



An End of the Year Focus on the Governor's Honors Program

DECEMBER, 2020

Dear Colleagues, Friends and Partners,

This month's GOSA newsletter is focused on the Governor's Honors Program (GHP) for several reasons. First, if you are a teacher or educator and you know of students who would be interested in pursuing challenging instruction on a college campus during the summer, please take time to nominate these students in upcoming years. Every school system has students who would benefit from participation.

The other compelling reason for this focus on GHP is because for the first time since the program's creation in 1963, we had to cancel the 2020 program due to COVID-19. We were heartbroken for the 660 high school juniors and senior finalists who had dreamed of attending GHP, went through rigorous auditions and interviews, and made it to the finals. While the 2020 rising seniors are now in college, the 2020 rising junior finalists (180) have an opportunity to attend in 2021, and we are committed to having them participate. While GHP has been funded solely with state funds in the past, to expand the program in 2021, the GHP Steering committee is working toward financially securing the opportunity for the 2020 junior finalists (180) as well as a new class of 650 rising junior and senior finalists can attend the 2021 GHP.

Thousands of students are among our GHP Alumni list, and many of those who are most grateful are those who had never left their small communities before their GHP experience gave them the opportunity to engage in educational projects in ways they could not imagine.

May your holiday season be safe, peaceful and richly blessed.

Joy Hawkins
Executive Director



What is the [Governor's Honors Program?](#)

The Georgia Governor's Honors Program is a four-week, residential summer program that offers the state's most gifted and talented rising high school juniors and seniors an opportunity to study with similar students on a college campus. This life changing experience has been available to students since 1964; it allows student participation in academic, cultural and social enrichment. Students apply to attend GHP for one of 11 available majors in academic studies or fine arts and during their time on-campus. They can also develop personally and academically by selecting an additional elective outside of their major area.

GHP completed its 55th iteration in 2019 on the campus of Berry College. Students' classroom experiences were supplemented with residence life and social opportunities outside of scheduled class hours within the bounds of a closed and secure college campus. In 2019, 644 students from 70 Georgia counties attended the program.

We are honored to announce the members of the 2020-2021 Governor's Honors Program Steering Committee. This prestigious group of leaders consists of GHP alumni spanning five decades and others who have special interests in the program. This group began organically with several GHP alumni asking to help with the program's awareness and resources. From there, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement asked others to serve as ambassadors. We thank each member for the time and commitment to this life changing program.

GOVERNOR'S HONORS PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE



Carmen Bergman	Dulany Industries, Inc.
Don Bolia	Peachtree Government Relations
Ian Caraway	Office of Governor Brian Kemp
Patrick Connell	Boyd & Jenerette, P.A.
Andy Cunningham	Woodward Academy
Houston Gaines	State Representative (HD117)
Andy Gibbs	Valdosta City Council Member
Cody Hall	Office of Governor Brian Kemp

Tyler Harper	State Senator (SD07)
Roger Harrison	Harrison Family Farms
Vance Hurst	Colquitt County School District
Cade Joiner	Shred-X Corporation
Jen Jordan	State Senator (SD06)
Rohan Krishnan	GHP 2020 Finalist
Jonathan Martin	GHP 2017 Alumnus
Scott McAfee	U.S. Department of Justice
Christie Moore	Dawson County Chamber
Jade Morey	Palladian Strategies
Laura Norton	Peachtree Government Relations
Caitlin O'Dea	Georgians for Kelly Loeffler
Raymond Partolan	Kick Baxter Immigration LLC
Ronda Price	DeKalb County School District
Paige Pushkin	Georgia Department of Education
Stephanie Shelton	University of Alabama
Brian Srikanchana	Cadet Portfolio
Brian Stickland	State Senator (SD17)
Adesola Thomas	GHP Alumna
Bob Trammell	State Representative (HD132)
Paula Weeks	Innovation Fund Foundation

Governor's Honors Program Supporters

Since 1964, the Georgia General Assembly has funded the GHP summer program so that the state's brightest and most talented students can attend with no charges for rooms, food or the program's instructional costs. Thank you to members of the Georgia General Assembly for continuing to prioritize this unique education experience for Georgia's students.

Since COVID-19 required the cancellation of the 2020 GHP program, a group of GHP alumni have endeavored to raise private support for the 2021 program so that 2020 rising juniors (180) and a new class of finalists (650) are able to attend.

The GHP Alumni Steering Committee set a goal to raise \$100,000 by Jan. 31, 2021. In the first week of fundraising this group raised over \$10,000! The Committee as well as the GHP team greatly appreciate the outpouring of support from GHP alumni, individuals, foundations and companies.

Inspiring Georgia students to be more than they ever thought possible is what the Governor's Honors Program means to students in all parts of the state.

A special thank you to these fourth Quarter 2020 business donors:



GHP Alumni Spotlight

The Rhodes Scholarship is the oldest and most celebrated international fellowship award in the world. Last month, a **2015**

GHP alumna, Phaidra Buchanan, joined recipients from 64 countries around the world as she was named a 2021 Rhodes Scholar.



Phaidra attended Fayette County schools and graduated from Sandy Creek High School as 2017 Valedictorian. She turned down a scholarship offer from Harvard to accept a University of Georgia Foundation Fellowship, UGA's highest undergraduate scholarship.

Congratulations Phaidra and the University of Georgia! [Read UGA's complete announcement.](#)

2021 Governor Honors Program – Student Application Process

Preparing for each summer's program is truly a yearlong process. Information was emailed to superintendents, independent heads of schools and GHP coordinators around the state this past August with instructions and deadline information for submitting student nominations. Those education leaders had a Nov. 13 deadline to submit their student nominations.

Currently, all students who were nominated are busy completing their required supporting documentation online. The process is not that much different from the process used for college applications. **Nominated students have a FIRM deadline of Jan. 8, 2021 to submit all required documentation.**

While many students are nominated, only those students with a focus and drive for

excellence make it past this stage. This first student deadline spotlights those who will be the strongest pool of applicants to continue to inperson interviews and auditions. The entire process timeline can be reviewed [here](#). When all student finalists and instructors come together June 20 – July 17, 2021, we will hopefully have financial capacity to welcome 830 students to the summer program. We are preparing for inperson, virtual and/hybrid in 2021, depending on safety concerns related to COVID-19.

The [video](#) below enables you to hear testimonials specifically from the past student participants. Enjoy!



GHP Student Testimonials

"GHP has made me a lot more confident, curious, and independent."

"I don't feel nearly as intimidated by challenging academics at school after the rigorous experience that four weeks of GHP mathematics courses put me through."



"Going into the GHP experience, I thought it was cliché to hear alumni say it was "life changing," but as I return home, I know that I truly left a piece of my heart at Berry College this summer."

"Because of GHP I feel more confident in my abilities and skills."

"The application process and four weeks staying on the Berry Campus has prepared me well for college applications and the responsibilities that will come along with living away from home."



"The people I met are ones that I have remained in touch with and will continue to hold dear for the rest of my life."

"The more I learn, the more I want to learn, and at GHP I was exposed to mathematical ideas that I had never even heard of."

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