



Student Spotlight: Germaine Adkins

We have all heard the expression "It's a hard knock life." If this describes any of our students at Madison Foothills, it describes Germaine Adkins. From hanging out in the streets of Athens, Georgia to running the dirt roads in small town of Colbert, Georgia, Germaine found his way to us in July of 2016.

The transition years of middle school can either make or break students. Germaine was one who was broken. Not only did he fail classes and get into fights, but he got into a great deal of trouble with the law. Germaine knew that something had to drastically change, so he moved from Athens to Madison County with his father and family. In the beginning, he felt that he had everything under control, but soon the walls came crashing down. Germaine began failing classes and giving up. Yet, he still knew that "you need an education nowadays to get further in life." He said, "I want to graduate because I want to be able to tell my children I graduated. I also want to continue at Athens Tech in welding, or join the Army."

Although he faces many obstacles with his responsibilities at home taking care of his siblings and working to help provide for his family, Germaine still finds the time to attend Foothills. He laughed and said, "Even when I wrecked my van and blew a tire, I still tried to make it. I want my family to be proud of me. My family is important to me because we all stick together." He stated with great pride, "Both of my parents support me and are proud of my accomplishments in school."

While at Foothills, Germaine has gained the confidence needed to be a successful student. He says it starts with respect: "I feel very respected at Foothills, and my teachers make me feel more respectful. Mr. Palmer always makes me feel like I can make it. When I feel like giving up, he is always there to tell me I can get through it. He is just cool like that. He just makes me feel comfortable. He seems more like a friend than a teacher, and that makes me feel like I can go to him for anything." Germaine also goes on to say, "Foothills works for me because I can work at my own pace, I get more one-on-one attention, and it works around my work schedule. Also, it has given me the confidence at my job. They are giving me more responsibilities, and this makes me feel good." Germaine chuckles and says, "Foothills ain't for everybody. You have to be serious about getting your work done and getting out of school. At first, I thought it was boring because there were not enough females, but then I realized it ain't about the females; it's about getting your work done and getting your education."

Germaine leaves us with these words of wisdom: "Work hard and anything is possible. Be patient, hard work pays off."



Submitted by Michelle Garrison, Madison Foothills

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Message from the Superintendent

January was a busy month for Foothills. Our 7 original sites had many new students enroll. January is when students get their first semester report cards, and they realize that May graduation may not be the reality that they had hoped. Students find their way to Foothills in hopes that they can realign their efforts and actually graduate.

We have been working with partner high schools to find new and different ways to support students who want to stay at their home high schools. In Barrow County, we created satellite credit recovery programs at both high schools in hopes that more students can earn high school credit and graduate with their peers.

We successfully opened Morgan Foothills on January 11 and Glynn Foothills on January 17. Both sites had excellent openings. Students were greeted by excited staff ready to help them realize their dream of earning a high school diploma. As of this writing, there are 102 students enrolled at Glynn Foothills and 74 at Morgan Foothills. We have only just begun. One student at a time.

Foothills continues to make a difference. WE are making a difference in more communities.

Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman, Foothills Superintendent

Foothills by the Numbers

We are 1/2 way through the 2016-17 school year, and our Foothills sites are putting up impressive numbers!

2016-17 Graduates as of January 28: 52

Credits Earned by Students as of January 28: 1,154.5

Total Enrollment as of January 28: 1,213

Keep it up, Students and Staff!

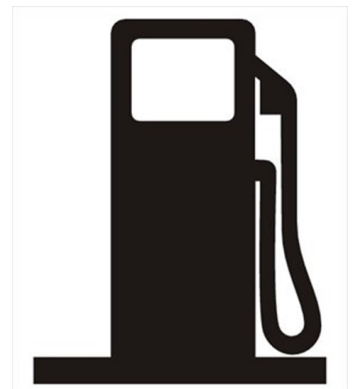
Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't.

Motivation Intervention, Grades and Gasoline

While the Foothills schedule differs from a traditional high school, our students are required to meet the same graduation requirements as other students in Georgia. So, when a required course has a state-mandated End of Course (EOC) test tied to it, Foothills students take those tests just like any other students. EOCs count 20% of the final grade for the course. Our Foothills students want to do well on their EOCs, but they also know if their grades are high enough before they take the test, then they can breathe a little easier. Our Foothills students, more than most student bodies, care more about earning the credit than they do about their overall GPAs.

Yet, Foothills Education Charter High School is held accountable for how well our students do on their EOCs. While students may be able to pass a class even with a low EOC score, low EOC scores do hurt the school on accountability measures. So, Foothills staff chose to implement an intervention to motivate students to do well on their EOCs. How could we encourage students to do well on EOCs if the overall grade was not a motivating factor?

It has been said that our culture runs on coffee and gasoline, and while our Foothills students could probably use a little of both, we know that many of them need gasoline to get to school and to work. So, we are rewarding students with gasoline cards when they do well on their EOCs. There are four performance levels on the EOCs (1=beginning learner; 2=developing learner; 3=proficient learner; 4=distinguished learner). Students who earn level 2 get a \$5.00 gas card. Those earning a level 3, get a \$10.00 gas card, and those earning a 4 earn a \$15.00 gas card.



Implementing this type of reward system is a win-win for Foothills and for our students. Foothills Education Charter High School benefits from increased EOC scores overall. Students have a tangible reward—something they want and need—as a motivator to do well on the assessments. Most of our Foothills students are not motivated by GPA, but earning a tangible reward reinforces the idea that if you work hard and put forth your best effort, there are benefits. This mirrors the real world that our students will face after graduation.

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.



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