VALLEY SCHOLARS
STUDENT EDITION
ENVISION. CREATE. ACHIEVE.

WORDS FROM OUR PEOPLE ABOUT THE VALLEY SCHOLARS EXPERIENCE AND THOSE WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN.
GREETINGS SCHOLARS AND SUPPORTERS,

WELCOME TO THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE VALLEY SCHOLARS PROGRAM AT JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY. WE WOULD LIKE TO CELEBRATE THE 2016-2017 YEAR AS THE YEAR OF GRATITUDE, EXPANSION, AND CREATIVITY.

GRATITUDE

Grant: The Valley Scholars program has been awarded a $135,000.00 grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. This grant provides essential opportunities for scholars and families such as:
- Hiring Academic Coaches and a Graduate Assistant
- Summer program transportation to special events
- An adjunct instructor and supplies for specialized future Dual Enrollment classes
- Funding for parent workshops

A big THANKS to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

Academic Coaches: Made possible by the Jack Kent Cooke grant, 4 Academic Coaches are providing academic support for all 8 high schools. Coaches host group study sessions weekly and individual scholar tutoring as needed.

Virginia Business: Virginia Business selected and highlighted the Valley Scholars program in its May 2017 issue.

EXPANSION

New Schools: We are pleased to announce the expansion of the Valley Scholars program. We extend a warm welcome to Beverly Manor, Elkton and Thomas Harrison Middle Schools. The program will be serving 11 high schools and 11 middle schools.

New Valley Scholars: After completing a rigorous selection process, 44 new eighth graders joined the program on September 9th. We extend a warm welcome to the class of 2022.

New Office: In March 2017, the Valley Scholars program moved to Madison Hall. This new office area provides space for the collaboration of innovative ideas.

CREATIVITY

Academic Curriculum: During the 2017 summer, an Academic Coach Curriculum was created by the Valley Scholars staff with the intent of serving as a guide for Academic Coaches working with 9th, 10th and 11th grade scholars. The curriculum introduces ideas, activities and lessons covering 5 content areas: Time Management, Basis Academics, Personal Growth, Career Exploration and Growth and Further Academics. The lessons are interactive and aimed at preparing scholars for life beyond high school.

Summer Program: During July 2017, two summer programs were held. The first week was devoted to 9th and 10th grade scholars. The rigorous curriculum included reading All Quiet on the Western Front and 100 Best-Loved Poems. Cumulating activities included a visit to Mt. Vernon and National Arlington Cemetery. The second week was dedicated to 11th grade scholars. Advanced academic content was supported with the reading of The Fever of 1721. Additionally, students participated in persuasive writing and debate. Visits to Virginia Tech and Williamsburg were highlights for many scholars.

Business Lunch: The program’s first Business Lunch was held on July 19th, 2017. Community business leaders and JMU faculty joined the 11th grade scholars for round table discussions. Leaders shared their professional experiences and their personal paths to success. The collective responses from scholars and leaders necessitated the planning of several future Business Lunches.

Pennsylvania Conference for Women: Thanks to JMU faculty member Kathleen Sensabaugh and Robert E. Lee High School Counselor, Betsy Bell for sponsoring and chaperoning three lady scholars to this leadership event.

The Valley Scholars’ staff looks forward to another exciting year of providing opportunities for the Scholars to participate in programs and activities on and off of campus. We invite you to join us and "stay connected"

Sincerely,

Dixie Davis

PROGRAM COORDINATOR
The 9th grade Valley Scholars of Stonewall Jackson have efficiently ended our second year and have been able to take the next step closer to college and graduating high school. The 9th grade cohort group consists of Bridget Silvious, Daniel Gaete, Autumn Summers, Tessa Souder, Constance Polk, Jazmine Garcia, Ana Juarez, and Dylan Lambert. Our program objective was to create a slideshow of advice for the rising 9th grade cohort group about what to expect when changing over from middle school to high school. We discussed the differences between regular and honors classes, and also suggestions on how to prepare yourself to accomplish the task. Each student prepared a short speech explaining their section and were very thorough. At the end of each of our presentations we felt that people walked away with a better understanding of how hard we as students are working to balance out high school and also working with James Madison University on our career path.

The 10th grade cohort group that is involved with the James Madison Valley Scholars were in their third year last year. The participants of this group were Brianna Kirby, Raven Rogers, Jenna Souder, and Joshua Morris. For their final presentation they were required to create a board game. The board game that they created was called On The Road to College. This game is along the lines of Monopoly. They created questions on History, Science, and also a category on tips and information on various colleges.

At the end of the whole showcase we can all reflect on what we have done and accomplished through our years as a James Madison Valley Scholar and also as a Stonewall Jackson High School and as North Fork Middle School scholar.
SHYLEIGH REPORTS ON THE VALLEY SCHOLARS
SHOWCASE: AN EXQUISITE DAY

The Valley Scholars Showcase day was a very fun and memorable event. There are many reasons why I loved this exquisite day. First, I thoroughly enjoyed the many nice professors, donors, and older Valley Scholar's students that I met. It was extremely delightful to listen to their feedback and advice. Secondly, I loved expressing my ideas to the public. I adored sharing my ideas because it increased the opportunity for feedback and advice, it showed the caring community the goals and purposes of the Valley Scholars Program, and it permitted me to portray my creativity. Lastly, I enjoyed the Valley Scholars Showcase event because of the diversity and inclusion. There were many versatile types of projects. For example, posters, power points, and game boards. Correspondingly, the Valley Scholar's staff included everyone by reviewing each individual's work, and they made it a point to talk to every Valley Scholar. Overall, the Valley Scholars Showcase day was an amazing experience!
SCHOLARS' VOICES

ELI REPORTS: EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

The Valley Scholars showcase was a great experience for me personally, and I believe that it was a great experience for all my younger peers. The projects this year were great like the previous year's projects. Everyone had different perspectives about the Valley Scholars Program and about their future as college students. The showcase floor was filled with every Valley Scholar's hopes and expectations about their future and the future of the program. Everyone that attended the showcase could see the excitement on the faces of the Valley Scholars. The showcase was split into different groups: 8th grade, 9th grade, and 10th grade and each was assigned different types of projects with different topics.

The 8th grade project was more individualistic and focused on the individual students. It expressed their hopes for the future. The 8th grade project also displayed the students' personality, hobbies, and the things they like to do. The 8th grade project was the project that seemed to get the most attention from the visitors. It got more attention because the project was more personal and everyone visiting wanted to see the new members of the program. Looking back to the showcase it is hard to believe how big the program has gotten because when the program began the showcase was held in a small conference room. Now, the showcase is held in a huge conference room; yet, the event still feels a bit crowded. It is impossible to imagine where the event is going to be held in a couple of years because of the number of new Valley Scholars we get every year.

The 9th grade project is more focused on helping the 8th grade students. The project is there so that the 9th grade students can ruminate about their first year in high school and give advice to their younger peers. In their projects, they outline challenges that they might have faced in their first year of high school. The challenges can range from bullying to academic pressure and time management. The 9th grade project is a great tool that all high schools can use to give the future 9th grade students a glimpse of their responsibilities and freedoms as high school students.

The 10th grade project is more focused on the cons and pros of going to college and life without college. The realization that there are plenty of people that are successful without going college, but they are a minority. The 10th grade project also covered the topics of the obstacles that someone might face during their high school and college lives. It is a social norm for people to go to college and it is highly encouraged. It is common knowledge that everyone has an idea of what higher education can provide for your life and career, yet people do not think twice about being able to go to college. The 10th grade project also outlines some benefits of not going to college and the other options you may have other than college.

The showcase was a very nice experience, and the Valley Scholars hope that they can be a part of the showcase next time. The Valley Scholars hope that the next time we can do a project that reflects our interests in life. It is apparent that the showcase gets better every year and that the projects are always enjoyable. The 8th grade, 9th grade, and 10th grade projects always get the Valley Scholars thinking. The projects do get a bit hard to organize because everyone from your school has a different schedule. The projects may be challenging at times but eventually they get it done.

ELEAZAR CORTES
11TH GRADE
FORT DEFIANCE HS
MEET THE STAFF

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

JACK NICHING
Jack is a first year in the MPA program concentrating in International Stabilization and Recovery from Newport News, VA and a recent graduate of UVa. Jack served UVa as an Orientation Leader and was a team leader for the Youth Volunteer Corps Hampton Roads. He has a passion for community engagement and is excited for the platform the Valley Scholars Program provides to expand this interest.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

MACY PNIEWSKI
Macy is studying for her Masters in the Art of Teaching concentrating in Secondary English Education. During her time at JMU, she has worked as an Orientation Peer Adviser, traveled to schools in Ireland, and developed a creative pedagogical style she hopes to bring to the Valley Scholars this year. Macy enjoys making people laugh and spending time with animals. She is so excited to be working with this team and our students!

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

CAMERON DUSMAN
Cameron is from Charlottesville, VA and will be pursuing her Master's degree in Music Education. Cameron is originally from Pennsylvania, where she attended Grove City College for music education. For the past 5 years she has taught elementary school music. Cameron enjoys traveling, music, cooking, and exploring new hiking trails. She is excited to be joining the Valley Scholars team and looking forward to meeting students and families!

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

TIANA BARLOW
Tiana is a second year Graduate Assistant with the Valley Scholars Program. She attended JMU as an undergraduate, graduating in the spring of 2016. She is now pursuing her Master of Public Administration degree. Her favorite thing about JMU is the beautiful campus and the sense of community. She is excited to spend her last year at JMU working with the wonderful scholars in the Valley Scholars Program.

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

MEG RICH
Meg is a senior International Affairs and Spanish double major with a minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at JMU. She has previously worked for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and Sister Cities International, where she developed a passion for serving a diverse community through language, mentorship and education. She has been involved with the JMU Women’s Rugby Club, Spanish club, and Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity. She is excited to contribute to the Valley Scholars Program’s mission this year!

ENGAGEMENT FELLOW

NAJEEHA KHAN
Najeeha is the current Engagement Fellow at Valley Scholars. As a recent graduate of James Madison University with a B.A. in International Affairs and Interdisciplinary Religion, she is excited to be spending another year on the most beautiful campus in Virginia. Her favorite thing about JMU is the warmth, kindness, and helpful nature of the people here. Najeeha enjoys travelling, trying new foods, and is a cat lover.

ACADEMIC COACH

MICHELLE CROTTEAU
Michelle is a Chicago native who calls the Shenandoah Valley home. Passionate about teaching writing, she has encouraged students of all ages to be confident writers and is an English instructor at the Massanutten Regional Governor’s School. With her son’s help, she raises goats and cows on her farm in Broadway. When she’s not thinking about school, she’s planning her next fishing trip to the Outer Banks, listening to music, or practicing her hoop skills. Michelle has a BS in Psychology and an MA in English from JMU and a doctorate in Education from UVA.

ACADEMIC COACH

BREE RIDDICK
Bree hails from Chesapeake, VA, Bree Riddick is a second-year graduate student in the Communication & Advocacy Program. She completed her undergraduate degree in Communication Studies at James Madison University. This year, Bree will be working with Valley Scholars at Stonewall Jackson High School in Quicksburg, VA.
MEET THE STAFF

ACADEMIC COACH

Dillon Gage
Dillon is studying at UVA pursuing a M.Ed. in Higher Education with an emphasis in Student Affairs and Administration. He is an alumnus and former student employee of West Texas A&M University with a passion for Student Development, Diversity, and Policy. He is currently serving as an Academic Coach employing a student-centered approach to better meet the needs of Valley students.

ACADEMIC COACH

Sarah Morris
Sarah grew up in Staunton, VA, and studied history at UVA. She completed the teacher licensure program at MBU and became a social studies teacher. She currently works for BRCC as a high school career coach and recently completed MBU’s M.Ed. program with a concentration in Adult and Higher Education. Sarah loves exercising and being outdoors with her husband and five-year-old daughter. She is passionate about supporting young adults in achieving their educational and career aspirations and is very excited to be joining the Valley Scholars program!

MENTORING PROFESSOR

Dana Haraway
Dana grew up in Virginia and has been at JMU since 2009. She is excited to begin teaching courses for the Valley Scholars mentors this semester. Her additional teaching responsibilities include guiding and mentoring the next generation of middle and high school teachers. Away from school, Dana enjoys time with her husband, her two springer spaniels, and her horses. Dana received her undergraduate degree in special education from UVA, her masters and education specialist degrees in school psychology and community agency counseling from JMU, and her Ph.D. in administration and supervision from UVA.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW:

FORMER STAFF UPDATES

Xavia Gary
Xavia graduated from James Madison University in 2015 with a B.S. degree in Sports and Recreation Management. After graduation, he returned home to Richmond, VA to work for Zoe House, LLC, a residential housing organization for individuals diagnosed with intellectual disabilities or similar disorders. In 2016, he accepted the position as an Engagement Fellow with the Valley Scholars Program. He is currently pursuing his master’s degree with the Center for Sports Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. He aspires to become a High School Athletic Director.

Grant Goodman
Grant graduated this summer from James Madison University with a Masters of Public Administration. Upon completing the two weeks of Valley Scholars camp, he moved from Harrisonburg to Spearfish, South Dakota, where his wife’s family is from. Grant is working as a Community Outreach Coordinator for the YMCA of Rapid City, South Dakota. His main duties include co-chairing for a collaborative committee of nonprofits to make the area healthier and to utilize the YMCA’s member base to create a community volunteer program.

Thomas Giordano
Thomas served Valley Scholars as a Student Assistant during its origins in 2014 until he graduated from JMU with a degree in International Business and a minor in Spanish in May 2017. He is working at Havas Worldwide, an advertising agency in NYC. His new job has been a great experience and he is constantly learning, but it will never match the amount he learned from the program. He misses the staff and scholars so much!

Kaitlynn Carter
Kaitlynn served as a Graduate Assistant with Valley Scholars from 2015 to 2017. Her experience as a homeless high school student helps her connect with the barriers that first generation students face. Kaitlynn graduated top of her class and was accepted into UVA as a first-generation college student. Kaitlynn inspires scholars to pursue college and give them tools to achieve their dreams. Currently, Kaitlynn is attending the JMU School Psychology Program, interning with Greene County Public Schools, and will graduate with an Ed.S. degree in May 2018.
SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

"My favorite part of the summer program was when I got to meet the marine biologist and I also liked going to Williamsburg and learning about the past of Virginia."

BROOKLYN KIER
11TH GRADE
ROBERT E. LEE

Learning both academic and life skills, the scholars enjoyed each other and the experiences they gained throughout the fun-filled week together!
LOOKING AHEAD

SPRING PROGRAM DATES

Saturday, January 13th, 2018
  University Recreation

Thursday, January 18th, 2018
  Mental Health First Aid

Friday, January 26th, 2018
  College of Integrated Science and Engineering

Saturday, February 10th, 2018
  SAT/ACT Prep
  Parent Workshop

Saturday, March 17th, 2018
  College of Science and Mathematics
  Career Day

Saturday, April 7th, 2018
  College of Arts and Letters

Tuesday, April 24th, 2018
  Closing Program / Project Presentations

Thursday, May 10th, 2018
  Partnering Program (TBA)

Thanks to our phenomenal JMU Photographers for attending our programs & capturing the Valley Scholars experience!