



Congratulations to the classes of 2016!



Eastside Academy Bellevue Campus



Eastside Academy Redmond Campus

Look at this exciting Eastside Academy first!

We held two commencement ceremonies this year, proudly graduating 8 seniors from the Bellevue campus and 6 seniors from our Redmond campus. As you know, all of our students work so hard to get their high school education, and these 14 students are no exception. This group held down part-time jobs, attended Running Start at Bellevue College, followed their passion in music, art, farming, and more. I have been inspired by these students as they have linked arms to pull each other along and hold each other up. In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, we are reminded: "Two are better than one because they can work more effectively. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up." These students are a true team.

Our amazing graduates are about to venture into the world, and Eastside Academy will continue to walk alongside them because we know that God intends for us to live in community. As alumni, we will provide them with academic support, professional services, scholarship funds, and a supportive social network. These 14 alumni will in turn come back to their Eastside Academy family to care for next graduating class by worshiping with us in chapel, participating in school activities, and finally, cheering loudly at graduation next year.

When we opened our doors 15 years ago, we knew there was a need for a place like Eastside Academy. We just didn't know how rapidly the need would grow. As alternative public school programs were cut and funding to nonprofits was consistently reduced, we found more and more families coming to us for help. The heartbreaking reality is that there are approximately 10,000 students who are expelled from Washington public schools each year. Right now, these children—God's children—are either scrambling to find some kind of a support system or they have simply given up. The sad truth is that we cannot serve all who have a need, but as we look towards our future, we can pray that changes.

Thank you for the investment you make in these youth. The returns are profound. Lives are changed. Families are healed. Bonds of addiction are broken. Teens who felt unworthy are blossoming as they find sure footing through Christ.

Thank you for all you do for Eastside Academy.

Sincerely,

Executive Director

Bellevue Campus



Anthony Abarca: My life before Eastside Academy was quickly going downhill. I was failing every class and I skipped school almost everyday. I was being bullied and I used drugs and alcohol to cope with everything. My life has done a complete 180 since coming to Eastside Academy. I gained a family and a support group that I can rely on and always go to. I am proud that I changed who I am and the path I was heading on. After graduation, I plan to help support my family as well as go to Bellevue College to earn credits in basic classes before going to the University of Washington to study Engineering and Architecture.



Americka Contreras: My life was slowly spiraling negatively. My connection with my family faded throughout the years. Being an EA student has been a challenge, and I've had my ups and downs, but I can say I made it. What has been most helpful is that through EA I have had a chance of redemption. The staff is loving and caring. I'm proud to have made it this far for all three years. My plans are to continue going to college and working to raise my son. My dream is to raise a happy, healthy boy and be independent and free.



Laurie Elizabeth Gaspar: My life was just okay before Eastside Academy. I took a lot of things for granted. I was never making the right choices. I wanted to do whatever I wanted, but it would always bite me in the end. The thing that was most helpful was when I got expelled from EA. I know it sounds weird, but it helped me grow. After that, I enrolled myself in military school for 6 months. I'm most proud that I graduated as a Cadet from the Washington Youth Academy. After graduation, I've considered getting employed (preferably not in fast food), travel out of the country, go to school to study Criminal Justice, or enlist in the military.



Jonathan Frederick Janssen: I was a rebellious kid who thought they knew everything. Now, I have found my peace through Christ. I've learned to respect people and see things from their perspective. I have a job working as a sales associate at Escape Outdoors, and I'm really proud of that. After graduation, I plan on attending Lake Washington Technical College to take a Mechanics class and learn how to be a motorcycle mechanic. I also want to be involved in music, own a truck and a Harley Davidson, and be a powder skier; living every day of my life to the fullest I can.



Hope Elizabeth LaFontaine: Before I made the decision to change things for the better, my life was a closet piled to the brim with skeletons. Coming to EA, there was a year of pure discomfort. Then there was a year of pure freedom. Then there was a year of purely focusing on what the future will bring. I have been able to stop leaning on my own understanding. I was able to be OK with being honest and dealing with the consequences at hand. After graduation, I'm taking it one day at a time.



Tannar August Russell James Jorgen Mann: My life before EA was unimaginable. I was in and out of treatment centers and failing my way out of school. I got clean on January 24, 2014, and went to two treatment centers after that to get into EA. Since being at this school, I've learned how to be a family and how to be honest and open-minded. I also got a job at North Coast Electric. I'm really proud of working a program of recovery, getting a full-time job, and graduating on time. After graduation, I am working full time at North Coast Electric, taking flight lessons, getting my real estate license, and most importantly, being more of service to Narcotics Anonymous. My goal is to "Live Life on Life's terms."



Travis T. Moody: I first went to treatment at 16 and came to Eastside Academy from an adult sober living facility in Los Angeles. My life at Eastside Academy has been filled with love and acceptance from all staff. My level of maturity has gone up immensely through mentoring from the school and the housing program. My proudest moment was making the Varsity soccer team for Bellevue High School. After EA, I plan to go to Northwest University to study Business and move on to a career in my field of study after college.



Janet Vera: Before coming to EA, I was going through a very hard time and was taking a destructive path. School was irrelevant to me. Going to this school has given me hope to graduate high school. I learned about God, and for the first time I believe in someone that I know will never leave me. One of the most important things I've learned is that relationships are hard, but if you try to work through them they will be stronger. Sometimes some relationships you have to let go because even though you think they are helping you, they are actually hurting you. I am really proud of being accepted to Warner Pacific College. My dream is to start my life, be independent, and see what God has for me.

Overlake Campus



Mogos Embaye: I was failing academically and I wasn't interested in anything. Since being at EA, I have tried harder in classes. Conversations with my mentor have led to an interest in my mindset and I've changed. I care more about people and I don't do activities that hurt others. I've learned a lot of things at EA. It's given me a voice and has taught me how to open up and get support. I'm really proud of getting into college, and being the 3rd person in my family to graduate. Next year, I will go to Bellevue College and keep working. My dream is to be successful, earning legal money. I also want to be in a relationship and have kids.



Anna Fisher: Life used to be chaotic. I was out of school and in and out of treatment. EA has created a dependable community for me to exist in. This is such a supportive school, and it's a joy to spend time with all of the individuals here—staff, mentors, and students alike. Since being here, I've learned balance. I tend to be an extreme thinker and that has caused me to make some very black and white decisions in my life. In the past year, I'm most proud of myself for persevering, changing old narratives, and for making my education a priority. I plan to continue taking classes at Bellevue College and working at an equestrian training barn. I have a dream of running my own dairy goat operation in Snohomish, making Chevre, and helping others learn to honor and respect animals.



Malik Gaona: Before coming to EA, I was always busy with homework and tests and it stressed me out and made me depressed at times. Being at EA has helped me improve my grades, and the staff has helped me keep my grades above 80%. I have learned to keep moving when things get difficult, and not to have it hinder my progress for the future. In the past year, I've gotten a job, and applied to Cornish and a few other schools. I'm proud of this because my depression has made staying motivated difficult. After graduation I plan to go to Cornish College to study fine arts and painting. My dream is to finish four years at Cornish and do freelance painting or put my art in an art gallery.



Kathrine Mae Hasselgrave: I used to go through everything alone and I was unmotivated. I felt stuck all the time and I didn't know why. Now, life is joyful, awesome, and fun. I am building friendships, even outside of EA. I feel like I have a bright future. Since being at EA, I've learned that I can't always have people speak for me. I need to be my own person. I'm most proud of the fact that I've become more confident and outgoing. I also made it onto Honor Roll! I plan to go to college and pursue a position in the medical field. My goal is to become someone that I can be proud of and my family will be proud of.



David Kristian Lorentzen: I had no community at my old school. I shut down, and that's when the stress came. At EA, it's easier to get up in the morning. I enjoy the people and the teachers. My relationship with God grew more than ever, and through EA I got connected to a Life Group. It's opened opportunities to pursue my interests in shop and welding. It's like a family here, and it's helped me become more accepting of support. I'm really proud of my independence and being able to see my actions and that they have results. After graduation, I plan to pursue an engineering career and restore cars. My dream is to own my own fishing business, buy a boat, and live on it.



Mary Quintana: My life was destructive and hectic. I didn't care about school. Since being at Eastside Academy Overlake, I have been able to build healthy relationships with my parents and friends. I have gained a lot of confidence and self-worth. My grades have improved and I have goals to work towards. I used to be a really angry person, and I've gained a lot of patience and tolerance. With the help of my mentor, I have found what I am passionate about and how to work towards that. My plans for graduation (besides crying) are to continue attending Bellevue College and to earn my AA in Early Childhood Education. My goal is to transfer to Eastern or Western Washington.

Thank you to our photographers:

Bellevue Campus: Ted Cook and Per Thomassen

Redmond Campus: Jacob and Emily Smith

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Eastside Academy Summer Activities

June 22—BBQ at Bellevue Park

July 6—Kirkland Waterfront

July 13—BBQ Meydenbauer Park

July 20—Pike Place Market

July 27—Summer Movie

August 3 —BBQ at EAB campus

August 10—Fun at Gasworks Park

August 17—BBQ at EAB campus

August 25—Orientation 6:00—8:00 pm

If you wish to participate, please contact Derick
Harris at (425)452-9920 x6006