Ashleigh Taylor
Lindbergh Fulfills Student’s Quest for Discovery
by Peggy Wagner

Ashleigh Taylor loves learning, creating and exploring. Her interests and talents are wide and varied and she is passionate about each and every one of them. She’s a gal on the go—curious, energetic, organized.

The Lindbergh school district, with its abundance of classes, activities and caring, insightful faculty, satisfied Ashleigh’s insatiable desire to expand her world and fulfill her sense of wonder. Feeling academically prepared and broadminded, the 2014 grad is confident and enthused about moving on to Southeast Missouri State University in the fall.

The numerous recognitions Ashleigh earned at Lindbergh are proof of her high achieving ways. As a culinary student, her days over the past two years were split between academic classes at Lindbergh and culinary classes held at South Tech High School. She won numerous local culinary competitions including first place in the district. She also received the Superintendent’s award for her scholarliness and community service, plus excelled in various quiz bowls testing professional development skills. She graduated in the top 30 percent of her senior class.

There is no disguising her self satisfaction when Ashleigh talks about all her after school activities. “I was in seven clubs at Lindbergh and two at Tech’s,” she reports, rattling off martial arts club, book club, Japanese club (president), environmental club, etc. She sampled all different classes too. In addition to general academics and her culinary focus, she took clothing design, art and design, several years of Spanish including honors, and is self taught in multiple languages.

She says she appreciates “so many” of her teachers for their individual merits—one for being kind and accommodating, someone else for stressing positivity, another for encouraging students to think deeper about all things, and one teacher from way back in fourth grade who insisted, “There’s no such thing as the word ‘can’t’ because you can.”

Ashleigh seems to have applied all of this advice in her own life. She is contemplating three college degrees or at least taking classes from each: global languages and culture, international studies and international business. She might take her culinary skills to the next level. She doesn’t want to limit herself. She wants to travel and see the world. She knows she can. And she will.

Ashleigh’s Advice for Other Students:
You have a choice in the friends you make. Whomever you choose will change you for better or worse. So choose wisely. Always follow the rules. Be yourself.

PJ Sims
Student Thrives from Challenging Parkway Education
by Peggy Wagner

PJ Sims likes to be challenged and the Parkway district delivered for him. “I guess I’ve always wanted more than I’ve had and so I’ve gotten used to pushing myself,” he notes, adding, “I’ve come to enjoy it. I thrive best when I’m challenged.”

That’s a good thing since the 2013 graduate of Parkway South High School now attends St. Louis University where, as an accounting major, he studies hard to meet the high academic standards. He remembers clearly the two classes at Parkway South High that really tested him. In his Advanced Placement Statistics class, the amount of writing involved had him perplexed. “Why would English be used in a math class,” he wondered. He was equally challenged by the problem solving skills required in Physics.

With his teachers guiding and encouraging him, he passed both courses. The principal too believed in his abilities. She was so certain he could score well on the AP Statistics exam (a high enough score to earn college credit), she rebuked his objections of not being able to afford the exam fee and put up the money for him. “She said she would track me down and make me pay if I didn’t pass, but I did!” In fact, PJ was on the honor roll for most of his 13 years in Parkway.

With interests in dancing and singing, PJ was part of the hip hop dance club at South and sang in the choir. When the choir needed a first tenor, PJ, who had been singing second tenor, worked hard to make his voice hit the higher notes. He succeeded. “It was an achievement,” he recalls with a smile.

PJ hesitates to name just a couple of his teachers who stretched his abilities. “There were so many who set the bar high for me and made me feel capable of reaching it.” PJ had enough credits to graduate early from Parkway South, but his principal persuaded him to take a couple more classes and lend a hand in the learning lab to students needing academic help. “It felt good to be able to pass along knowledge to others and help them pass their courses.” After school he did the same for youngsters in his neighborhood when he worked as a junior staffer at the Adams Park location of Herbert Hoover Boys’ and Girls Club.

At St. Louis University, PJ is involved with the African-American Scholars group that brings in African-American guest speakers who share their stories of success. “It’s inspirational,” he says. “If they can do, so can I.” The faculty and staff at Parkway South never doubted that for a second.

PJ’s Advice for Other Students:
Sample all different types of classes and activities to narrow down which ones interest you. Then focus more in those areas. Take them to the next level and stretch yourself.

Check inside for
Outstanding Graduates!
All county schools will start in August. See page 4.
This issue of the Parent Link is dedicated to those transfer students who are members of the Class of 2014 — hardworking students who have left behind an enviable record of accomplishments. For each student who is mentioned, there are scores of others also deserving of recognition. Our congratulations go not only to the students, but their parents and teachers as well. You are at the heart of this program and an important part of the success it has achieved.

Affton
Affton High School
Tatyanah Petford
Affton High School
Tatyanah Petford is a wonderful example of hard work and dedication. Ranked 13th out of 213 graduates with a cumulative grade point average of 3.9038, Tatyanah has participated in honor classes and the “Project Lead the Way” biomedical program all four years. She is also successful in athletics, participating on the cross country and track and field teams at Affton. A great role model and very mature beyond her years, Tatyanah is still deciding on her future college plans.

Bayless
Bayless High School
Planning to major in chemical engineering at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Karen Nwosu is her school’s choice for outstanding senior. A member of the National Honor Society, she earned honor roll status all four years of her high school career, and earned a leadership award her senior year. Assisting others, she completed multiple hours of academic tutoring and served as a meal runner for senior citizens providing comfort and support when necessary. A vocalist in the Bayless Performance Choir and an actress in the Bayless Theater Company, Karen will graduate at the age of 16, all while building positive relationships with her peers and staff.

Brentwood
Brentwood High School
While at Brentwood High School, Chris Williams participated in several activities including football, wrestling and competitive speech and debate. Along with extracurricular activities, Chris took a challenging course load, taking several dual credit college courses. Over the years, Chris has demonstrated maturity, intelligence, respect, a great sense of humor and devotion to his future. After graduation, Chris will be participating in the Show Me Gold program through the National Guard at Southeast Missouri State University. This program offers the opportunity for professional development, leadership training and the ability to become an officer in the Missouri Army National Guard while attending college.

Clayton
Clayton High School
Monica Long-Davis
Clayton High School
Monica Long-Davis is a self-starter who arrives at Clayton High School every day with a smile on her face, ready to put in her best effort. She is an all around wonderful student who has been involved in the Clayton community since kindergarten. Monica has garnered the respect of faculty and students alike, crossing all boundaries to represent the essence of the School District of Clayton. Monica is an excellent role model who will positively represent her school at the University of Missouri-Columbia this fall, where she will pursue a degree in physical therapy.

Hancock Place
Hancock Place High School
Tyree Wright
Hancock Place High School
Tyree Wright plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University in the fall to major in exercise science. With that as a major, it is no surprise that Tyree was involved in several extra-curricular sports, participating in Hancock’s baseball, basketball and wrestling teams for two years and was a dominate part of the cross country team for three years. He was selected as captain of the team his senior year. Tyree was chosen for the National Honor Society in his junior year and served as vice president the following year. Among his high school honors are selection to the honor roll all four years, perfect attendance for three years and he was selected by his teachers for the Virtue of Missouri awards, representing the virtue of Equality.

Kirkwood
Kirkwood High School
Artez Johnson
Kirkwood High School
Artez Johnson has been a shining star in the Kirkwood District since second grade. Following graduation, he plans to attend the University of Missouri-Kansas City. While at Kirkwood, Artez was an honor student, participated in the Spanish club, plus was a Link Crew Leader and member of TRYPOD, both which work with transitioning freshman students. He was a sixth grade camp counselor and he volunteered with the Special Olympics.

Lindbergh
Lindbergh High School
Alex Rucker
Lindbergh High School
Alex Rucker has been hard at work during her time in Lindbergh, through involvement in Character Council and Key Club. The recipient of numerous awards, including perfect attendance, LHS Renaissance Award, Durnell’s All-Stars and Teacher’s Choice Award, Alex was recently awarded the 2014 Youth of the Year Award from the Boys’ and Girls’ Club of Greater St. Louis, in recognition of her academic excellence and outstanding community service. In her spare time, Alex lends a helping hand at the St. Louis Dream Center, where she assists with children’s activities. She plans to major in elementary education so she can continue working with children. She was accepted to Missouri State University, Southeast Missouri State University, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and the University of Northern Iowa.
Lindbergh High School
Alex Rucker

Oakville High School
Blessing Opara

Paiuten High School
Paiten Hamilton

Parkway Central High School
Frederick Henry

Mehlville High School
Blessing Opraji

Parkway South High School
Margaret Prospere

Pattonville High School
Paiten Hamilton

Parkway West High School
Paiten Hamilton

Valleypark High School
Jabez King

Webster Groves High School
Jamaal Hinton

Alex Brown
Marquette High School

Alyiah Brown
Oakville High School

Jessica Hayes
Valley Park High School

Jamal Hinton
Webster Groves High School

Mehlville

The recipient of a track and field scholarship and a ‘Champion Scholar Award, Blessing Opara will enroll in the University of Missouri Kansas City. A reliable student athlete who communicates well with coaches and teachers, she has had success in the classroom and on the track. Blessing maintains a 4.0 grade point average, is a member of the all state academic team, and ranks 44 in a class of 452. Her peers and teammates view her as a leader and are constantly looking to her for guidance.

Mehlville High School
Graduating with a 3.04 cumulative grade point average, Paiten Hamilton will major in physical therapy at Tennessee State University. She challenged herself with a college preparatory curriculum, and explored career options through the Fashion Design program at South Tech High School. She has received honor roll recognition for her grades both at Mehlville and as a member of the National Honor Society at South Tech. She has excellent attendance and enjoys singing.

Parkway

Hungry is the most accurate description for Frederick Henry. When one meets him, they are immediately drawn to his insatiable appetite for knowledge. During his years at Central, Fred participated in football and crew, but ultimately shifted his focus entirely onto his academic pursuits. With the higher goal of attaining his doctorate degree in neuroscience, Fred will begin his collegiate career this fall at Truman State University with a major in biology, with a specialization in biodefense research.

Rockwood

Raven Jackson knows all about preconceived notions. During her time in Parkway, she strived to break down barriers and stereotypes. With a keen eye on how media plays an important role in how individuals see the world and themselves, Raven feels the need to continue to play basketball. Another advantage to Webber U, he said, is its proximity to the high school. He’d like to watch a few Statemen basketball games as an alumnus.

Several years ago our counselors created a workshop entitled, “What You Learn Affects What You Earn.” In this workshop our VICC counselors worked with our students to help them make the connection between current learning and future earning potential. As I was reviewing the information related to the outstanding graduates in this issue of the Parent Link, I was reminded of this workshop and the obvious connection these students have made between their learning and their long-term earning potential. Most, if not all, of these outstanding graduates are already making plans to attend college and then embark upon a successful career. Similarly, PS Simms and Ashleigh Taylor, the two students highlighted in this issue, worked hard throughout their educational career and this has paved the way for both of them toward a successful future.

John Wooden, the extremely successful head basketball coach at UCLA who led the team to a record 10 national championships, has stated “There is a choice you have to make in everything you do. So keep in mind that in the end, the choice you make, makes you.” Each of us are where we are today as a result of the decisions we made yesterday. These decisions powerfully shape our lives and the affects of them can last for many years or even a lifetime. As we unwrap the conclusion of another school year, celebrate the success of our students graduating from high school and college, and get ready to begin a new school year, it is important to remember the importance of the decisions we make today upon our future tomorrow.

David S. Glaser
CEO
dglaser@choicecorp.org
314.721.8422, ext. 3013
CONTACT PERSONS for Voluntary Student Transfer Program Families

Each of the districts accepting voluntary transfer students may designate a contact person. Contact persons coordinate the district’s administrative responsibilities for the transfer program, and serve as the liaison between the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) and the district.

Contact persons’ responsibilities may include enrolling transfer students, conducting orientation for new students and parents, processing applications and submitting transportation requests.

Contact persons are often the only individual from the district that a new transfer family meets, and they are a valuable resource for transfer families. They can answer specific questions about district policy and procedures and can refer parents to the proper school administrator if necessary.

Affton
Dr. Travis Bracht
314.467.5007

Burlington
Ms. Robin Hallock
314.860.2550

Clayton
Dr. Greg Batenhorst
314.854.6023

Eureka
Ms. Ann Rellinger
314.454.3544 ext. 100

Faxton
Dr. Timothy M. McNiss
314.454.1300, ext. 199

Kirkwood
Dr. Robert Washington
314.213.6105

Lindenwood
Ms. Melanie Grady
314.729.2400, ext. 4621

Mehlville
Dr. Dale I. Johnson
314.467.5007

Parkway
Ms. Rahilly “Rocky” Talavera
314.413.7060

Ritchiewood
Dr. Mr. Larry Knecht
314.413.5503

Rockwood
Mr. Terry Harris
636.733.2177

Valleypark
Mrs. Vickie Pardeck
636.923.3614 or 3617

Webster Groves
Ms. Brianne Rieber
314.802.9457

Special School District
Mrs. Mary L. Belemann
314.499.8125

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a law that affords parents and students 18 years of age and older with certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. A copy of the FERPA addendum is available on the VICC student handbook, which can be requested by calling 314.721.8422, ext. 3012. The handbooks are also available on the VICC website at www.choicecorp.org, and are available in bookstores in San Francisco, Valley Park, and other locations.

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation so long as your child goes to a school in the correct attendance area. The phone number for the transportation service is 314.721.8657.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to board their bus only at their assigned stop. They must arrive at their designated pick-up location 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time, and remain at their designated stop until the bus arrives.

Parent Responsibilities

Transportation may run late and/or routes may not be firmly in place during the first few weeks of school. Please make sure your child knows exactly how to do this or her bus does not arrive. This includes knowing where to go and whom to call. Also make sure your child knows what is expected when he or she is dropped off at the end of the school day. If you normally meet your child at the bus stop, be sure your child knows what to do if you are not there.

In the event of an emergency, students must call 911 or visit the nearest fire or police station. If you have a child in VICC and you are on vacation or otherwise unavailable, please designate a responsible adult who is familiar with your child and who can continue to provide transportation in your absence.

Trespass Policy

To bolster the safety of students riding buses to school, the VICC Board adopted the following trespass policy:

“Trespass occurs when anyone boards a school bus without prior approval from VICC. Any VICC-designated person (including students), contractor or school staff whose job requires them to ride the school bus shall be authorized and not be considered trespassing. Only with prior approval from VICC can a contractor, contractor’s parent, guard or member of the general public be allowed on a bus at any time.”

Be sure to review the transportation section in the Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook (pages 9-21) with your child before the start of school. If you need a handbook, please call 314.721.8422, ext. 3072, or visit our website: www.choicecorp.org

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) staff includes five counselors/social workers who can assist families with issues related to their school transfers.

Counselors are happy to respond to concerns and/or questions from parents or students regarding any issue that would prevent the successful participation of a child in the school setting, such as attendance, disciplinary issues, curriculum, achievement or other concerns. They can also provide counseling assistance for students and help parents understand their educational rights.

Parents are generally assigned to a counselor based upon the number of students who attend their schools. They can be reached by calling 314.721.8422, and dialing the extension number below, or via email.

A-C Watle Williams
ext. 3011
314.721.8422

C-D Lawrence Mitchell
ext. 3020
314.721.8422

E - F Jennifer Christy
ext. 3021
314.721.8422

G - H Melinda Scott
ext. 3027
314.721.8422

I - J Mary Schafer Meehan
ext. 3016
mmehan@choicecorp.org

K - L Dr. Charlotte Ijei
314.467.5007

M - N Dr. Travis Bracht
314.467.5007

O - P Dr. Shirleas Washington
314.213.6105

Q - R Dr. Joan Oakley
314.467.5007

S - T Jennifer Christy
ext. 3021
314.721.8422

U - V Dr. Travis Bracht
314.467.5007

W - X Ms. Sandi Riley
314.467.5007

Y - Z Dr. Travis Bracht
314.467.5007

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

VICC STAFF
Ready to Assist Transferring Families

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation so long as your child goes to a school in the correct attendance area. The phone number for the transportation service is 314.721.8657.

Transportation cards with the bus stop location and time are mailed to all students who are designated to attend two or more schools due to their family’s circumstances or other factors. If you do not receive your card by one week before the start of school, contact the principal of the school that your child normally attends to ensure the transportation staff has your information. The transportation staff will then mail your child’s transportation card.

During the first few weeks of school, your child may not board the bus at a stop other than the one specified on his or her card. Your child must be on the designated bus stop at least 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. After the designated pick-up time and during the school day, the transportation staff will only transport your child to the bus stop indicated on your child’s card.

It is important for parents to keep the school as well as the district contact person informed of any changes in the home phone number or the cell phone number for your child. Also, be sure to request that this information be forwarded to the transportation staff.

If You Move

Students who are moving during the school year, the principal at the school your child has been or will be attending, or that district’s contact person immediately. You must notify the district of the new school attendance zone and complete the required paperwork. It is your responsibility to contact and inform this office of any changes in your child’s address.

If your child is moving during the summer, the principal at the school your child has been or will be attending, or that district’s contact person immediately. It is your responsibility to contact and inform this office of any changes in your child’s address.

It is important for parents to keep the school as well as the district contact person informed of any changes in the home phone number or the cell phone number for your child. Also, be sure to request that this information be forwarded to the transportation staff.

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If your child is moving during the summer, the principal at the school your child has been or will be attending, or that district’s contact person immediately. It is your responsibility to contact and inform this office of any changes in your child’s address.