



Catching Up With an “Old” Friend: Michelle Acevedo

Submitted by Tad MacMillan, Foothills Alumni Transition Coordinator



The Foothills community, including our own sites and those we have guided and developed, is huge and stretches from one end of the state to the other. We were reminded of the Foothills “reach” when Justin Drew, co-director of the Social Circle Foothills site checked into his hotel on Jekyll Island where he was attending the Foothills Strategic Planning Retreat this past July. Michelle Acevedo, the hotel clerk who was checking him in, is a 2020 Foothills Graduate. She enrolled in Glynn Foothills in 2018, at that time a part of the Foothills universe, which subsequently used our guidance and the Foothills model to become a part of Coastal Plains Education Charter Charter High School. Through this kind of “spawning” as well as our own growth, our reach is both strong and expansive. No one is a better testament to that than Michelle Acevedo. Michelle grad-

uated in May 2020, but due to COVID did not walk until September 2020. Back in 2018, due to some family issues, Michelle was living on her own and was working full time. Her hectic work schedule made attending a regular day high school impossible and she was about to give up on getting her high school diploma. Then, a counselor suggested that she look into this new program that was being opened up in Brunswick called Glynn Foothills. She immediately saw that Foothills was a perfect fit. She could continue working during the day and go to Foothills in the afternoon and at night. She loved being able to “work at my own pace” and quickly caught up so that she could graduate “on time.”

Michelle’s story is continued on page 2...

Message from the Superintendent

What is the word? It’s serendipity—a “fortunate discovery that is made by accident,” and it is a perfect description for the unexpected—and wonderful—chance meeting with Michelle Acevedo. There we were at the Foothills Strategic Planning Retreat, prepping for the new year and reflecting on our past successes, when we came upon this perfect reminder of why we do what we do. Ecclesiastes tells us to “cast our bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days” and at Foothills we are indeed reminded never to underestimate the impact, on our students and communities, of our words or actions. Weston Kieschnick, who presented at the GAEL Conference on Jekyll, tells us that, as educators, with great power (we may not realize we have it) comes great responsibility. Kieschnick and his wife and co-author Molly, counsel us that “we can speak just one sentence and change the course of a life.” These are words we need to continue to live by.

Sherrie

In This Issue

- **Catching Up with Michelle Acevedo**
- **Message from the Superintendent**

Michelle Acevedo: The Story Continues...

When asked about her experience at Foothills, Michelle heaps praise on the Foothills staff. She says she would recommend Foothills for everyone, but especially for anyone “that is being forced to grow up a little faster than maybe they should have to.” Michelle says that, “If it were not for the Foothills teachers, I would not be where I am.” She highlights her mentor, Ms. Sharon, who she said, “made sure I was physically or mentally okay every day—she would call if I did not attend just to check on me.” Michelle says that although she graduated in May 2020, Ms. Sharon still contacts her every couple of weeks to check in. She also says that if it were not for Ms. Grady’s support, she would not have made it through US History or Economics. Michelle says her math class taught her how to apply for a credit card, how to balance her checkbook and other real life skills.

Michelle is also so grateful for Ms. Zania Laws who recommended Foothills in the first place and was supportive of her throughout her enrollment.



Michelle Acevedo—proud graduate!

And today...

Currently, Michelle Acevedo works at the Jekyll Island Holiday Inn and attends Coastal Technical College. Michelle has always dreamed of working in law enforcement and is in the Cyber-Security-Criminal Justice program. Her goal is to be a computer technical analyst for the FBI one day. Michelle wants to work in a profession that will make the world a little safer and a little better by getting “some bad people off the street.” What a powerful dream!

Michelle says that, unlike in a regular high school, you use “everything you learn at Foothills in your day-to-day life.” We are so proud of Michelle Acevedo and look forward to staying in touch with her as she strives to accomplish her life goals. The work is a better place for her efforts and she reminds us of the importance of our work. The reach of Foothills is indeed impactful!

Congratulations to Michelle for earning her high school diploma and becoming a contributing citizen to her community. Congratulations, also, to Coastal Plains Education High School for expanding the option of an alternative high school experience to many students in South Georgia.



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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.