christians can view all aspects of their work (paid or unpaid) as something that can give God glory.

#### 4. Regional and State Finalists in Poetry Outloud Competition

Juniors, Jessie Urgo and Ben Elliott placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in the regional competition to advance to the state competition, where Ben took the honor of 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up. This is the school's 6<sup>th</sup> year making it to the state level - next year Nationals!

#### 5. Baseball State Champions

The Warriors Varsity Baseball team captured their first VACA state title, winning the championship game in extra innings in Danville, Virginia.

#### 6. Student FilmFest

The first-ever FilmFest showcased original films written, directed and produced by Grace Christian High School students.

#### 7. Future Problem Solvers Compete at State Bowl

After a 13-year hiatus, the Future Problem Solvers Team regrouped at the high school and competed for this year's State Bowl in Norfolk, Virginia.

#### 8. Western-Themed Family Fun Night

GCS Parents and students of all ages came together to enjoy a rootin', tootin' night of good old-fashioned fun. In addition to best-dressed cowboy/cowgirl contests, other activities included stick-horse rodeos, feed sack races, cow pie eating contests and dancing the Virginia Reel.

#### 9. Student-Athlete of the Year

Senior, Micah Mallory was named the City/County Student-Athlete of the Year. He was chosen from 11 local public and private high schools. Micah will be majoring in biomedical engineering at Geneva College in Pennsylvania, where he will play baseball and soccer.

#### 10. Ministries Near and Far

The entire school community united and focused on two major service projects. At Christmas time, students contributed 235 gift bags to each student at Wenonah Elementary School in Waynesboro, Virginia. Throughout the year, students collected and processed over 8,000 pairs of shoes for shipment to the Kenya Shoe Project, which enables Kenyan widows and their children to purchase land and build homes.

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## CONNECT WITH US

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**Grace Christian School's mission is to assist Christian parents by providing a sound academic education in a Christ-centered environment, designed to prepare our young people to know God and to live in obedience to His will for their lives.**

## Thank You, Business Partners in Education!

The Grace Christian School Business Partners in Education Program plays a key role in our ability to offer tuition assistance to many of our school families. To learn more, contact Janet Cleveland in our Development Office at (540) 886-9109.

- Vision Technology Group
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- Pro-Build
- Weaver Insurance & Financial Advisors
- Jack Clem, General Contractor

## Students Enjoy GCS Summer Camps

Many of our elementary and middle school students are spending part of their summer at school, but instead of reading, 'riting' and 'rithmetic, they're playing water games, gardening, cooking, swimming, painting and going on field trips.

GCS has offered a Summer Day Camp since Campers Nathan Sprouse, Katie Elliott and Kaleigh Sprouse pose behind one of the three murals completed.

"The Summer Day Camp has been a real blessing to our school families who need childcare during the summer," stated Joanne Kinder, GCS Elementary & Middle School Principal. "This program offers a perfect balance of structured activities and just plain old summer fun, while also instilling biblical values and godly character in a Christian environment."

The Summer Fine Arts Camp offers campers a chance to delve deeper into water color, charcoal and murals. One of the major art projects this summer was to paint murals on parking barriers, adding festive scenery to the entire campus.

"It's been a great summer for our campers so far," added Mrs. Kinder. "We are very pleased with the quality of our programs and that we can assist our families."

