

FUTURE

February 2019 Newsletter

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A Truly Fabulous February



Hello FUTURE family. It is hard to believe that we are two months into the spring semester. Already, we have seen some amazing work from our students in their classes and internships. In Career and Life Planning, the students have started to create weekly vlogs with discussions of class topics. Class instructor Arden Szepe has already reported impressive progress! Many of our students are taking on multiple internships on top of their demanding class loads. This includes Aley Sasport, who is working at both East Tennessee Permaculture Research Institute and The Daily Beacon (read more about The Daily Beacon internship below). We have continued to make connections with other organizations on campus, like the Student Tennessee Education Association and both the Dance and Cheer team, who Alex Notte helps at his internship.

While our current FUTURE students are working hard to continually reach new heights, we have also started to prepare for next year. February was the last month to submit applications for FUTURE's 2019-2020 academic year. Soon, the FUTURE will hold interviews to see who is going to join the FUTURE family next fall. It is a very exciting time for the program as new accomplishments are being made every day.



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Able Ed Update

The first episode of Able Ed, FUTURE's new podcast, has been released on Apple podcasts and Google Play. The first episode serves as an introduction to postsecondary education programs and how they all got started. It features an interview with David Cihak, who helped start the FUTURE Program and now serves as the associate dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. His interview was insightful and brought up many great topics about postsecondary education. It is definitely worth a listen. Our next episode is set to come out in March and features a panel of students from different postsecondary education programs like TigerLIFE at Clemson and SDAP at Appalachian State. Links to the podcasts can be found on our social media pages.

New Accomplishment for Ciara

One of our main goals for FUTURE students is to gain independence skills during their time at college. One student, Ciara Armstrong, has made a huge step in becoming more independent. This month, Ciara passed an exam to get her learner's permit. Ciara worked extremely hard to achieve this goal. She spent extra study time in FUTURE in preparation, oftentimes skipping Fun Friday activities to study. We are so proud of Ciara and the determination she had to get her permit. She is a great example that you can use the skills learned in class to produce real results!



Let's ask a FUTURE student

What is your favorite spot on campus?

It is either the Starbucks or Panda Express in the student union. -Molly

Probably the UC, I love to talk and meet new people there. -Emily

Neyland Stadium is the best. -Alex C.

I like Stokeley and the good food they have there. -Rachel

FUTURE Student: Rachel Smith



Rachel Smith is a first-year student in the FUTURE program. After graduating, she wants to become a veterinarian because she loves animals. She says one of her favorite parts about being in the program is that she's made so many new friends in the time that she's been at UT. Her other favorite part is that she is a part of the university. She has wanted to become a UT student since she was a baby! Her favorite class this semester is Life Skills because she gets to do fun stuff like play Kahoot! In her free time, she likes to "sleep, sleep, sleep all day long" and watch Netflix. Her favorite part of the school day is eating lunch with one of her peer mentors, Allyson. She wants you to know that FUTURE is awesome because it is like her second family!

FUTURE Staff: Meredith Abercrombie

Meredith Abercrombie is the current outreach coordinator for the FUTURE Program. She came to FUTURE through AmeriCorps, which is a service program that matches individuals with nonprofit organizations that need assistance in capacity building. She is originally from North Carolina, and graduated from Appalachian State University last May. Meredith is relatively new to Knoxville but is really enjoying her time in the community and at UT.

Some of her tasks as outreach coordinator are recruiting new mentors, improving the awareness of the FUTURE Program at the university and in the city of Knoxville, and creating more efficient ways of recruiting students eligible for the program. She also maintains the day-to-day communications with the current mentors.

Meredith's favorite thing about working at FUTURE is seeing the energy the students bring spread to the people around them. "The students' attitudes and motivation are so contagious to those who get to spend time with them. They pick me up on my worst days and empower me to do the best that I can." Meredith hopes that this experience will lead to a career working in the nonprofit sector, while always advocating for inclusive environments.



FUTURE Mentor: Amber Carmody



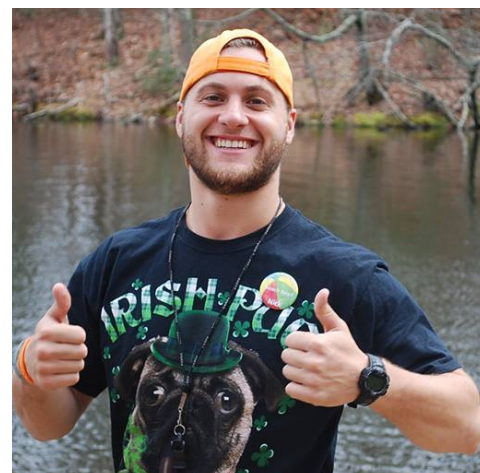
This month's mentor is the hard-working Amber Carmody. She is a junior studying neuroscience with a minor in psychology. She has been working with individuals with disabilities since she was 11, and wanted to keep working with that population in college. Luckily, she found the FUTURE Program! Her favorite thing about the program is the relationships she builds with the students. Amber says, "I love getting to experience their fun-loving personalities!" She is a proud volunteer, and loves the unity of the university. She has contributed so much to the FUTURE Program, and is always willing to go the extra mile for our students. Many days would not be successful without her, and we appreciate her hard work.

Interesting Facts about Amber:

- She has two siblings in the military
- She has traveled to England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and France
- She has a rare disease, which she is one of the youngest people in the world to have

FUTURE Audit Instructor: Nick Geicek

Nick Geicek is a graduate student teacher for the adapted Adaptive Recreation class who came to UT from Detroit, Michigan. He was excited when he learned UT offered Therapeutic Recreation as an undergraduate degree. His teaching philosophy is all about learning by doing. He expects full participation in hopes that his students are given as many opportunities to learn as possible. Growing up with a twin brother with Autism and a developmental delay ignited his passion to work with students with intellectual/developmental disabilities. He says the students in the FUTURE program impress him with their positive attitudes, their willingness to learn, and how they encourage class participation. This experience as an Adaptive Recreation teacher has reaffirmed his mission to expose and educate people on the world of adaptive sports. In the future, he hopes to use sport as a channel to improve the quality of life of others, regardless of ability level. When Nick isn't teaching classes or studying for grad school, he loves to go thrift shopping!

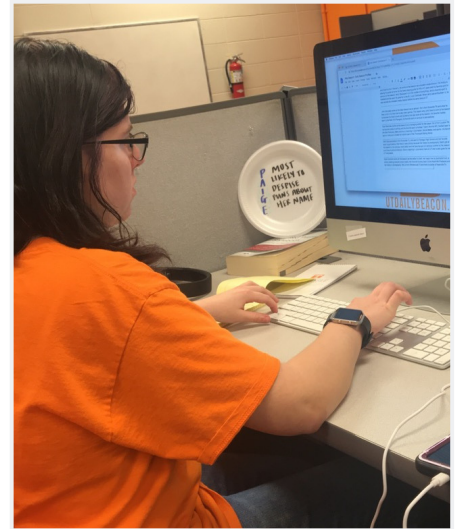


Hot off the Press: Aley's Internship with The Daily Beacon

This semester, Aley is interning at The Daily Beacon doing what she loves most, writing. Aley's main job is to write short profiles and feature pieces on students and faculty in the FUTURE office and eventually around campus. These are similar to the Humans of New York posts that have become popular over the past few years.

Kylie, Aley's internship supervisor, described Aley's presence each Wednesday as a bright spot during her week. Aley admits that the Beacon is her favorite place to be on campus, aside from the FUTURE offices. When asked to describe Aley's greatest skills, Kylie said, "Aley is best at making people smile. In interviewing students for her profiles, she has done a great job of listening and engaging in small conversation before and after asking her questions."

Kylie knows this is a really important opportunity for Aley to gain experience in a field that she will want to work in the rest of her life. She said, "We want her to do more than learn- we want her to walk away from this internship with a portfolio of work that she can share with others." Aley's pieces will soon be available online and through the printed copies of the Daily Beacon. It is so exciting to see Aley work one step closer to the career of her dreams.



FUTURE Family: The Kykers

For this month's newsletter, Lisa Kyker talked about Caleb and the rest of the Kyker family. She has seen Caleb change a lot since joining FUTURE. The biggest changes she has seen is Caleb's maturity and independence level.

He has learned to interact and advocate on his behalf with UT and FUTURE professors one on one. Caleb's family expects that after graduation Caleb will be a functioning member of society, working in a job he loves that gives him a feeling of accomplishment, as well as living somewhat independently. He already has many independence skills. Caleb usually makes his own dinner, from baking a pizza from Papa Murphy's to broiling fish in the oven for a fish sandwich. Caleb helps out at home by washing and putting away dishes, washing his own clothes, taking care of the trash and recycling, and blowing leaves. On weekends, Caleb loves going to any type of UT game with his dad. He has miniature SEC football helmets, and during football season he will pair up the helmets and put them head-to-head according to which games are being played that day. When asked about family vacations, Lisa explained that Caleb is a true homebody. Since they've been moving around living out of suitcases and driving back and forth from Chattanooga, for the past couple of years they have mostly enjoyed just being at home. But one of Caleb's favorite places to visit is Jacksonville, Florida where he was born. FUTURE is so glad to have the Kykers as members of the FUTURE family.



Fun Fridays

For love month, the students at FUTURE spent their Fun Fridays showing love to others, the community, and themselves. First, we made valentines for the children's hospital with the ladies of Chi Omega. Then, we spent an afternoon talking about the five love languages and taking a quiz to see what each person's primary love language was. Finally, we showed love for our community by helping the Student Tennessee Education Association prepare bins for their upcoming can drive benefitting the Ronald McDonald House. There is so much love and kindness at FUTURE, and February was a great time to celebrate that!



March Calendar

6th- Spread the Word to End the Word Day

8th- Fun Friday at the Tennessee Theatre

10th- Down Syndrome 5K in Knoxville

18th-22nd- Spring Break

21st- World Down Syndrome Day