

WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS GRADUATES

Senior overcomes obstacles on road to becoming a teacher

BY KIM UNDERWOOD
WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

Having dealt with a number of physical difficulties over the years, Alexandria Nicole Lash knows what it's like to face challenges. With that in mind, she wants to become a teacher who works with students with special needs or perhaps an occupational therapist.

After Lash graduates from Atkins Academic & Technology High School, she will go to Winston-Salem State University, where she plans to major in exercise science with a minor in education.

"Nicole, as she is affectionately called, is an awesome student with a beautiful personality," said school counselor Felicia Tubbs. "Even though Nicole has experienced many obstacles in her life she does not allow it to define or hold her back. Nicole will graduate from Atkins High School on June 6th with honors... I am sure with Nicole's resilient personality and determination she will accomplish her personal and professional goals."

Lash was born eight weeks prematurely. She weighed 3 pounds, 12 ounces. "When I was younger, I had a lot of complications to deal with," Lash said.

"She spent most of her first year in the hospital," said her mother, Lawanda Lash.

The complications included necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), a serious intestinal disease that can affect children born prematurely. Also, one of the medications Lash was on carried the chance of liver damage. It did damage her

liver, and she had an operation at the age of 10 months in which her mother donated part of her liver to her daughter.



Lash

As time went along, Lawanda Lash said, everyone might say something along the lines of "Once we are through this, everything will be fine" only to have something else come up right after that.

When Lash was born, she and her parents lived in the Atlanta area. Both Lawanda Lash and her husband, Cedric, are from this area and graduated from North Forsyth High School. They moved back here in part to be around grandparents Hubert and Ericsteen Lash, and Samuel and Myra Benjamin as well as other family members. Lawanda Lash said that both sides of the family have been extremely supportive, as everyone has dealt with all that has come up.

Lash's early difficulties led to such long-term issues as immune deficiencies, not being able to receive certain immunization shots, severe allergies to dairy and peanuts and, more generally, the need to take great care with what she eats. "She was 45 pounds in the seventh-grade," Lawanda Lash said.

Growing up, Lash also had to have various surgeries and receive such assistance as speech therapy and physical therapy.

Through it all, Lawanda Lash said, her daughter would talk to her about how she wanted to give back, perhaps by working with kids. "She thought she could identify with

kids with special needs."

Day-to-day, Lash continues to deal with challenges. She has to take care about being exposed to illness, and, when she took the Nursing Fundamentals class at Atkins, she couldn't participate in the clinical portion of the class when everyone else began working in a retirement home.

Because she is smaller than most people her age, she also has to put up with people saying such things as "Are you sure you're 18? You look 12 or 13."

Lash enjoys shopping, but it can be frustrating sometimes because it can be hard to find clothes she likes that fit well, even when she shops in the Junior Department.

Lash's mother is a nurse, and her father, Cedric works for BB&T. Her brother, Kendrick, is 10. Before coming to Atkins as a junior, Lash spent two years at Early College of Forsyth.

For fun, Lash goes horseback riding at Cash Lovell Stables and Riding Academy. She has been doing that since third grade. Because she is allergic to horses, she has to take Benadryl before each session. Lash enjoys art, and she has done such things as painted a mural that features a dolphin and sculpted a polar bear out of clay.

One thing she has learned over the years, Lash said, is "no matter what you go through, you still have a positive path you can go down... at times, I wish I was normal but stuff happens for a reason."

"She really strives to be all she can be with how God has made her," Lawanda Lash said. "She is going to try her best."

Alexandrea Nicole Lash graduated from Atkins on Saturday, June 6, in the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum Annex.

Two Parkland seniors win Gates Scholarships

BY KIM UNDERWOOD
WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

As part of their applications for the 2015 Gates Millennium Scholars Program, Parkland seniors Eric Brown and Javier Cattle had to write a series of eight essays looking at different aspects of their lives.

In one of his essays, Cattle wrote about the path that led to him becoming an Eagle Scout. In first grade, he joined the Cub Scouts. He could have worked toward the Arrow of Light award. Somewhere along the way, though, he lost his motivation. When he became a Boy Scout, he vowed to himself that this time he was going to reach the highest rank — an Eagle Scout.

He pursued that goal with great energy. The average age of boys becoming an Eagle Scout is 17. "I got that when I was 15," Cattle said.

The requirements include organizing an Eagle project and earning 21 merit badges. Cattle earned 41.

In one of his essays, Brown wrote about using his position as president of the Senior Class at Parkland High School as one way to become more comfortable talking with others. "I have trouble conversing," he said. "When I'm nervous, it shows up more."

As Senior Class president, he sees it as his responsibility to make people feel at ease and part of the school community. So he has made a point of speaking with students throughout the school, especially those who might appear to be alone or ill-at-ease. While promoting a sense of community at the school, he has helped himself.

Brown and Cattle are among 1,000 students nationwide this year receiving Gates Millennium scholarships. Brown will be going to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Cattle will be going to Appalachian State University.

Charity Sutphin, a teacher in the English Department and International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at Parkland, said, "These boys are what teaching is all about — their dedication and strength of character lets me know that the future is in good hands."

"Javier Cattle is a once-in-a-career type of student. His humility, kindness, and empathy just astound me — I cannot wait to see where he goes in life. Whatever success awaits him is completely deserved."

"Eric Brown is another outstanding young man. He is funny, creative, and has worked so hard to earn everything he has accomplished. He is the kind of kid who makes me proud to be a Parkland Mustang."

Principal Spencer Hardy said: "Eric Brown and Javier Cattle are great examples of the quality of students we have at Parkland Magnet High School. These young men have taken advantage of all of their academic and extracurricular opportunities and being awarded as Gates Millennium Scholars is a fine recognition of all of their work and efforts."

The Gates Millennium Scholarship Program, which is administered through the United Negro College Fund, is designed to help high-performing students who might not otherwise be able to afford college. Funded by a \$1.6 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, it covers whatever costs of college that are not covered by any other scholarships or financial aid a student is receiving.

"It covers basically the cost of attendance," Cattle said.

Students who go on to graduate school for a master's degree and even on to a doctorate can continue to receive assistance through the program.

Brown was also accepted at Wake Forest University. Cattle was also accepted at N.C. State University, Duke University, Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and Bowdoin College in Maine.

Receiving the scholarships means a lot to both young men.

"Without the scholarship, I probably wouldn't be able to go somewhere," Cattle said.

Both young men are participating in the IB Program at Parkland and will be receiving an IB diploma in addition to their regular diplomas.

Achieving that goal requires a lot of work. "The IB Diploma program is a world program that requires two intense years of six seminar courses each running 240 hours over the two years," said Melissa Moore, who coordinates the IB program at Parkland in addition to being a visual arts teacher.

"It also requires a Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course with a 1,500 word essay, an Extended Essay of 4,000 words and, finally, Community Active Service (CAS), which is service to the community with a minimum of 150 hours," Moore said. "All this is required as well as specific scoring on the IB Exams to qualify for the IB Diploma."

For the past three years, Cattle has also taken art classes with Moore. "Although he is not planning on going into art as a profession, he is very talented with a preference to charcoal," she said. "His artwork has had an emphasis on his true love of biology as he has studied the works of Da



Eric Brown and Javier Cattle

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Both young men are quite active in other aspects of the school as well. Brown plays an assortment of brass instruments in the marching band. He also sings in the school's choral ensemble and gospel choir. On the school's Academic Competition team, he is a member of the science team.

"I volunteer a lot," Brown said. He regularly participates in such activities as food drives, campus cleanups and car washes to raise money for worthy causes.

Cattle is a member of the history team on the school's

Academic Competition team and plays viola in the school orchestra. He is a member of the National Honor Society and participated in Science Olympiad. He also participates in scouting's Venture Crew program, which includes both young men and young women. On weekends, he may spend time camping and canoeing.

Brown was born in Champagne, Ill. His first stop in North Carolina was Cumberland County. After moving here, he went to Clemmons Middle and Flat Rock middle schools before coming to Parkland.

"I was born in Pinehurst," Cattle said. "I moved here when I was 2."

He went to South Fork Elementary and Clemmons Middle.

Both students foresee a career in science.

"I want to be a biomedical engineer," Brown said.

That might lead to cures for diseases and other medical problems. Ultimately, he envisions using that knowledge as a teacher. "I always had the desire to help people and to teach others."

Cattle plans to major in cell molecular biology and become a researcher who develops vaccines and treatments, perhaps for such medical issues as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease.

"I want to find new treatments," he said.

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