

Greater Commonwealth Virtual School



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Phone: 413-475-3879

Email: info@gcvs.org

Online: www.gcvs.org

Greater Commonwealth Virtual School Holds First In-Person Graduation Since COVID-19 Pandemic



Laila Itemere, recipient of the Susan D. Hollins Founder's Award, speaks during the ceremony. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)

GREENFIELD -- Executive Director Salah Khelfaoui and the administration and staff at the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School would like to congratulate the Class of 2022 on their graduation this past weekend.

For the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school held an in-person graduation ceremony for the graduating class. The ceremony was held at the Ja'Duke Center for Performing Arts in Turners Falls on Friday, June 10, and was also streamed live on the GCVS Facebook page.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem, opening remarks were given by Director Khelfaoui and GCVS Board of Trustee Chair Jennifer Reynolds. Each expressed to the students how proud they should be of their achievements.

“You’ve all put aside your worries and you conquered your fears to work hard and achieve the success you enjoy today,” Director Khelfaoui said. “In a few days when all of the celebrations are over many of you will most likely experience new worries, anxieties and fears as to what lies ahead. Some of you may have already started feeling that way, and that is normal. But know this, beyond that cloud of uncertainty and fear, you will all discover purpose and success.”

Reynolds described how she too is a product of a “less traveled” path to education and success. She wished to impart several lessons she has learned in her life to the graduates, including the importance of always being true to yourself and trusting your instincts, having good intentions and taking time to care for yourself, and never giving up despite any obstacles life may present.

Several students were recognized for achieving scholarships and awards.

Ella Pierce, of Greenfield, was honored with the Gauthier Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship is named for Scott Gauthier, a beloved member of the GCVS school community who worked directly with high school students as one of the school’s guidance counselors.

Recipients of the Susan D. Hollins Founder's Award were also honored, including Laila Itemere. The award is in honor of GCVS’ original founder/superintendent, and is given to a graduating senior who exemplifies the characteristics of courage, scholarship, generosity and entrepreneurial spirit.

The valedictorian address was given by Jeremy Ruggles, who has taken part in GCVS’ dual enrollment option through the school’s partnership with Greenfield Community College. Ruggles plans to continue his education at Greenfield Community College by studying liberal arts.

“No matter how you did or how high school treated you, you still made it. Even if you just barely scraped by, you should all be proud,” Ruggles said. “I am proud of every student, both here and those at home, for graduating today. I am also proud of this school. GCVS is an amazing place for students who were unable to thrive in a traditional school, for whatever reason.”

To close the ceremony the names of each student were displayed on a large screen on stage, including what the students’ plans are for after graduation.

Meet the Class

The graduating members of the GCVS Class of 2022 include the following. A * indicates a student graduating with honors:

Pablo Alvarado-Cruz, Fausto Neto Andrade, Noah Arel, Nathan Berrios, Eliza Blakie, William Bohonowicz, Brooke Brunelle, *Krystal Brunelle, Taylor Brunelle, Joshua-Mark Campbell, Ivy Canavan, *Reid Carrier, Alainna Catino, *Emily Clark, Amelia Collett, Xavier Cruz, Celia Curtin, Lydia Cutillo, Mickey DeMartino, Ariana Diaz, Cameron DiRusso, Libby Doyle, *Grace Dunning, Alicia Emond, *Marick Farina, Gianna Finkley, Carah Finn;

Lydia Flagg, Angelina Frisoni, Savannah Frye, Hikaru Fujiwara, Matt Gayle, *Anthony Gerardi, Morgan Gibney, Vanessa Gomez, Ally Gracia, Sofia Guadalupe, Cassidy Herbert, Jomarick Hernandez, Alexia Hubacz, *Morgane Inhaber-Courchesne, Laila Itemere, Kiara Johnson-Ware, Kayleigh Kenney, *Jayzon King, *Olivia Knickerbocker, Kaylee Lee, Iraima Lopez Diaz, Nicole Lopez, Isaie Louis, Harley MacMullen, Shane Mahoney;

Emma Matteau, Mariah Mayerhofer, Claire Mental, Holly Merrikin, Lacy Migliaccio, *Caitlin Moran, Evelyn Mostovoy, Emma Nguyen, Jacqueline Nieves, Edit Nye, Fiona Peill-Meininghaus, Anna Pepper, *Ella Pierce, Alexandra Pinto, Callie Poissot, Danielle Poole, Adrianna Power Callaghan, Sofia Price, Nathan Recchia, Joelyne Reyes, Courtney Ribas, Sean Roach, Julia Roberts, Ryan Roberts, *Nolan Ross;

Madison Roy, *Jeremy Ruggles, Kasia Russo, *Nolan Saito, Tasneem Shakir, Emma Sherman, Kayla Soeng, Melody Sousa Rebelo, Emilee Souza, Piper Stephenson, Jackson Sullivan, Rehan Syed, Emilia Tryon, Finn Trznadel, Yulianna Vale-Madsen, Adrian Vargas Rivera, *Amandine

Vereque, Gabriella Vigorito, Briley Wade, *Lindsey Welch, Charles Williams, Tyler Williams, Owen Winters.



Students make their way into the venue prior to the ceremony. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)



Executive Director Salah Khelfaoui addresses the crowd. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)



Students await hearing their names to receive their diplomas. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)



The valedictorian address was given by Jeremy Ruggles. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)



Vice Principal Dr. Jodi Drury speaks during the ceremony. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)



Students were recognized on the screen on the stage. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)



Board of Trustee Chair Jennifer Reynolds speaks on her own personal path through education during the ceremony. (Greater Commonwealth Virtual School photo / Courtesy of Schley Warren)

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A message from the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School