

**Scholarship and Leadership**  
**Niswonger Foundation Board Update**  
**Thursday, August 10, 2023**

**Summer Leadership Institute**

The 2023 Summer Leadership Institute focused on a state and local perspective of the meaning of “community.” The Scholars spent three days in Nashville. They visited SCORE, meeting with David Mansouri, Mary Cypress Metz and Brice Warden. They visited the Governor’s Early Literacy Foundation, spending time with James Pond, Executive Director. They toured the Frist Art Museum, the Parthenon, the Hermitage, and the Governor’s Residence. At the Residence, they were treated to the surprise of meeting our First Lady, Maria Lee. The final stop on the visit was touring the State Capitol and meeting with Governor Lee.

The Scholars returned to Greeneville for a two-day “Community Mapping” project, where they considered the opportunities and challenges faced by a rural community. A panel of regional leaders were on hand to listen to the Scholars’ final presentations and provide critique. Our panel included: Cal Doty, Mayor of Greeneville; Jeff Taylor, President of the Greene County Partnership; and our Board members David Golden and Scott Niswonger. Marilyn duBrisk participated as elocution coach.

**Scholars Travel/Training Experiences**

- The Junior Scholars traveled to New York City in May. Highlights of the trip included a tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the play *Leopoldstadt*, on Broadway; Liberty Island and Ellis Island; Central Park and Strawberry Fields; the 911 Memorial; and enjoying the sites and architecture of the City, averaging 15-20 miles of walking each day.
- The Senior Scholars traveled to Normandy, Paris, and London. The major focus of the trip was five days of WWII history in Normandy, visiting Omaha, Utah, Sword, Gold and Juno Beaches, Arromanches, Sainte-Mere Eglise, Bayeux and the Bayeux Tapestry, American Cemetery, Normandy-American Cemetery, La Combe (German Cemetery), Pointe du Hoc, Rouen, Pegasus Bridge, Caen and the WWII Museum, and other WWII sites. Time in Normandy also included Honfleur and Mont St. Michel. The Scholars also enjoyed following WWII history to Paris, then riding the Eurostar to London. Many sites were visited, and experiences had in both cities, including the Churchill War Rooms.

**Scholar Academics**

- The following Scholars obtained a 4.0 gpa for the Spring 2023 Semester: Derek Driskill (Carson Newman University, junior); Mabel Olson (Tennessee Technological University, junior), and Makayla Davis (East Tennessee State University, senior)
- All Scholars are in good academic standing with our program.
- While all Scholars complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service each semester, of special note, Trent Dickerson (University of Tennessee, junior) completed 70 hours for the spring semester.

### *Recent Scholar and Alumni Scholar Updates*

- Please see attached updates.

### **ALUMNI SCHOLAR UPDATES**

**Dr. Katie Baker** – (Class of 2007) – was selected to serve a 3-year term on the NIH (National Institutes of Health) Child Care Board, beginning in September 2023.

**Levi Blazer** – (Class of 2021) completed his two-year rotational program with Optum Insight (A UnitedHealth Group Company). He has been promoted to Manager, Innovation Enablement, where he will be working to ensure their product teams are leading the way in healthcare solutions.

**Christian Dalton** – (Class of 2020) – recently passed his thesis defense to receive a Master's of Animal Science from University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

**Ben Fox** – (Class of 2009) – was named Head Football Coach at Maryville College in Knoxville.

**Courtney Hill** – (Class of 2019) – was co-creator of a program through the senior center in Sevierville to work with patients with Parkinson's Disease.

**Rachel Mixon** – (Class of 2011) – has a new position at Modular Devices in Indianapolis, Indiana as Engineering Manager.

**Dr. Ivory Shelton** – (Class of 2016) – has begun her first year of a Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellowship at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. She will be completing a funded master's degree, in Applied Philosophy and Bioethics during her fellowship.

**Alex Smyth** – (Class of 2015) is returning to the classroom at West Greene High School to teach Math. He and his wife, Macy welcomed their second child, a daughter, Audrey Michele, on May 15.

**Elizabeth Tetrick** – (Class of 2006) has accepted the position of President Elect on the board of Holston Habitat for Humanity.

**Zachary Ward** – (Class of 2019) – has accepted a full-time teaching position in Science at Science Hill High School in Johnson City. He and his wife Callie welcomed their first child, a daughter, Carson Lee, on June 2.

**Dr. Rachel Witt** – (Class of 2012) – was contacted by one of the editors for “Archaeology Magazine” to discuss her research as part of a special article that was printed and released online from their May issue. The story is about the ongoing archaeological work on the north coast of Peru. As a result, some of her work and a few of her quotes were in this article. The article can be accessed online at <https://www.archaeology.org/issues/508-2305/features/11340-peru-chimu-chan-chan> if you would like to read it.

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#### **NISWONGER SCHOLAR UPDATES**

**Derek Driskill** – (Carson-Newman University, Senior) accepted a part-time position at Carson-Newman as Internal Auditor and special assistant to the president.

**Sam Hensley** – (East Tennessee State University, Senior) - was awarded the Dr. Richard W. Kopp Chemistry Education Scholarship by East Tennessee State University’s Chemistry Department. He received a \$500 chemistry education scholarship for his academic achievements in the Chemistry Department. He was named the Student Government Association’s Secretary of the Interior.

**Macy Noe** – (Vanderbilt University, Senior) accepted a summer internship opportunity with Parv Consulting based in Nashville and Colorado. She will work remotely.