Congratulations to the Class of 2022! Nolan Johnson, Rusia Saidi, and Telicia Thompson received their diplomas and turned their tassels, becoming the newest GSD alumni on Tuesday. All three speakers provided great advice to students. Nolan, Salutatorian, instructed students to work hard and put away their phones to focus on real life. Rusia, Valedictorian, encouraged students to overcome obstacles. Commencement speaker Donna McGee, a GSD alumna ('85) and Guidance Counselor at the Alabama School for the Deaf, made a wonderful address, sharing how she challenged herself to forge her own path and never give up on her goals and dreams, and encouraged our students to do the same. The graduates, their families, staff, and students enjoyed a lovely reception after graduation. A lot of photos were taken, a lot of hugs were given, and many memories were made. Thank you to everyone who made graduation happen, including Graduation Sponsor, Dr. Tiffany Brown, GSD administrators, the IT team, the maintenance team, the Hospitality Committee, Beth Bell, Terry McElwee, Teri Hicks, Marie Dickinson, Bussey’s Florist of Cedartown, and Dixie Green for the donation of ferns. More thanks to everyone who helped the graduates achieve and succeed along the way—their families, their teachers, their RAs, and their friends. Congratulations, Class of 2022! We are so proud of you, and will miss you, but look forward to seeing you soar!

Clockwise: Rusia Saidi, Nolan Johnson, Telicia Thompson, all in cap and gown, casual senior photo of all three on the GSD campus.

Photo credit: Katherine Kennedy
Lined up; procession: Nolan, Rusia, Telicia; State School Superintendent Richard Woods signs a congratulatory video message

Telicia opens the ceremony with a welcome message; Nolan’s Salutatorian address; Rusia’s Valedictorian address

Terry McElwee (GSD Accounting Office) introduces Donna McGee (her sister); Donna McGee gives the commencement address; DeSign Choir performs “This World Is Yours” by Julie Durden (led by Julie Burton).

Above: Nolan, Rusia, and Telicia receive diplomas from GSD Superintendent Leslie Jackson; tassel turn; cap toss

Below: Telicia’s family bearhug, Nolan with family, Rusia with family; reception; the grads
High School students were honored for their hard work this year at Awards Day. Students received certificates and kudos for their efforts. Senior Nolan Johnson was awarded the McDonald’s Leadership Award that included a medallion and $500 check. Congratulations to all students for a successful school year!
Senior Breakfast

The Class of 2022 was honored at the traditional Senior Breakfast the day before graduation. The delicious menu included quiche, cinnamon sour cream pancakes, bacon, and breakfast punch. Seniors invited staff who were especially important to them as their guests. During breakfast, the seniors and staff guests shared stories and gratitude. A really lovely event! Many thanks for Jamie Herston, Cheryl Beard, Mallory Edge, Beth Bell, and Jennifer Sanford for cooking, decorating, and making it magical!

Wrapping Up 175

GSD celebrated our 175th Anniversary of educating Deaf and Hard of Hearing children throughout the 2021-2022 school year. GSD opened its doors to students on 15 May 1846 and we continue to strive to provide the best education for our students. Last Friday, the school wrapped up the year-long event with a slideshow and cupcakes. You can enjoy the slideshow of the many events that celebrated 175 on the GSD webpage or social media. Thanks to Loren Frick for making the great slideshow and the Nutrition Team for the cupcakes!

Upcoming Events

- 5/23 Elementary Field Day (Rolater Park in CS)
- 5/24 Middle School Fun Day (Bowling in Rome)
- 5/24 Kindergarten Awards and Graduation 1:30 pm
- Wednesday 5/25 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL! Homegoing time 11:45 am
Atlanta Braves and GCDHH Deaf Awareness Day

The Georgia Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing partnered with the Atlanta Braves to host Deaf Awareness Day on 15 May. GSD Class of 2022 Valedictorian Rusia Saidi performed the National Anthem with AASD’s Valedictorian, Makayla Smith. There were 800 of the special Deaf Awareness ticket packages purchased—so it was great to see so many people from the Deaf community there to cheer for the Braves and have a great time (despite the Braves losing). GSD was well represented by staff, students, and families. Hope to have more families there next year! Many thanks to Lara Whitfield-Garfinkel, GCDHH, and the Braves for this awesome event!

Lara, Rusia, Makayla, Jimmy Peterson (GCDHH director) and Chip (interpreter)

Lara with the valedictorians

GSD Superintendent Leslie Jackson and son Hayes

Makayla and Rusia meet Blooper!

Student Abe with his dad, teacher Steven Herston

Student Kingsley with his family

GSD teachers Kaylyn Nix, Marie Dickinson, Dana Tarter, and Tiffany Brown

Students Tony, Diego, Raul, and Jose with their families and GSD staff

Enjoying the game.

Cool fingerspelling BRAVES shirt

The Senior Tiger Walk is a fun tradition. The grads visit each department and are feted by all the students and staff. Videos on GSD media channels!