

## Grace Classical Academy

Κατανῶμεν *Let us consider...*

*This year, GCA graduated the biggest class in its fourteen year history—thirteen students! This newsletter will profile each student from a class that will be dearly missed.*

Claire Burrell

Claire started GCA in kindergarten, along with three other graduating seniors—McKayla, Melissa, and Victoria. Her goal after high school is to double major in vocal/choral education and instrumental/violin education at Missouri State University. With these degrees, she would like to continue teaching choir and have a private studio of voice and violin students. On the side, she would like to sell her hand-made jewelry, paintings, incense holders, candles, and other crafts either online or in a quaint boutique, and finally, aspire to ever increase her cooking abilities (gluten-free, of course!) throughout life.



One person who has impacted Claire is Mr. Cymbaluk. She said, “He has taught me to question my beliefs, to work out my own salvation and what it means to both fear and love God, to meditate on (not just skim) the Bible, and to understand the world’s point of view on things in order to better defend the Christian view of things. Mr. C and I have the same sense of humor, so that helped us connect on a more personal level. I always learn more from teachers who have connected with me as a person, not just as a student to force-feed information.”

Claire, it has been a joy to have you as a student and teacher at GCA. May God bless you on your journey and may you increase His kingdom!



The mission of Grace Classical Academy is to provide an education designed to help our children know the love, grace, truth and holiness of our glorious God and, from this understanding, strive for excellence in knowledge, wisdom and service.

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**Let the word of  
Christ dwell in  
you richly,  
teaching and  
admonishing  
one another in  
all wisdom,  
singing psalms  
and hymns and  
spiritual  
songs, with  
thankfulness in  
your hearts to  
God.**

**Colossians  
3:16 (ESV)**



Makenzie Chastain

Makenzie started attending GCA in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She plans to attend Missouri State University and pursue a master of science in occupational therapy. After that, she would like to travel (nationally and internationally) with that career as much as possible for a few years, and then maybe settle down somewhere warm and sunny and work as a sports therapist.

According to Makenzie, “Mrs. Vandiver impacted me most at Grace. Her unconditional love for her Father and the fruits that He produced in her were incredible to see. Talking with her was always absolutely delightful, but just watching her life and how it played out and how she responded was mind-blowing and a privilege to have been able to be a part of.

One of my fondest memories from my time at Grace is from 4<sup>th</sup> grade during Battle Grammatica. I had been in the final class round and Mrs. V was overseeing the game, as usual. It was my turn, so I threw the dice, moved my little knight, pulled a card and defined my phrase. Mrs. V told me I was wrong and I was out of the game. The next day, in the middle of class, Mrs. V walked in and began talking to Mrs. Moss about something. The next thing I know, she's pulling me out of class to take me to lunch. While we were in the car, she looked at me and smiled and said ‘I'm sorry. You were right.’ As if it wasn't enough to my little 4<sup>th</sup> grader self that I was getting taken out of class to eat food, now I was being told I was right. I felt so smart and special. We went to Mexican Villa, and I ordered what I thought was what Mom always got me at Mexican restaurants—an enchilada. The waiter brought the food and I began to panic. That was not what I wanted. I felt so bad and I really didn't want to try this weird thing I'd ordered on accident (I was really, REALLY picky back then), but Mrs. V had been so nice and bought me lunch and made me feel special, so I ate it. AND I LOVED IT. To this day, enchiladas are my favorite Mexican dish. But that day in 4<sup>th</sup> grade sparked a very special relationship in my life with a woman who would impact me, both directly and indirectly, in more ways than I would have ever thought possible.”

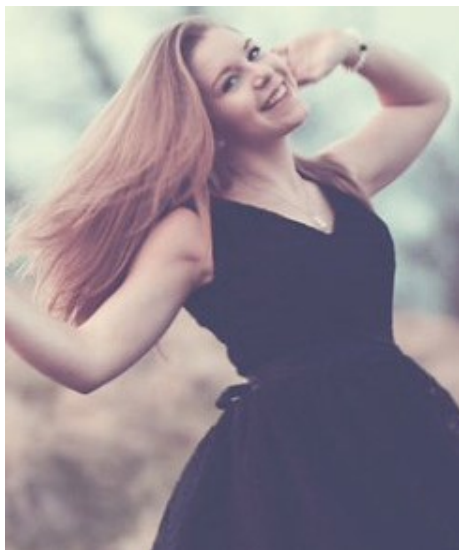
Makenzie, may God bless you and keep you and shine His face upon you (and may your hair color never stay the same for too long)!

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Editor: Luke Shawhan

Please e-mail comments and suggestions to [admin@graceclassical.org](mailto:admin@graceclassical.org)

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### Victoria Deren

Victoria came to GCA in kindergarten. She plans to attend Drury University in the fall and hopes to graduate with honors, yet she is not sure what she wants to study. Over the summer, she is going to work at her dad's business fulltime.

Victoria is a voracious reader with eclectic taste and is always up for a challenge. Whether she is reading *War and Peace* or skinning rabbits, one can never know what Victoria may do next.

If she could visit her 7<sup>th</sup> grade self, she states, "I would tell myself that these people will be lifelong friends so stop being shy." Victoria loved for the class discussions she was able to have in Mr. Cymbaluk's class and the history lessons Mr. Bradley taught her.

Victoria, you have excelled here as both a teacher and a student. Your GCA community loves you and wishes you the best!

### Kaylen Draschil

Kaylen came to GCA in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She will attend College of the Ozarks in the fall and plans to study music performance with an emphasis on piano. After college, she would like to travel to Japan in order to teach English as a second language.

One of Kaylen's best traits are her wise words. If you know Kaylen, you know that she is incredibly quiet. Yet, when she speaks, she usually has something worth hearing. One example was during her 10<sup>th</sup> grade Bible class: it was a joint class period with Mr. C's 8<sup>th</sup> grade Bible class. We held a question day, and Kaylen spoke clearly in regards to prosperity and being a Christian. She said (this is a loose quote from Cotton Mather) "Faithfulness is the mother of prosperity, and then the daughter eats the mother." Kaylen may not have said much during any of her classes, but when she spoke, she was able to capture the heart of an issue with a single thought.

Kaylen, you are both thoughtful and talented. We pray you enjoy the story God has planned for your life!



### Rachel Edney

Rachel came to GCA in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. After graduation, she will participate in The World Race: Gap Year program to spread the knowledge of the Gospel to three countries over nine months. Some of her opportunities will include ministering to orphans and sex-trafficking victims, building projects, and evangelism.

Given the opportunity to share with 7<sup>th</sup> graders who are just beginning their junior high and high school journey, Rachel would admonish them to remember Paul's words "You reap what you sow." The decisions you make, the way you spend your time, the content you choose to consume through media will all produce fruit. Is it the fruit you desire?



Also, Rachel said, “Some of the best moments from my life at GCA have taken place in Mr. C's room. I will never forget having deep class discussions about anything and everything. We loved class so much that we got Mr. C to continue our conversations in lunchtime meetings! God changed my life through those discussions, and I will always look back on those times with fondness and appreciation.”

Rachel, may God continue to form you into the image of His Son through dying daily and loving Him!

#### Melissa Gadd

Melissa began at GCA in kindergarten. She plans to attend Evangel University with a focus on pre-med, which has been a passion of hers for many years. She is grateful to have had the opportunity to travel to third-world countries on medical mission trips, where she worked side-by-side with doctors caring for patients.

If speaking before a group of 7<sup>th</sup> graders, Melissa would counsel them to think through a general plan for their life: What do they want to do? Who do they want to be? What excites them? She would also advise students to get to know their teachers: try to find out their interests in life and expectations for the classroom in order to understand how to do the best work for that teacher.

Melissa, the GCA community loves you dearly. Blessings to you and may you bring energy and vivaciousness wherever you go!



#### Philip Herzog

Philip came to GCA in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. He plans to attend Missouri State University in order to study business/marketing and then move into criminal defense law. One of Philip's favorite light-hearted memories is having a poetry day in Mr. Moss's 9<sup>th</sup> grade writing class. Philip was thrilled because Mr. Moss brought in coffee and tea for the students to enjoy while reading poetry. Unfortunately, Mr. Moss decided to not bring them coffee and tea anymore because of the effect of caffeine on their behavior! On a more serious note, Philip appreciates the community he and his family have found at GCA and for the opportunity to sing, with his classmates, Mrs. V's favorite songs to her in her home before she passed away.

During his schooling, Philip has discovered that failure in good endeavors can still bring good fruit. Philip is also thankful to have had the opportunity to pursue truth and love truth. He has found that through blessings and struggles, God's truth has proven to be a rock-solid foundation.

Philip, you have been a joy to have in our community. We look forward to seeing you grow in the future!

#### Lauren Howland

Lauren also came to GCA in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. She will either attend Evangel or Missouri State University and pursue a double major in elementary education and accounting. She hopes to use this degree in order to work in foreign countries, start a school, and advance the Kingdom of God!

One person Lauren is most grateful for is Mrs. V, who once told Lauren: “If you need anything, I am right here. If you need to talk, scream, or cry, I am here.” Lauren said that Mrs. V’s words proved true over and over again and Lauren is grateful for that kind of self-sacrificial personality. She is also appreciative of the community she found at GCA, her classmates, and special times in yearbook class with Jalinn Sowersby and Kaylen Draschil.

Lauren, God will use you in mighty ways. We look forward to seeing those ways.



#### Caleb Marshall

Caleb enrolled at Grace Classical Academy in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He plans to attend Missouri State University in the fall with a desire to study English and French in order to teach English as a Second Language.

If he could travel in time and give advice to his 7<sup>th</sup> grade self, Caleb said he would encourage risk-taking and honesty. Caleb has learned the benefits that failure can bring from his experience with auditioning: he may not have accomplished a particular goal, but still grew from the experience. He also has learned the value of being honest with people, especially concerning struggles. He says it is better to be honest with people and admit your struggles versus hiding struggles behind a smiling face.

Caleb, what a blessing you have been in our community as both a student and teacher. May God bless you on your journey!

#### Abby Mercer

Abby began her journey with GCA in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She plans on attending Drury University to study music therapy. She hopes to become a board certified music therapist. She says, “I want to work in a children's hospital with terminal patients. I've wanted to help children in this department ever since my extended stay at the hospital in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. When I have a family, I want to be a stay-at-home mom. I plan on going on all of the field trips, driving carpool, and making the best cookies, and maybe eventually work as a high-school counselor.”



Abby appreciates the education she has received. She spoke of Mr. Bradley:

“Mr. Bradley has deeply impacted the way I see the world. He has taught me that there are always two sides to one coin. From his customary, ‘Take your seats!’ to his final salutation, ‘No criminal activity!’, his classes have always held my attention. I am thankful that such a gifted and giving person has been instrumental in my growth as a writer, student, and citizen of the world.”

Abby, we are so thrilled to have had you as a student and teacher. We pray God’s blessings on you and your future endeavors!





#### McKayla Mills:

McKayla began her time at GCA in kindergarten. She plans to attend Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, to major in interactive media, which would include graphic design and creating games, apps, software, and websites. She is also secretly nervous that her mom will move down to Arkansas to be nearby.

One of the gifts GCA has given her includes learning how to disagree. McKayla recounts that her class has always been a close community of people without cliques, but there have always been different perspectives on various issues. McKayla is grateful that she has learned how to be close friends with people she does not see “eye to eye” with on particular issues. She has also enjoyed having Mr. Bradley as a teacher for both Art and History—he taught her the importance of history when she refused to see its importance before his classes.

McKayla, you are a treasure that God has created for His glory. May He bless your future plans!

#### Tara Rader

Tara came to GCA in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She would like to major in social work and minor in psychology and possibly pursue a master’s degree. In regards to her future work she said, “I plan to work in the foster care system, maybe in the U.S., maybe in a different country. I would like to get my certificate in counseling and specialize in counseling young adults. There are a variety of things I could do with a degree in social work and I think that’s why I like it so much.”

Concerning GCA, Tara wrote: “I’m grateful for teachers that pushed me to my limit and never went easy on me. Also, I’m most thankful for my class: twelve truly beautiful people I will always cherish. It’s because of them I can look back on my high school years with fondness.”



Tara, you have an incredibly tender heart and we pray that God would use you in miraculous ways!



#### Jalinn Sowersby

Jalinn joined GCA in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She has also been accepted to College of the Ozarks, where she is torn between studying theater performance or marine biology. Hopefully, she can make time to do both!

Jalinn has also been impacted greatly by the community at GCA. Some of the people who have most impacted her are Mr. Cymbaluk, Mrs. V, Mr. Bradley, and her classmates. She admits that her classmates taught her how to “interact with humanity.” She also credits Mr. Cymbaluk for teaching her how to think. She remembers that Mr. C had a remarkable ability to guide class discussion down the path he wanted it to go and that his class was a safe place to discuss any topic and to learn from the discussion.

Jalinn, God’s story for you will be exciting to watch. May He keep you and forever shine upon you.

The one story that kept reappearing in student interviews, told by Claire Burrell:

The Poison Sumac Incident: In 9<sup>th</sup> grade biology, our class had to make little booklets full of different leaf types. As we were outside foraging for leaves, Eva Young ran up to the group holding a large, majestic, compound leaf and claiming it smelled like peanut butter (her favorite). In disbelief, we all started holding the leaf to our faces and taking a whiff. It did smell like peanut butter! We finished the day by shoving the plume-like leaves down each other's backs and hitting them over each other's heads. The next day, Eva was absent. Three others seemed strangely puffy. Steroid cream was passed around the room; we had discovered poison sumac. Eva was not at school because her face was so swollen that she could not open her eyes. Rachel and Tara had rashes and swollen arms. Those of us blessed to not be allergic to poison sumac just laughed. Many of the leaf booklets had to be dismantled and the poisonous leaves removed.

Class of 2015: You all are loved, appreciated, respected, and missed. May you walk the narrow road and enjoy the life God gives you...and avoid poison sumac!

## A Note from Mr. V

This school year is Mr. V's final year as the administrator of GCA. He and Mrs. V started the school in 2001 based on a conviction from God that they simply had to try. Fourteen years later, Mr. V decided that it is time to step down. Here is his final address to the community God has created at Grace Classical Academy:

This has been a great journey and has afforded opportunities that I could not have dreamed of.

I am so thankful that all the years at GCA, except this last one, were spent with Esther and me working as a team. It was a beautiful experience.

Many of you have become so dear to me. You too have been a fellow laborer with Esther and with me in this wonderful endeavor. Thank you, thank you from the depths of my heart.

Now this chapter of my life is closing and I look with anticipation to what lies ahead.

I pray for His blessings and guidance to rest on GCA, the board, administration, teachers, staff, students, and families, and all who support the school in prayers and resources. May the living God who birthed this school continue to flow through this place with His power, His grace, His truth, His goodness, and His beauty. May that which would hinder be bound and set aside and may that which would bless and enable be brought forth.

In Christ's name I pray.

Lonnie Vandiver

**How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 36:7 ESV)**



2438 E Cherry Street  
Springfield, MO 65802

Phone: 417.877.7910

Fax: 417.866.8409

[www.graceclassical.org](http://www.graceclassical.org)

E-mail: [info@graceclassical.org](mailto:info@graceclassical.org)

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**Return Service Requested**

### ***June 2015***

- 1 Tuition Due
- 21 Father's Day

### ***July 2015***

- 1 Tuition Due
- 3 Office Closed
- 4 Independence Day
- 13 Mrs. Cymbaluk's Birthday

### ***August 2015***

- 1 Tuition Due
- 3-11 Teacher Training
- 10 Orientation,  
7 PM
- 12 First Day  
of School
- 21 Evening Prayer  
for GCA, 7 PM