

Colonial



COURIER

October 2022

Photo by Sara Davis

New Teacher Edition



October 10 - 14 was the SCA-sponsored Homecoming Spirit Week. Monday was Minion Day or Disney Character Day, Tuesday was Tacky Tropical Tourist Day, Wednesday was Construction Day, Thursday was Battered Opponent Day, and Friday was Colonial Pride Day. At the Homecoming pep rally, two students were awarded "Most Spirited" throughout the week; the winners were Catherine Alderson, 11, and Grey Ellenburg, 12. The Homecoming pep rally was held on Friday, Oct. 14, at the end of fourth block before the Homecoming football game where the Colonial Heights varsity football team won the game 44 - 8 against Meadowbrook.

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Mr. Nelson plans to listen during first year as principal

by Jenna Mason

After a long journey that began as a teacher in Prince George County Schools, Mr. Mike Nelson has found his way to CHHS to step up and serve as principal.

Mr. Nelson graduated from William & Mary with a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in educational leadership from VCU. After graduating from William & Mary, he began teaching at Prince George High School.

Being in the educational profession from a young age, Mr. Nelson has held many roles. Throughout his years Mr. Nelson has held the positions as history teacher, assistant principal, co-principal, principal and school quality specialist at the Virginia Department of Education.

During his time at the Department of Education, Mr. Nelson worked with struggling schools to create improvement plans that would help with their

Photo by Jenna Mason



Mr. Nelson has been in education for 26 years. He started off as a history teacher and then worked his way up to principal. One year, Mr. Nelson had even tried something new and served as a "co-principal."

performance. After some time in that position, Mr. Nelson realized that he missed his old roots and started looking for new opportunities.

"You know, I always missed being a principal, and Colonial Heights is a great

school district, and Colonial Heights High School is a really incredible school," said Mr. Nelson. "It was just a great opportunity. Mrs. Janssen had built and done so much to foster a really amazing faculty and staff and just great students."

Photo courtesy of Mike Nelson



Outside of school, Mr. Nelson enjoys spending time with his family; he has a wife and three daughters. They like to do fun family activities together. Mr. Nelson also enjoys going to the gym and just relaxing.

Coming to a new school is always a scary and challenging experience. Mr. Nelson is looking forward to learning the traditions and rituals that CHHS has made throughout history.

“Every school does things a little differently, right?” said

Mr. Nelson. “So every school has its own schedule, rules and procedures, and so I’m kind of figuring all that out; it’s getting used to things, but everyone’s been so wonderful from parents to students to the staff members, and that’s made a difference and made

the transition easy.”

When it comes to hiring new principals, it’s a long process of posting applications, and multiple applicants have multiple interviews. Sometimes, it’s hard to choose the right person, but Dr. William Sroufe, superintendent, knew who the perfect candidate would be.

“Well, you know, Mrs. Janssen’s shoes are hard to fill, and so I think that he and Mrs. Janssen will probably lead differently,” said Dr. Sroufe. “I think that he will bring sound quality experience to the high school. Running a high school is not an easy job; it’s early mornings and late evenings, so you have to have someone who I think has, you know, a very committed way about them to run a high school. So I think he brings that commitment and dedication to kids, and I think his instructional knowledge is very important.”

When it comes to the future of CHHS, Mr. Nelson has very high hopes. He’s looking forward to working with

parents, students and staff to make CHHS be the best it can possibly be.

“To be honest with you, I really enjoy working with students,” said Mr. Nelson. “My favorite part of the job is helping students to achieve, to do better and to just be there for them and for whatever they need.”

Something that Mr. Nelson finds to be very important is communication. He thinks that communication is a major aspect of building relationships with students, parents and staff.

“The more we can let people know the great things that are happening here and also looking for feedback from parents, students and faculty members, that’s really important,” said Mr. Nelson. “Especially in my first year here, I want to do a lot of listening.”

Stepping outside the realm of education, Mr. Nelson enjoys family time, gym time and relaxation time.

“In my free time I love spending time with my three daughters, Molly, Mary Kate,

and Lily Beth,” said Mr. Nelson. “Family time is very important, faith is very important to me and I love trips to the beach.”

As a principal, there are expectations and duties that have to be fulfilled while holding that position. One of those responsibilities is motivating students and staff.

“If a principal can’t inspire people, then that’s a problem,” said Mr. Nelson. “I mean the biggest thing is to validate people, right? Validate students and staff so they understand that what you’re doing and what you

have going on is great, and I value that and I need to know those things. I need to know the great things you’re doing, and I need to be able to share that.”

After working alongside someone for 12 years, and then having to get to know someone completely new and different who takes their place can be an intimidating experience. Mr. James Burnett, assistant principal, had to go through that exact experience after Mrs. Janssen left.

“He’s come in, and he has embraced the school

Photo courtesy of Mike Nelson



Mr. Nelson is a big advocate for being a listener. He believes that listening to others is a key factor in accomplishing change. Mr. Nelson would like students to know that he will always be there to listen to their thoughts, concerns or ideas if they need someone.

community, and the school community has embraced him, and we're excited to have him with us," said Mr. Burnett. "This place means a lot to me because I went here and graduated from here and worked here all my life, and I think we're going to keep striving for new heights."

The measure of success for principals can be viewed in many different ways. Not only

does Mr. Nelson look at his success as a principal through the lens of student academic achievement, but he also looks at his success through the character of his students.

"I would say getting more students to go to college or have jobs, meaningful jobs, after graduation, those are important things to me; but beyond that, even bigger than that would be the character

piece," said Mr Nelson. "You can get rid of all those academic achievements, right? You can get rid of all the employee achievements, but if I know the students here are students of character, that they care about other people, that they're compassionate, then that's success in my book."

Important Senior Information

Senior Portraits:

- Portraits are due to Mrs. Taylor Puckett by **Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022**
- Seniors who took portraits through Lifetouch do not need to submit them to Mrs. Puckett, but they need to "select" which pose they want to use.
- Seniors who had their portraits taken through an outside photographer will need to submit which picture they choose and upload it to <http://hjeshare.com/> and use the school code **chhs243**.
- If anyone has any questions, please email Mrs. Puckett or stop by room 45 to ask.

Important Forms:

- In order to graduate, seniors must turn in their Diploma Form and Transcript Release Form to the counseling office by **Friday, Nov. 4, 2022**.
- They can be found online on the counseling Canvas page.
- If anyone has any questions, feel free to stop by the counseling office.

Scholarships:

- Seniors who are interested in scholarships can fill out the Local Scholarship Application form that can be found on the counseling Canvas page.
- The sooner seniors fill it out, the better because scholarship dates vary. The deadline for the Local Scholarship Application Form is **Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022**.

Class Dues:

- Seniors who are interested in going to prom must be caught up on all of their class dues in order to attend. See Ms. Jaime Smith in room 47 or Mrs. Gretchen Galderise in room 103.

Students show leadership for Pink Out fundraiser

Photo courtesy of Lisa Boiteau



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Carmichael



Photo courtesy of Lisa Boiteau



Photo by Jenna Mason



Photo by Jenna Mason



Photo by Alyssa Reynolds



Photo courtesy of Mickey Alderson



Photo courtesy of Lisa Boiteau



Photo courtesy of Cassie Damon



Photo courtesy of Kaylie Melanson



CHHS held its annual Pink Out Day for Breast Cancer Awareness month on Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022. Two seniors, Olivia Harrison and Ellie Tuck, took the lead on a fundraiser idea for the National Honors Society. The two girls came up with the idea to raise money for a charity organization called Little Pink Houses of Hope. This organization sends families who are struggling with breast cancer on vacation with other families in the same situation. The families get to escape from their rigorous routines of medications and doctors' appointments. Harrison, Tuck and many other students helped raise over \$1,000 for the NHS to donate to the foundation. On the last day of the fundraiser, the school wide Pink Out Day was celebrated by many students and teachers. Ms. Crowder, NHS sponsor, was pleased with the participation and proud of Harrison and Tuck for leading this service project. Harrison and Tuck were featured on the local CBS station WTVR during its evening newscast on Thursday, Oct. 20.

Ms. Berry brings joy to students through cosmetology

by Whitnie Hoyle

The start of a new school year brings new students, new teachers, and, most importantly, new opportunities. Ms. Omega Berry, cosmetology teacher, not only falls under the new teacher category, but also brings new opportunities for students with her addition to CHHS.

The Tech Center offers many courses for students to partake in, such as nursing, culinary arts and early childhood education. One new course is cosmetology. The addition of this course now allows students to not only expand their knowledge

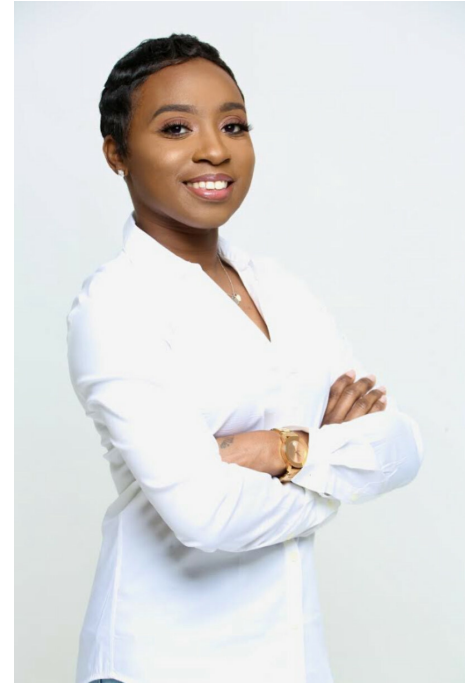
in cosmetology, but also pursue their dreams of having a career in that field. Ms. Berry's addition will allow students to express their creativity through cosmetology.

Ms. Berry has been around the salon her entire life as her mom has been in the cosmetology field for over 30 years.

"My mom worked with 10 other stylists, and I used to sit and watch them and ask questions," said Ms. Berry. "I would go try everything on my mannequins until I got it to look like theirs."

Even though Ms. Berry spent a lot of time in the

Photo courtesy of Omega Berry



Ms. Berry grew up in a salon environment, which helped shape her interest in the cosmetology field.

salon with her mom, she never took the profession seriously until high school when she decided to take cosmetology her junior and senior year at Chesterfield Technical Center to receive her license. After high school, she went to college at John Tyler and received her business management associate's degree. During college she did hair on the side; however, in her last year of college, she decided to quit her other jobs to try to do hair full time.

"Everyone used to tell me 'you will be just like your

Photo courtesy of Omega Berry



With the added cosmetology class at the Tech Center, a wider variety of students may be inclined to take a career and technology class.

Photo courtesy of Omega Berry



Ms. Berry is most excited to build relationships and bonds with her students through their shared interests in cosmetology. She also hopes to show her students new and diverse career paths that involve cosmetology.

mom or even better one day,” said Ms. Berry. “I never took anything they were saying seriously until years later.”

A few years after she started doing hair full time, she started thinking about teaching cosmetology.

“I thought about it in December 2020; I placed it on

my vision board for 2021 to look into different places to shadow another teacher to see if I had what it took to teach,” said Ms. Berry. “In 2021 I received my first teaching job.”

With Ms. Berry’s new position at CHHS, she is most excited to build a bond with her students and fellow

teachers during this school year.

“My favorite part is seeing the students master something they had no clue how to do when they first started,” said Ms. Berry.

While Ms. Berry is excited to build relationships with her students and to watch them grow, she also has some personal goals that she wants to accomplish. Her main goals are to bring awareness to cosmetology career paths and for all of her students to graduate to become successful cosmetologists.

“Seeing the girls leave will be the hardest part for me because I get attached easily, but no matter where they go in life, I let all my students know I’m a call away,” said Ms. Berry.

What is cosmetology?

According to dictionary.com, cosmetology is the art or profession of applying cosmetics. In CHHS's CTE class, students take it a little bit further by adding hair into the mix.



Ms. Boiteau inspires students in Childhood Education

by Alyssa Reynolds

At CHHS, there have been many new teachers for the 2022-2023 school year. Among them is Ms. Lisa Boiteau, the new Early Childhood Education teacher.

Prior to teaching, Ms. Boiteau went to VCU.

“She has a master's degree in childhood education, and she understands childcare needs from previous employment,” said Coach John Thomas, Jr., assistant principal and CTE director.

For the previous 13 years,

Photo courtesy of Lisa Boiteau



Ms. Boiteau has always had a love for children and education, which inspired her to become a teacher. She enjoys being able to interact with all students and loves seeing them learn and grow.

Ms. Boiteau taught at J.E.J. Moore Middle School in Prince George County. This year at CHHS has been a transition for Ms. Boiteau, especially after having taught the last 13 years elsewhere.

“The transition is good, but change is always difficult when you’ve been doing something for so long,” said Ms. Boiteau. “That’s something I’m getting used to.”

What inspired her most to become a teacher was her love for children and her

Photo by Alyssa Reynolds



Ms. Boiteau has been teaching for the past 13 years. She taught previously in Prince George County.

priority of education, for the kids and others, as well.

Her favorite part about being a teacher is being able to interact with all the students, no matter their age. She loves being able to watch them learn and grow.

“She is very kind and enthusiastic, and you can really see how much she loves children by teaching us all of the safety guidelines and rules when teaching young children,” said Helen Duke 12, Early Childhood Education student. “She tries to make class fun by doing team-bonding activities and dances that we are going to

Photo courtesy of Lisa Boiteau



Outside of school, Ms. Boiteau spends most of her time with her family and two dogs. She also enjoys reading and crafting.

do when the toddlers come in October.”

Outside of school Ms. Boiteau enjoys spending time with her family and her two dogs. When not doing either of those activities, she likes to take time to read and craft. She incorporates her love of crafting into classroom activities.

“My favorite part about her class is all the arts and crafts we do to put ourselves into the toddler's minds,” said Duke. “It feels like I'm back in elementary school sometimes.”

Ms. Boiteau hopes that all her expectations of the class are met, and she looks forward to seeing the high school students be able to work with the preschoolers in the program.

Ms. Boiteau and her students have constantly been preparing for the preschoolers and their arrival.

“Having Ms. B. as a teacher can be really fun but also very busy,” said Hannah Mitchell, 11, Early Childhood Education student.

On top of the Early Childhood Education

program, Ms. Boiteau is also the sponsor for FCCLA. She takes the time to organize the club and plan out the clubs service projects that they will be doing in the upcoming year.

Ms. Boiteau wants her students and other students in the school to be able to look for the good in things and also be able to strive for the best.

“I'm super excited to be part of Colonial Heights High School, and I'm looking forward to all the years to come,” said Ms. Boiteau.

Photo courtesy of sportslogo.net



Ms. Boiteau attended VCU, where she got her master's degree in childhood education.

Mr. Bryce brings real-world theater experience into the classroom

by Hendrix Harris

Mr. Andrew Bryce, drama teacher, is setting the stage and making his mark on the CHHS drama scene.

“What sets it apart from other arts is that drama is the study of your own individual person.” said Mr. Bryce. “You grow your communication skills, expand your imagination, and learn more about yourself. By studying drama you grow as an individual and grow your understanding of yourself.”

Mr. Bryce became heavily involved in theater during his last few years of high school. He then went to Binghamton University, where he received a bachelor's degree in theater. He found a passion for theater in Binghamton, and then moved to NYC after graduating from school and gaining his professional Actors Equity Association union membership.

He worked as an actor and teacher in New York for four years before he enrolled in VCU's MFA Theatre Pedagogy

program in 2018 and has been teaching theater ever since.

Mr. Bryce has joined the CHHS staff as the new drama teacher and club director. His arrival is widely welcomed as many students greet him with positive feedback.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Bryce



During his first years teaching, Mr. Bryce was also an actor. He was teaching and acting in New York for four years prior to being enrolled in VCU's MFA Theatre Pedagogy program.

“Mr. Bryce is very talented and has had a lot of experience in the field of acting, theatrically and through the film industry.” said Ryan Ramirez 12. “A part of me would like to say he is

overqualified for the job. It's obviously most helpful to have someone who teaches you to have expertise in the field, and Mr. Bryce definitely has the tools to help students take on the outside world of theater.”

Drama students and club members are highly anticipating what Mr. Bryce will bring to the table this year, from the fall one-act play “Animal Farm” to the spring musical “The Wizard of Oz.”

Mr. Bryce urges students who struggle with coming out of their shell and expressing themselves to take a drama class or participate in Drama Club.

“The key to make a drama class work is coming to it with an open mindset, realizing that they are places of nonjudgement,” said Mr. Bryce.

Mrs. Crow returns home to teach English 9

by Heather Claytor

Back from where it all started, Mrs. Casey Crow, English 9 teacher, grew up in and graduated from Colonial Heights. Growing up she realized that Colonial Heights would always be a home to her.

“High school is still high school, and there were challenges, but growing up here still provided me with a much more vibrant high school experience than I think I would have gotten in other schools,” said Mrs. Crow.

Even though high school was difficult at times, her teachers were the main reason for her amazing experience.

“It is really cool watching former players and students come back to teach at CHHS,” said Mr. Dan Pulskamp, SPED teacher and former field hockey coach. “It helps build tradition and a sense of community.”

Throughout her school years, she had always been set on the idea of teaching.

She grew up in a family of teachers, and since all they really talked about was teaching, she followed that career.

Photo courtesy of Casey Crow



Mrs. Crow has lived in Colonial Heights since she was five years old. Coming back to teach at CHHS has made her feel at home again.

Mrs. Crow attended Longwood University and majored in history. Taking an AP history class back in high school made her fall in love with the subject. It wasn't until this year she decided to make the switch to English.

“My school really prepared me for teaching,” said Mrs. Crow. “I had to do multiple internships and was constantly getting field experience and valuable feedback from my

professors.”

Ever since Mrs. Crow was a little girl, she always loved the idea of teaching. “School” was her favorite game to play. Making all the teacher lessons, pretending there were students in the room and making seating charts entertained her more than anything else.

“I love kids,” said Mrs. Crow. “In any room, that’s often who I am drawn to. Being around children and watching them grow brings me so much joy and purpose.”

Teaching isn't the only thing that caught Mrs. Crow's attention. She grew up during the “YouTube Age” and spent way too many hours watching other people's vlogs.

“I love all very stereotypical girly things, like clothes, makeup and shopping,” said Mrs. Crow.

Being a new teacher involves learning different styles of teaching for the different ways people learn. Students have found that Mrs. Crow has been very



Mrs. Crow dedicated all of her four years of high school playing field hockey. According to Mr. Pulskamp, her coach, she would always listen to her coaches and do her best at all times to improve.

diverse in her teaching style.

“She does so many activities like white boards,” said Noor Metwaly, 9, a student of Mrs. Crow’s. “She puts us in groups and lets us do Bloocket.”

Outside of school, Mrs. Crow likes to hang out with her family and friends. Going to Richmond and trying cool restaurants along with new spots is normally what she and her friends do.

“I also like to read, do things

outside and I do spend a lot of my time on social media,” said Mrs. Crow.

Having friends like Ms. Grace Hogan, another fellow new English 9 teacher, makes teaching for Mrs. Crow even better.

“Any time I get frazzled, which can be often at times, she is there to reassure me that everything will be okay and goes on to give me many reasons to ‘look on the bright

side’ of things,” said Ms. Hogan.

From growing up in a family filled with teachers, to teaching at another school, and then transferring to Colonial Heights, Mrs. Crow finally feels like she is back at home.

Mr. Davis teaches students about the ways of life in biology

by Gavin Jarvis

Biology is the study of living things and their vital processes. Now, as boring as that may sound to some, Mr. Nicholas Davis, biology teacher, uses humor and his interest in biology to create a fun learning environment for his students.

Mr. Nicholas Davis was born in Loudoun County, Va. He moved to Colonial Heights from Roanoke to continue his career as a biology teacher.

Mr. Davis attended the Brigham Young University and Iowa State University. Mr. Davis majored in biology at BYU, as well as Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Iowa State.

"I had originally planned on becoming a professional scientist," said Mr. Davis. "My first job out of college was working as a vaccine scientist for a pharmaceutical company."

Instead of becoming a professional scientist like he planned, Mr. Davis transitioned to teaching. The

Photo courtesy of Sara Davis



While Mr. Davis is downstairs teaching biology, Mrs. Davis is upstairs teaching English 10. Together they conquer their days and go home with one another to relax and take a break from school.

rewarding experience that teachers share with their students attracted him to teaching. He chose Colonial Heights to teach in because of the very high quality of life that it offers for him and his family.

"CHHS, in my experience thus far, is a wonderful combination of a productive and safe learning environment with great cultural and philosophical

diversity," said Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis values his students and has high respect for them. He keeps close to a coach mindset with the idea of his students and him acting like a team. If they lose, he loses; if they win, he wins.

"Mr. Davis is a great teacher because you can tell he truly cares about his students and their future," said Cadence Martin, 10. "He also makes

Photo courtesy of Sara Davis



Something that students believe Mr. Davis is good at is asking questions in different ways. He has adopted many diverse skills to explain topics in the various ways that students learn.

everyone in the classroom feel accepted and included.”

As a current student of Mr. Davis’s, Martin enjoys how Mr. Davis can turn a boring topic into something fun and interesting using his sense of humor to keep his students entertained. Though Martin likes his sense of humor, Mohammed Boutahar, 10, recognizes another aspect of Mr. Davis’s.

“Mr. Davis is a good teacher because he helps me with the questions I don’t understand, and then he tells me the answer but with explanation and the reason why that’s the

answer,” said Boutahar.

Mrs. Sara Davis, English 10 teacher, is Mr. Davis’s wife. She met Mr. Davis through a mutual friend when she was 18 years old. She cherishes how Mr. Davis is an extrovert and likes meeting new people.

“Mr. Davis is a kind person who is very devoted to his students’ success,” said Mrs. Davis. “He enjoys being able to teach and see his students understand something new. He’s very interested in who students are as people, which helps him to understand them as learners.”

Mr. Davis is interested in biology because it is the origin of life. He wants to interest his students in biology because it explains what and why they are. As Mr. Davis settles into teaching for his first year at Colonial Heights, he recognizes the challenge that this teaching offers.

“Teaching high school is the most difficult thing I have ever done,” said Mr. Davis. “The most difficult exams in graduate school pale in comparison to the challenge of meeting the learning needs of my students. Despite the challenges, I believe that education is at the heart of humanity and a worthwhile endeavor for all, educators and students alike.”

Mrs. Davis brings fun, creativity into English 10

by Alyssa Reynolds

“Being able to effect change and to see students learn something new and do something new and different” is Mrs. Sara Davis’s, English 10 teacher, favorite aspect of teaching.

With things around CHPS finally being able to go back to normal, plenty of new teachers have been introduced to this environment, including one of the new English teachers, Mrs. Davis.

Although it is Mrs. Davis’s first year at Colonial Heights, it is not her first year teaching. She previously taught at Patrick Henry High School, Lucy Addison Middle School, North Polk High School and Gilbert High School.

“A teacher never tells her teaching age,” said Mrs. Davis about the number of years that she has been teaching.

Outside of school Mrs. Davis enjoys activities like painting, and she also enjoys photography. Another hobby

she mentioned doing whenever she gets the chance is sleeping.

“Mrs. Davis is a thoughtful and passionate educator! As grade level partners, she’s been always ready (several weeks in advance!) to communicate, share, and put a fun twist on things,” said Ms. Elizabeth Gates, English 10 teacher.

For her schooling, she went to Iowa State and later student taught there as well. She went on to teach in Iowa prior to coming to Virginia to

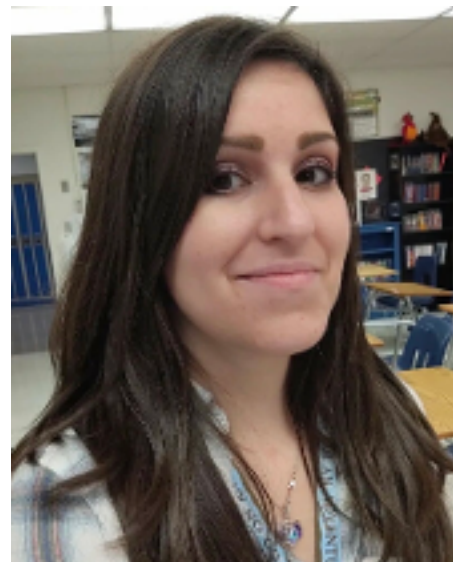
Photo courtesy of Sara Davis



Mrs. Davis originally wanted to be a teacher when she was younger, but she changed her mind and went to college for singing.

teach. Although she is a teacher now, she was not

Photo courtesy of Sara Davis



Mrs. Davis originally went to college for a singing degree. She changed her path to teaching because of the teachers she had; she was inspired to be like them.

always on the path to becoming a teacher.

When she was younger, she wanted to be a teacher, but she then went to college for singing.

“I had some really cool teachers that did a lot of fun, hands-on, creative type activities so I wanted to be just like them,” said Mrs. Davis.

After realizing that singing wasn’t a great career choice for her, she got a degree in medical assisting and later went on to do nursing for a few years.

“I got married and had kids,

Photo courtesy of Sara Davis



Mrs. Davis is a firm believer in what students do in high school sets them up for what they do in their futures. She wants students to take their education seriously because it will impact their future successes.

and then I went back to school and was like 'well, I can be a teacher now,'" said Mrs. Davis.

Photo by Sara Davis



When Mrs. Davis is not teaching, she enjoys doing various activities like photography and painting. She also draws different cartoons in her classroom every week.

A piece of advice she would give her students and other students around the school would be "take your education seriously because high school and what you do in high school sets you up for the rest of your life. So your successes here are going to open doors for you that you wouldn't otherwise have opened."

"She's cool, and we do activities in that class so it's fun and she helps us improve our vocabulary," said Dre-Asia Mattox, 10.

So far, her first year teaching at CHHS has been going well, and her students

have good behavior along with getting their work turned in. She believes that the students here are "productive" and that everyone is part of a "close-knit family."

"I hope it's going to go well, and I hope that my students are going to be very successful and that they'll come away from my class being able to think about everything that they interact with and ask questions and that they will be willing to find answers," said Mrs. Davis.

"I look forward to everything I can learn from her! I'm hoping some of her expertise and preparedness rub off on me," said Ms. Gates.

Photo courtesy of Bleacherreport.com



Mrs. Davis graduated from Iowa State. She student taught in Iowa before she moved to Virginia.

Ms. Gates returns to teach a new generation of Colonials

by Jenna Mason

Ms. Elizabeth Gates, English 10 teacher, has taken on a whole new journey from teaching middle school history to high school English. She's ventured to Colonial Heights for a brand new and totally different experience.

Ms. Gates has been teaching for three years; she graduated from James Madison University with a Bachelor's of History and a Master's of Arts and Teaching.

Ms. Gates' first year teaching was the year of COVID-19 and quarantine. Being a new teacher without being able to see students in person was a challenging experience. Ms. Gates was completely new to teaching, and she had to learn how to work in an offset environment.

"[My first year of teaching] was weird, and it was pretty sad," said Ms. Gates. "I didn't see any students until I started teaching in August of 2020, and I didn't meet any students until the end of

March. When relationships are my favorite part of it, it's tough to form those relationships through a screen."

Before Ms. Gates made her way to Colonial Heights, she taught eighth grade history in Chesterfield County at Falling

Photo by Jenna Mason



Ms. Gates's first year of teaching was completely virtual, but she was thankful in the end because it taught her different ways to teach under challenging circumstances.

Creek Middle School.

The transition from middle school history to high school English can be interesting. Ms. Gates not only has to teach a new curriculum, but also has to teach a new age group of students.

"I am a nerd who loves school, and I love reading and

writing, which are both history and English skills, so it's been fun to focus more on the feelings and emotions of a story rather than the facts," said Ms. Gates.

This year is not Ms. Gates's first time in Colonial Heights. She was a student at CHHS from 2011 to 2015. Ms. Gates has ventured back to her hometown to be a key factor of the future generations of Colonials.

"It's pretty weird, but good, good weird," said Ms. Gates. "It's so great to have people who taught me now as my colleagues and mentors. It gives me a really cool connection to the community and to the school itself, and it's cool to feel that I'm part of, like, shaping a new generation of Colonials."

Now that Ms. Gates is working alongside her former teachers, Ms. Tabitha Strickler, English 12 teacher, has become one of her new co-workers.

"I love working alongside students that I have taught,"

said Ms. Strickler. "It's not the first time I've had a former English student teaching here, but it's so much fun to see my former students connecting with their own students and exhibiting enthusiasm and passion."

Ms. Gates didn't always want to be a teacher. Her original plan was to work for the state department and work in politics.

"Everyone told me I was going to be a teacher, and I said 'nu uh, I don't want to be a teacher: that's boring,'" said Ms. Gates. "It turns out that I like talking about stuff more than I actually like doing it; I like to live in the theory."

For her undergrad, Ms. Gates originally went to George Mason University and majored in politics. She soon came to the realization that there was something missing and that there should be a deeper meaning relationship with the information she was learning.

"I realized really quickly that I loved the classes, I loved talking about theories of democracy and any of my

in-person stuff just didn't feel right; it felt like I was ignoring a big part of myself," said Ms. Gates.

Even though Ms. Gates has only been teaching for three years, she has already realized why she loves teaching.

"I love the relationships with my students," said Ms. Gates. "I think that at the end of the day, that's what's most important. There's always time to learn in your life, especially if you're a lifelong learner, but what's not always going to be around is the relationships."

Stepping outside the realm of education, Ms. Gates enjoys reading, watching and talking about television, and doing outside activities like walking, hiking and kayaking.

Being a teacher can be stressful sometimes. Teachers always have their own way of leaving the work behind and enjoying their relaxation.

"I like to just veg," said Ms. Gates. "I like to just take a moment and just let myself not have any thoughts. I like

making sure that I have that time where you get to turn your brain off a little bit."

In the end, Ms. Gates is happy to be back at her former high school to help shape the next generation of Colonials. As welcoming as the community at CHHS is, the students and staff have been doing as much as they can to make her feel welcomed as not only a former student, but also an inspiring teacher.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Gates



Outside of school, one of Ms. Gates's favorite activities is hiking. One of her favorite hiking trips was in Canyonlands, Colorado.

Mrs. George returns to the students and staff of CHHS

by Riley Bridgman

After working in the central office at CHPS, Mrs. Christy George, SPED teacher, has returned to work the classroom.

Mrs. George has worked in Colonial Heights Public Schools for the past 15 years. She decided to come back to CHHS because of the staff and students.

“CHHS is a great place to work with great staff members and students,” said Mrs. George.

Along with being a SPED teacher, Mrs. George collaborates with Mrs. Lori McDonald, science teacher and science department curriculum lead.

“Mrs. George is a tremendous asset in our classroom in helping the students with the material, keeping them on task and answering questions that some students may not want to ask in front of the entire class,” said Mrs. McDonald. “The students in our classroom are fortunate to

have her developing a caring relationship with them.”

Mrs. McDonald states that she is lucky to have Mrs. George in the classroom due to her experience in helping

Mrs. McDonald.

Mrs. George graduated high school from Tidewater Academy in Wakefield, Va., and attended East Carolina University, where she

Photo courtesy of Christy George



Mrs. George has been working in Colonial Heights Public Schools for 15 years. She appreciates the community and well-rounded students and staff.

students with unique needs.

“She is able to connect with our students throughout the period and give them a reassuring nudge during the class to help them be successful in the course,” said

achieved a degree in health sciences. After ECU, she attended Old Dominion University and got her master's in Special Education.

Mrs. George states that she knew she wanted to be a

SPED teacher her first year out of college when she served as a substitute

Photo courtesy of Christy George



Mrs. George enjoys participating in outdoor, like running.

teacher.

"I like working closely with students and helping them learn to become a self-advocate," said Mrs. George.

While she spends most of her time at school, Mrs. George enjoys many activities outside of school.

"I enjoy spending time with my family, watching my kids play sports, running and baking," said Mrs. George.

Mrs. George has been married to her husband, Mr. Burke George, for 15 years,

and has two children, a 12-year-old named Grant George and a 10-year-old daughter named Audrey George.

Mr. Dan Pulskamp, Algebra and English 10 teacher, stated that Mrs. George has a lot of experience.

"Mrs. George brings a lot of experience," said Mr. Pulskamp. "Her experience and knowledge will enable her to be an effective advocate for her students and a great classroom teacher."

Mr. Greenwood tackles the history curriculum

by Eliza Chiodo

"I like making a difference, and I like feeling when I come into work what I'm doing matters," said Mr. Brandon Greenwood, World History 1 teacher.

Mr. Greenwood has been teaching for 13 years. His first job was working at a group home for six years.

"I taught all subjects," said Mr. Greenwood. "It was an

Photo by Jenna Mason



Mr. Greenwood has been in the education industry for 13 years. He has taught at schools and at an assessment and diagnosis center.

assessment and diagnosis center. We got kids that the state had pulled in or were going out of juvenile detention."

He also worked at a behavior-based charter house for about three years and Lakeview Elementary School as the emotional disabled specialist.

Mr. Greenwood's interest for sports and activities came from his dad at a young age.

“When I was younger, my dad was the activities coordinator, so I did literally every sport,” said Mr. Greenwood. “Every sport he ran, I did. I was even really into chess for a while.”

loves kids, he’s a hard worker and he will do anything someone asks of him.

“He will get on you, but is also very loving and caring and is going to help you when you need it,” said Mr. Dixon.

Greenwood.

Outside of school Mr. Greenwood enjoys hanging out with his family.

He enjoys going to bounce houses and anywhere he can run around and have a good time with his two-year-old son.

“I spend so much time doing football stuff really at this point that anytime I get to spend with my son, or my wife and family, I really try to do that,” said Mr. Greenwood.

Mr. Greenwood treasures anytime he gets to spend with his family doing activities they love.

“I’m happy to be here teaching and coaching,” said Mr. Greenwood. “The day goes by fast, and there’s never a dull moment.”

Photo courtesy of Brandon Greenwood



Mr. Greenwood has always been a fan of football. One of the many activities he’s enjoyed since he became a teacher is coaching football teams. Mr. Greenwood loves the connection he has with his players and the bonds that are formed out on the field.

During high school Mr. Greenwood participated in football, baseball and track. He has always been told that being a football coach is something he should do, and he loves football so much it just seemed like “a natural fit.”

Mr. Amaris Dixon, assistant football coach, enjoys coaching with Mr. Greenwood because he is energetic, he

Mr. Greenwood spent a lot of time at the collegiate level. He played football at Bridgewater College for two years.

“When I left there, I went to community college for a year and got my associate’s degree,” said Mr. Greenwood. “I then transferred to James Madison University to get my undergraduate degree and master’s,” said Mr.

Photo courtesy of facebook.com



Mr. Greenwood played football all throughout high school, and he also played some while attending Bridgewater College.

Native New Yorker Ms. Hogan moves to Va. to teach

by Heather Claytor

Originally coming from upstate New York, Ms. Grace Hogan, English 9 teacher, moved all the way down to Richmond, Va., to reunite with family and start her new career.

"I currently live in Richmond," said Ms. Hogan. "I moved here because my mother along with other family members are from Richmond, and for some reason I've always been drawn to the area."

Meeting people throughout high school and college have really molded Ms. Hogan into the person she is today, but one of the biggest influencers in her life is her mother.

"She works with older adults who are autistic and have physical disabilities, and she teaches them life skills; she's a life coach," said Ms. Hogan. "She gets up everyday and is constantly on the go helping others, doing everything and anything to help other people, so she's very much

Photo courtesy of Grace Hogan



Ms. Hogan loves to spend her time with her dog Fiona, commonly known as "Fifi." She likes dressing her up in crazy outfits and cuddling with her all the time.

selfless, so I kind of hoped to model who I am like my mother."

During Ms. Hogan's high school years, she was very shy, but she would always find a special way of connecting with her teachers. They were her role models and inspired her to become a teacher.

"Like I said, I am a bit nerdy," said Ms. Hogan. "I love

reading and writing, so I thought I'm going to become an English teacher, and here I am."

Graduating from SUNY, State University of New York, Ms. Hogan was in college for a total amount of four and a half years. Getting her bachelor's degree and her master's degree, along with participating in many clubs and being a part of a sorority, made her college experience

great.

"People say college is the time of your life, and it really was," said Ms. Hogan. "I had a really great experience in college."

Coming from a small town, where everyone knew everything about each other, Ms. Hogan was a very timid girl. Going into college her mind was set on branching out and learning about all the different cultures she had seen and all the different events she could participate in.

"My high school wasn't very diverse, didn't have many cultural or racial backgrounds, and then I went to college, and I was like, 'oh my gosh, there are different people, and they think differently,'" said Ms. Hogan. "I was like, 'I'm not going to be that shy girl anymore, and I'm going to share my opinion and share my thoughts with whoever is going to listen to me.'"

Starting her career at Prince George County teaching seventh graders, she realized that the age group in middle

school was very different. After hearing about a job opening at Colonial Heights High School from Mrs. Casey Crow, English teacher, Ms. Hogan decided to apply.

Photo courtesy of Grace Hogan



Mrs. Crow and Ms. Hogan both started their first years of teaching in Prince George County at a middle school before switching to Colonial Heights to become high school English teachers.

"I've only heard great things about the community, and I definitely see that working with the students and going to events," said Ms. Hogan.

Learning to teach many different learning styles can be intimidating, but Ms. Hogan has not backed down from creating an interesting and engaging learning environment.

"She gives us time to finish our work, she makes games

to help us learn, she gives help when you need it, and she makes all activities or class work fun in her own ways," said Rhilee Shook, 9, a student of Ms. Hogan's. When it comes to spending her time outside of work, Ms. Hogan loves to play with her dog, go to sporting events, and read.

"I have a dog whose name is Fiona, but I love spending time with her and dressing her up in crazy outfits," said Ms. Hogan. "I love sports. I go to almost every single home VCU Rams basketball game."

Becoming a teacher has given Ms. Hogan the best opportunities to learn many different skills. Being able to share her knowledge with other people gives her the inspiration to continue teaching.

"I love learning, sharing my knowledge, and sharing English with my students," said Ms. Hogan. "There are a lot of reasons why I wanted to be a teacher, but the main one is probably just to get to interact with younger minds."

Ms. Kushner starts her first-ever year teaching at CHHS

by Gavin Jarvis

While students poured into the building on their first day, Ms. Ashley Kushner, math teacher, was settling in for her first-ever year of teaching. With the help of her co-teacher Mrs. Elizabeth McBryde, Ms. Kushner was able to begin a busy new year, excited to teach students.

Photo courtesy of Ashley Kushner



Outside of school, Ms. Kushner likes to participate in outdoor activities, such as hiking, skiing, going to the beach and playing disc golf.

Ms. Kushner was born in Pittsburgh, Pa. She is very involved with outdoor activities and enjoys hiking, skiing, laying by the beach and playing disc golf. Ms.

Kushner moved from Pittsburgh to Colonial Heights to become a teacher.

"I grew up coming to Colonial Heights to visit my cousins over the summer, so I knew I enjoyed the area," said Ms. Kushner.

Before coming to Colonial Heights, Ms. Kushner graduated from The University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor's in chemical engineering. Eventually she went back to school to get her master's in education because she loved tutoring and helping people more than she loved engineering.

"I have been cheering for Pitt since I was a baby," said Ms. Kushner. "It has always been my favorite school!"

Ms. Kushner is teaching Algebra 1, Part 1. She became a math teacher because she loves solving problems and puzzles. She wants to show students that they are "math people" and that they need to believe in themselves.

"I believe positive reinforcement is the biggest

Photo courtesy of Ashley Kushner



Ms. Kushner is originally from Pittsburgh, Pa. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor's in chemical engineering.

thing," said Ms. Kushner. "If students know that their teachers believe in them, they start to believe in themselves."

Emma Horan-Knode, 9, is a student in Ms. Kushner's class. When she first met Ms. Kushner, Horan-Knode saw her as a kind teacher and now thinks that she will be a great guide throughout ninth grade.

"She makes sure you understand the math problem or whatever she is teaching," said Horan-Knode. "She is also very understanding."

On the first day of school

and her first day of teaching, Ms. Kushner was very nervous; however, once her students started entering the classroom, and with the company of Mrs. McBryde as her co-teacher, she felt much better.

“Ms. Kushner is calm and easy-going,” said Mrs. McBryde. “She works hard to make the Algebra I material relatable to all of her students.”

Mrs. McBryde just met Ms. Kushner this year, but she has known many of her cousins for years. She sees Ms. Kushner as a smart and kind individual with a good sense of humor.

“I’ve really enjoyed working with Ms. Kushner, and I am looking forward to working together this year,” said McBryde.

Ms. Kushner’s favorite part of teaching is seeing all the “light bulbs” that go off in students’ heads as they figure out different topics. As she delves deeper into the year, Ms. Kushner hopes to be able to experience those “light bulbs” continuously as she

Photo courtesy of Ashley Kushner



Of the many activities that Ms. Kushner does for fun outside of school, hiking is one of her favorites. For one hiking trip, she traveled to Herod, Ill., and hiked at the Garden of the Gods.

teaches each required unit.

“Teaching so far is exactly as I expected it to be,” said Ms. Kushner. “I’m sure as I make it further into the school year, I will come across different things I have not experienced that will be new and unexpected, but I am ready

for whatever is thrown my way.”

Mrs. Oates takes the lead on marketing curriculum

by Eliza Chiodo

“People comment negatively about this generation; from my experience, this generation has energy and insight into what truly matters in life and will do great things in this world,” said Mrs. Susannah Pulling-Oates, marketing teacher and DECA director.

Mrs. Oates graduated from Thomas Dale High School and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University with an MBA Degree.

“I admire how she is always willing to help anybody whenever it is needed,” said Jackson Oates, 12, son of Mrs. Oates. “I have always noticed how she helps me and all my siblings when it comes to anything, but she also treats every single one of her students as another one of her children. She is always there to help anybody with any assignment no matter the subject or class that it is for.”

Her fellow teachers have also noticed that Oates really

Photo by Eliza Chiodo



Take a trip back in time, when Mrs. Oates was in high school, she was a cheerleader and she was on the dance team. Mrs. Oates has always loved participating in school and extracurricular activities.

cares for and about her students.

“Just within the time she has been here, Mrs. Oates has contributed her experience and knowledge as a marketing teacher,” said Mrs. Angie Anderson, business

teacher. “She is now sponsor of DECA and has already been moving forward with their events and competitions for this year. The business teachers work closely with marketing, and she has been a wonderful asset to our CTE

Photo courtesy of Susannah Oates



Outside of school, Mrs. Oates enjoys relaxing outdoors and spending time with her family. Her favorite activities outside are anything that has to do with water. Mrs. Oates loves to paddle board, kayak and go to the beach.

department.”

Mrs. Oates believes that there is something so real, honest and encouraging about teaching teenagers.

“I enjoy going into her class every day because she makes learning exciting,” said Will Cimburke, 12.

Becoming a marketing teacher fit Mrs. Oates’s degree so she knew it was a perfect fit. She loves kids and knew this could be her way to give back.

Mrs. Oates enjoys any time she can spend with her family because “they are the reason” she “is alive.”

“The biggest thing that I enjoy doing with my mom is just hanging around the house even though most of the time it turns into yard work or running errands for her,” said Jackson Oates. “We could sit outside for hours and just talk and play with our dogs.”

Students describe Mrs. Oates as available, caring and always willing to give a helping hand.

“She is available at all times for anyone and anybody that may need her,” said Jackson Oates. “From her students to other teachers, she also does everything in her power to solve any conflicts that anybody could be having.”

Photo courtesy of en.wikipedia.org



Mrs. Oates attended Virginia Tech and graduated with a Master’s of Business Administration.