

FUTURE

September 2018 Newsletter

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New Faces at FUTURE

To our new students, parents, guardians, instructors, supervisors, mentors, and friends, we would like to welcome you to our FUTURE family! To new and returning students, we hope you had an amazing summer, and have been getting back into the groove of classes these past few weeks. We know that returning FUTURE students will be there to help and support the new students in their first college experience. FUTURE staff worked hard this past summer planning, developing, cleaning, and occasionally vacationing to prepare the FUTURE office space and program blueprint for this year.

We are welcoming three new FUTURE staff this year. Charaya Upton will be the new internship support specialist, and Jessica Kotik will be working as the academic support specialist. We also have a new AmeriCorps VISTA, Meredith Abercrombie, who will be serving as the outreach coordinator. We have so many great things planned for this year, and we hope you'll join us in our never-ending endeavor to grow and learn.



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Celebrating New Friendships with **Best Buddies**

Best Buddies is an international nonprofit organization that creates one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Here at the University of Tennessee, we work with the FUTURE program, where a unique opportunity is given to both FUTURE and Best Buddies. Given that FUTURE serves the purpose of employment and leadership, Best Buddies at UTK can really work to carry out the mission of friendship. The one-to-one friendships are made between a FUTURE student or FUTURE alumni and a University of Tennessee student without an IDD. The students are paired based on an interview that determine likes and dislikes. Both sides of the match are revealed to each other at the Match Party.

We just celebrated our Annual Match Party on Sunday, September 23rd. The Match Party's theme this year was a cookout because we really wanted to celebrate friendship and inclusion. Because of our rapidly growing chapter of over 160 people, we have more participants than what can be matched in pairs.

Even though the nature of the Match Party is to focus primarily on the matches, I wanted to ensure that everyone attending was included. To do this, we waited until the end to create the pairs, and also created small groups for people to get to know each other on a more intimate basis. In my eyes, it was a very inclusive day, and I hope everyone that attended can agree.

This year we had a sorority style reveal for the buddy pairs. The peer buddies were given signs with their buddies name on it, without peeking at who their sign said. One at a time, a peer buddy flipped their sign around, so that the buddies could see what was written on the sign. The buddy then would run to their new buddy, and often embraced in a hug. It was a really awesome moment for the buddy pairs, and was a special way to begin the friendship. Most all pairs from the moment of the reveal hit it off immediately. I am really excited to see where the friendships go this year!

-Lexie Vaughn, President of Best Buddies



FUTURE Mentor: Abbie Maples



Abbie Maples is a FUTURE peer mentor from Sevierville, Tennessee. She is a third year student here at UT and is majoring in Special Education. This is Abbie's first semester volunteering with the FUTURE program, but she says "I feel like I have already known the students forever, I have loved them since the moment I met them". Abby chose Special Education after considering other degrees. She explained that God told her she should be in the education field. When she began researching, she found Special Education.

She was still not convinced that this was the major for her, but decided to try it. Now, after volunteering with the FUTURE program, she claims she could not see herself in any other major. Abbie loves working with the FUTURE program because of the student's perseverance, selflessness, encouragement, and positive attitudes, "They have taught me how to love myself and others more deeply, make me a better person, and encourage me to be the best that I can be". We are so glad to have mentors like Abbie! Keep being you, we think that the Special Education department is lucky to have you!

FUTURE Staff: Charaya Upton

This month we have chosen Charaya Upton as our FUTURE Staff Spotlight. Charaya is new to FUTURE and we have welcomed her with open arms. She is from Cookeville, Tennessee, and attended Tennessee Tech for both her undergraduate degree and master's degree. Her undergraduate major was Psychology with a minor in Music Education. Charaya also received a masters degree in Clinical Mental

Health Counseling. She is currently getting her doctorate in Counselor Education. Charaya is the Internship specialist, meaning she collaborates with worksites and students to see if they will mesh well and be successful. A few of her responsibilities include follow up sessions with the worksites to see how things are going, site contracts, FUTURE Program information, and evaluations for midterms and finals.



In her free time, Charaya loves to spend time with her family, watch movies, and get her camera out and practice her photography skills.



Inspiration in Bloom at YMCA Garden Internship



Aley Sasport is a first year FUTURE student and is interning at the Lindsay-Young Downtown YMCA Community Giving Garden. There, she helps with watering and maintaining plants, cleaning up in the garden, connecting with community partners such as Juice Bar, and entering data for volunteer and harvest members. When her audit instructor, Sarah, was asked about the positive aspects Aley brings to the team she responded, “Aley is a very willing intern. She is always willing to learn new skills and ask questions along the way to make sure she understands everything being asked of her. She brings previous gardening experience with her after being a faithful volunteer at another garden prior to this.” However, Aley is not only making a great impression with gardening skills, but her personality, hard work, and attitude are shining through as well. Sarah boasts about Aley’s attitude, saying “Aley is consistent, able to listen well and complete tasks on her own. But most of all she has a great attitude about doing any jobs and is always excited to do her work. She’s so fun to work with.”

Aley personally loves getting to meet new people, harvesting in the garden, and having new experiences while getting to further develop her already existing skills. Writing is a hobby of Aley’s outside of gardening, and the skills she is learning at her internship can help enhance her writing as well. Aley is creating a great foundation for herself if she decides to work at a garden, as this will be her second job experience in gardening. Either way, Aley is meeting new people and adjusting to a new environment, while learning to stay on task, which will be beneficial for any job Aley chooses in her future. The FUTURE program is so proud of Aley. We know that no matter what career path she takes, she will be successful. Thanks for being such an awesome FUTURE student, Aley!



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Young YMCA

FUTURE Audit Instructor: Sally Hunter

This month, we have chosen Sally Hunter to be our featured Audit Instructor. Sally teaches different levels of Child and Family Studies (Human Development) here at UT, but got the opportunity to go to Ireland and teach CFS 460 this past summer. Sally grew up in Signal Mountain, Tennessee and attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she double majored in Spanish and Child and Family Studies. She has a family of all boys- her husband, two sons Isaac (11) and Owen (8), a rescue dog named Duncan and a Beta fish named Bo.

Sally has been an audit professor for our FUTURE students just about every semester since the program began. She also has previous work experience with preschoolers with cognitive disabilities at UT's Early Learning Center in the early 2000's. When asked what her favorite part about working with FUTURE students was, Sally replied "I love the joy for life that FUTURE students bring to my classroom, and I love seeing the typically-developing students develop deep friendships with the FUTURE students over the course of the semester".

One fun fact about Sally is that she rides her bike to work almost every day! We are so thankful for Sally and for her support and commitment to the FUTURE program. It is professors like her who are making the biggest difference in FUTURE students' lives!



Sally and her family in the gardens behind Blarney Castle in Ireland!

FUTURE Profiles

FUTURE Family: The Beets

What was your favorite thing you did as a family this summer?

We went to Wrightsville Beach in North Carolina for a week with some friends.

We also raced with Eli in dirt late model racing.

What is your favorite thing to do as a family?

We love to go to different theatre productions. We also love to watch racing events.

Answers by
Linda Beets

How does your family celebrate the holidays?

We get together and cook a big meal and open presents. We celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

What is your favorite part of the FUTURE Program?

My favorite part is that Karlee has been so active. Karlee is very happy to go to school and be as independent as she can be. She loves Clarence Brown Theatre. She has gained self-confidence and matured even in just a few short months.



Let's ask a first year FUTURE student

What were you most nervous about before starting FUTURE? Has that opinion changed?

I was nervous about navigating campus and knowing where everything was. I'm starting to feel a little bit more comfortable. -Blake

I was worried about not knowing anyone or making friends. I feel different now even though it has taken some time. -Rachel

To tell you the truth, I was not nervous at all! I was super confident and so excited. -Karlee

FUTURE Profiles

FUTURE Student: Katie Erwin

Meet Katie Erwin! She's a first year FUTURE student who lights up every room she is in. She is such a positive person and radiates that positivity to every person she meets! She has a huge collection of marbles and she loves to play with them in her free time. Katie is enjoying college and loves seeing her friends from high school. She also loves going to library and hanging out at the student union. Katie is currently interning at the Student Aquatic Center.

Her role there is to greet people and help sign them in to go to the pools. Her favorite class this semester is digital literacy. Katie is always on her iPad telling jokes to Siri. She knows everything about technology and loves to talk about it. She says her dream job is to be a computer lab teacher. We love you Katie. You're doing great!



October Calendar

ALL MONTH- National Disability Employment Awareness Month

12th- Advocates for Autism Fall Festival

18th- Campus Sustainability Day

19th- Big Orange Friday

21st- Best Buddies Friendship Fest

31st - Halloween

Fun Fridays

Our first month of classes were filled with so many Fun Friday adventures. We learned about horticultural education at the UT Gardens, swam at the UT Aquatic center, ate delicious food at Soccer Taco, and appreciated the view at the Sunsphere. Our most recent Fun Friday was a relaxing campus picnic, followed by FUTURE students showing their star power with Karaoke. There is so much more exploring left to do this year!

