

GRACE CLASSICAL ACADEMY

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Let us consider...

Congratulations to the Senior Class of 2019!

Our final newsletter of the year is a celebration of the seniors of 2019. We interviewed each one, asking for their thoughts, memories, and advice. Enjoy!

Marissa Abulon

Marissa began at GCA her junior year. She plans to study communications in college and pursue a career as an American Sign Language translator. Although she only spent two years here, she is very grateful for the school and her experiences. She says,

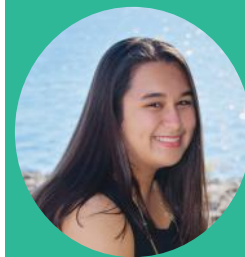


“Being with my class, being with all the other classes, and helping out with the younger grades has truly been an amazing experience! I have made so many friends and I have grown so much. This school is the biggest blessing I could have hoped for, and one I never thought I would have the joy of experiencing. Having my beliefs challenged and strengthened, growing spiritually, and having friends that help me grow into a more mature individual are all gifts GCA has given me that I could never repay.”

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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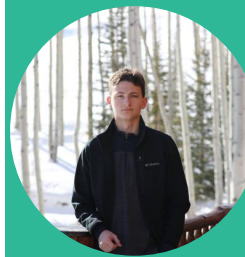
Inside Katanomen:



Marissa Abulon



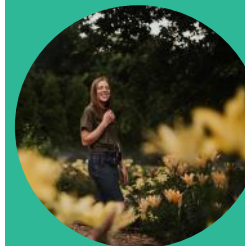
Emma Brookie



Ryland Chernesky



Mary Epler



Samantha Sellers

continued from pg. 1

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Marissa
Abulon

Her favorite experiences at GCA have been the field trips. “My favorite part of the trips were always the adventures along the way. For example, on the car ride to our outdoor education field trip our junior year, we were headed to a horseback riding farm to spend an hour or two trail riding. Everything was going fine until we came to a four-way stop. Isaac Adkison and Logan Wilson got in the left turn lane, but everyone else thought they were going an alternate route, and so turned right, which is the way the GPS instructed them to go. We drove for more than 20 minutes and ended up getting lost and turned on an out-of-the-way road—which ended up being washed out because there had been an abundance of rainfall recently. All the cars had to stop and figure out where we were actually supposed to be. While many of the students rolled up their jeans and went in the river, Mrs. Mercer called Isaac and Logan and looked up the directions again. We discovered we were not only going in the opposite direction, but we were in the middle of the woods where there were nearly no houses—only cows. So, we had to drive all the way back to the original spot on the four-way street and follow the directions that Logan and Isaac had given us. We finally made it to the horseback riding farm, however, we were over an hour late! After that, everything was smooth sailing, but it was quite an adventure!”

Finally, Marissa has advice for future students that applies to everyone. “Value your time here. Value the people. The time you spend with the people here will be some of the best years of your life! Don’t waste it. Get involved! And, show love to the other people around you! You never know what benefits you will gain from your time here!”

Marissa, you have been an energetic student to teach and a joy in the classroom. Enjoy your next steps!

Emma Brookie

Emma joined the GCA family her freshman year. She will attend Evangel University in the fall.

Some of Emma’s best stories also come from field trips. She wrote, “Some of my favorite memories from my time at GCA would probably be several of the outdoor education field trips we went on junior year. The first one was the fishing trip, where the actual fishing part was great, but the real fun started on the way back. Our class asked Mrs. Mercer if we could all ride back in the same car with Mr. Adkison. We got to stop for ice cream at Braums, and we named their car “The Party Pilot” (because it was a Honda Pilot). There were so many other little things that have made it one of the best memories. It was super fun getting to be with the whole class having fun together. Honestly, sometimes the car rides are the best part of a field trip! The other trip that sticks out to me was

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continued from pg. 2



the ski trip where we all went to Fitz's, which was super fun and delicious. Then we went to the house where we were staying and played games until after midnight with Mr. Moss and the graduating class of 2018! There are so many fun memories and stories that go along with these that I could go on all day."

Emma also has advice for the next round of GCA students. "I would say to enjoy every moment because high school goes SO FAST and before you know it, you'll be a senior and then, what feels like two weeks later, you will be graduating! Don't get overly stressed about everything going on, just relax and do what needs to be done, but don't let the stress overwhelm your life. You will look back wishing you had enjoyed time with your friends and in your classes, but you won't look back wishing you had stressed more! Keeping a positive

attitude also makes such a big difference because how you see things can greatly affect how those things go for you. Also, don't ever be afraid to stand up for what you believe in—there will always be things that you might not agree with everyone on, so don't be afraid to use your voice for good. One more thing—surround yourself with people who will encourage you, build you up, and help you to grow in your faith."

Emma, we are so glad you spent your high school years at GCA. May God bless you and keep you!

Ryland Chernesky

Ryland has been at GCA since his kindergarten year. He will be attending Missouri University of Science and Technology in the fall.

One of Ryland's best memories involves a midnight trip to Denny's on the St. Louis field trip his junior year. He says, "The guys in the high school wanted to do something after the adventures were done at the City Museum. So we started looking around at locations that were close enough and open for us to go get something to eat. The decision eventually came to go to a Denny's that was a half mile or so away from our hotel. All the high school boys walked over to the Denny's and we got some real good food. (I got myself a milkshake.) To be honest, I can't really



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Emma
Brookie

remember a thing about the conversations we had there. All I know is that I was tasked with getting some milkshakes for my fellow junior girls, but the lady working there said she was “too busy” or something similar to that. (Apparently making a milkshake is a very arduous thing to do.) So in the end I got blamed for the failure of obtaining some milkshakes.”

Ryland has a few bits of practical advice for the next wave of GCA students. He says:

Worry about four things: Science Fair, Debate, Apologetics, and the 20-page paper. Don't be too stressed about the rest of the classes or assignments. (Note: Rube Goldberg does not count as Science Fair; it's pretty chill.) (Extra Note: If whoever is reading this is still taking grammar, also worry about that final grammar test.)

For all four items mentioned: get them done as early as possible and try not to suffer too much (although some level of suffering is inevitable, so grow some thick skin).

Do Chemistry junior year and not senior year. Doing it in junior year makes the most sense in my opinion..

As far as electives, if you have the same interests as me and if they are available, I would recommend computer class with Mrs. Tolbert (while I didn't take it with her, it sounded like a lot of fun) and art class (I also didn't take this with the current teacher, but again, it looked like fun).

Ryland, your potential is abundant. May you use it for the glory of God!

Mary Epler

Mary joined GCA in the 7th grade. She plans to attend OTC in the fall and study mathematics. One of her favorite memories includes field trips, or the lack thereof. “One wonderful memory from my days at GCA was in 10th grade. All the upper grades were given a designated day for a history field trip. Our grade was the only one that had not planned a trip, so instead we had an in-school party day. It consisted of junk food, a movie, contra-dancing, and a lot of foosball. We had the entire high school side of the school to ourselves to just hang out and have fun. All in all, it was a pretty awesome school day.”

If Mary could go back in time, she has some advice for her 7th grade self. “If I could go back, I would tell myself to enjoy the time I have at GCA. Back then, I didn't fully appreciate this school and was looking forward to graduating. Now, that I am graduating, I wish I had more time here. So, although there will be weeks where you have test after test and just want to be done, know that you are extremely blessed to go to this school and be thankful. Also, try not to stress out about assignments. I used to freak out about certain things (mostly science fair) but once you calm down and focus on the task ahead it is never as bad as you originally thought it was going to be.”



“I didn't fully appreciate this school and was looking forward to graduating. Now, that I am graduating, I wish I had more time here.” Mary Epler

Mary, you have been a wonderful student. We look forward to seeing what God does with your life!

Samantha Sellers



Samantha joined GCA for her 4th grade year. She will be attending Missouri State University in the fall and plans to study Dietetics and Nutrition. She says that in 10 years she sees herself “out of college and working as a Registered Dietitian. I am not sure in what capacity, yet hopefully working with children—whether seeing patients at an office or working with young girls through eating disorders, both to provide insight on proper nutrition.”

To continue the trend, Samantha’s best memories and favorite stories also surround field trips and classmates. She recounts, “We had a class get together at my family’s old property in Rogersville. At the property, we had a John Deere Gator. We took turns driving the gator throughout the night and when it was dark, we got glow sticks. While it was my turn driving, Isaac Adkison dropped his glow stick out of the back of the gator into the field. I stopped so he could get it and before he got out of the gator, he made sure I wasn’t going to drive off. I said that I wouldn’t drive off, yet as soon as he was out of the back, I sped off, leaving him in the middle of the field. We didn’t see him for about half an hour, but he was all right. Also, any upper grade field trips when there was a long car ride (Kansas City or St. Louis) were special because they gave my classmates and I time to just talk and get to know them better. Many times the car rides were more educational than the field trip! Finally, beginning my sophomore year at GCA, the Etiquette Banquet incorporated contra-dancing (which is extremely fun). What was already an enjoyable event was made even better with being able to create new memories with all the high school students. Ever since then, Etiquette Banquet has been a highlight of the school year for me.”

Samantha is especially grateful for her teachers and her parents. She says, “I can’t pinpoint a certain person at GCA that has impacted me the most, yet a collection of people that have impacted me. Every teacher has had their words of wisdom that have blessed me and shaped me into who I am. The same is true for my family. My parents have provided so much wisdom—especially lately with making big life decisions.

Samantha, may you trust the Lord in all you do. Enjoy Missouri State!

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Samantha Sellers

Excerpts from the Senior Graduation Address

This year's graduation speech was given by Mark Sellers, a GCA dad, board member, veteran, and pharmacist. He offered advice to the graduates as they enter the next stage of life, and we would like to share some highlights from his address.



Good evening fellow board members, faculty, staff, family, friends, and most importantly graduates. I would like to thank you for attending the 2019 GCA graduation. I appreciate this opportunity to speak with you this evening...

We're here this evening to celebrate the culmination of 18 years of life experiences for Emma, Marissa, Mary, Ryland, and Samantha. I hope to get through this evening without too many tears, but for many of you this is an emotional time. It's reminiscing about standing at this crossroad of many years of outpouring of love, protection, and teaching our children in the way they should go. It's also a point in time where we look toward the future with expectation and wonder at what exactly God has in store for this fine young man and women of the graduating class of 2019. As it says in Ecclesiastes 3, there is a season for everything. So as we look to this future, I hope to pass on some thoughts about running the race before you and finishing strong.

First and foremost, commit to the Lord whatever you do. Graduating seniors, I would like for you to pay attention to this next question. With a show of hands from those in the audience and on the stage, how many of you are doing something different today than you had thought you'd be doing the moment you graduated high school? You see...you're not alone in not having it all figured out. I believe there are great pressures these days on students and young adults to figure it out at an early age what they're going to do with their life. Remember that life is a journey, and God uses all your experiences to shape who you are and develop who you are becoming. I can attest to the convoluted route life has taken to be standing here before you this evening. My plan after graduation was to join the Navy and somehow become a pilot. Instead of flying thousands of feet above the water, I ended up a thousand feet below the water on a submarine. If you would have told me I'd end up in prison with mob bosses, terrorists, and "drug wholesalers," I wouldn't have believed you... Many of you here tonight have a fascinating story of God's provision along the way. Moses led a stiff-necked people in the wilderness for decades. Peter, James, and John dropped their nets and livelihoods to follow Jesus into an uncertain future... When I first went into the Navy, my sister gave me a bible containing the New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs. In the front, she had hand-written Proverbs 3:6 which says: In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make straight your paths. When our submarine was thousands of miles from home, operating in waters we shouldn't have been in, that verse and many others were a great comfort to me...

Also, be yourself. That Instagram personality with a million followers that lives in LA and has a vacation home in Vail: that's not real life. The couple you see on HGTV where the husband raises salamanders, the wife has an Etsy shop, and their house budget is \$2.1 million for a vacation home in the Cayman Islands is not reality so don't compare your life to theirs. There are many theories and studies about the negative effects of social media and the pressures of constant comparison. The pressure to take the perfect photo, with the perfect filter, with perfect people all around you can be fierce. The world is waiting for who you were made to be. It doesn't need more people trying to be other people. It needs your unfiltered self. The real you that likes to quietly analyze problems. The one who excels at math and logic. The one who loves squirrels. The one who loves kids. The one who has a kind heart. The one that likes regular coffee without an artistic 3-dimensional

foam swan shaped from organic yak's milk. In a world of nearly 8 billion people, we are each unique individuals made in the image of God, with our own unique circumstances and design...

Next, be kind to people along the way. It's a small world. Anyone ever heard of Kevin Bacon? He is an actor who gained fame with hits such as Footloose, A Few Good Men, and Apollo 13. His agent must be a genius, because there's a game based on the six degrees of separation concept, whereby if you name a Hollywood actor there are 6 or fewer connections between that actor and Kevin Bacon. In most spheres of life, this gets even smaller than 6 degrees, and each group has smaller degrees of separation. For my current position with USAID, there is 1 degree of separation between myself and all but 1 of the other 5 members of my team. I've had phone calls to give references for job applicants that through the course of conversation discovered that we'd deployed together in the past. Your reputation will precede you, so treat people with kindness and mercy along the way, no matter what their station in life. On a practical note having worked in a prison for many years, I was always respectful and kind to inmates within the parameters of my position. In my mind, that made me least likely to be shanked should the prisoners take over. Zechariah 7:8-9 says, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another."

...Be a life-long learner. You may be thinking that I'm done with high school and that's it for me! I was right there with you many years ago. Enjoy this evening and the summer. You've earned a break. But this is just the beginning of a new chapter. You've been given a great foundation by the teachers and staff at this school who love you, and care about you, and have made sure you know whose you are. Always remember that God is the center of knowledge. There's nothing that surprises him. There's no technology or discovery that catches him off guard. The older I get, the more I realize how much I don't know and the diminishing time I have in which to learn it. CS Lewis said "One of the things that distinguishes man from the other animals is that he wants to know things, wants to find out what reality is like, simply for the sake of knowing. When that desire is completely quenched in anyone, I think he has become something less than human." He also said "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." God has a plan for each and every one of us here tonight. We have the privilege of running the race before us and finding out what that plan is, one step at a time by first committing to the Lord whatever you do, being yourself, being kind along the way, not being afraid to say I don't know, not taking life for granted, and trying new things.

And now I couldn't resist closing out the evening with a final lightning round of "Dad" thoughts:

When working on a project, buy extra parts at the store.

Always take a snack.

Be generous.

There is more than one shade of pink, so don't ad lib when at the paint store.

Be honest.

You can never use too much tape.

A little bit of glitter goes a long way.

If you want to make a lasting impression, send one of those cards that drops glitter and stars when the person opens it.

Love deeply.

Exiled Nigerian princes don't email people to give away money.

Leave some margin in your life for things that come up.

You can never have too much ice.

Technology doesn't always make your life easier.

Take chapstick.

You can never have too much firewood.

Be a friend that others can call in the middle of the night when their world is crashing in.

Start videoing if someone enthusiastically says watch this! You could win \$10,000.

GCA class of 2019, I pray for all the best for this life God has given you. It has been my honor and privilege to speak with you this evening. Thank you.



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Return Service Requested

June 2019

Summer Office Hours
Monday-Thursday:
9 am—3pm
Fridays:
Closed

July 2019

1 Tuition Due
4 Independence Day
Office closed

August 2019

1 Tuition Due
1-6 Teacher Training and
Work Days
5 Orientation: 6 pm
7 First Day of School
15 Evening Prayer for GCA
6 pm
30 Camo Day