

WHS students selected as pillars of their class



Sarah Tencher, Emily Harris,
Amanda Harris, Nicki Simon
and Sierra Forvilly

Publisher's note: *Five Whittell High School seniors were honored Feb. 27 by Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe as young women of distinction. The following is what counselor Estela Gerlinger said about them at the lunch at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.*

By Estela Gerlinger

Sarah Tencher

Sarah has always been dedicated to her academic endeavors. She will be graduating with an honor's diploma and a GPA of 4.21. During her high school career, Sarah has consistently found her place on the honor roll for her academic achievements. Sarah enjoys being challenged and she has a real thirst for knowledge. Her favorite subject is math because it is not subjective and it's based on facts. And although Sarah hasn't decided on a specific career or major to focus on in college, she knows she would very much like to study something that involves math and science.

What makes Sarah a great individual is that she is not only a

great scholar, but she has also learned how to balance a rigorous class schedule with extracurricular activities. Sarah has participated on the volleyball and softball teams and in cheerleading. In addition, Sarah belongs to the Key Club and the National Honor's Society where she has learned leadership skills that will translate well into college. Last but not least, Sarah enjoys serving her school as our current senior class vice president and class treasurer.

As well as being an exemplary student at Whittell High School with excellent grades and citizenship, Sarah has dedicated much of her free time to community service. Sarah understands the importance of giving back and has enjoyed doing so by participating in causes that are near and dear to her heart; Breast Cancer Awareness, Nevada Humane Society, Relay for Life, and Special Olympics.

When I asked Sarah who has had the most influence on her, she quickly responded that both her parents have had the most influence on her. She admires her mother for being caring and empathetic, and her father for being motivated and hardworking. This response was not surprising as Sarah is an individual who has cultivated all of these great qualities within herself.

Amanda Harris

As her new counselor, I have gotten to know Amanda for the well-rounded student that she is. Amanda is a great example of the complete George Whittell High School Student. I say this because Amanda has managed to be involved in our school across all areas.

As part of our Executive Student Council, she is always looking to improve school spirit on campus not only by planning events that encourage school involvement but by leading by example. Amanda is a member of the school's Black and White Choir, Christian Club, National Honor Society,

Academic Team, and Youth Group. As a natural athlete, she is involved in sports and this year was awarded division MVP in volleyball and All Team League in basketball. Amanda has carried the determination, enthusiasm, and focus she has for athletics into the classroom by challenging herself academically and enrolling in AP and honors courses.

Amanda learned from a young age to fight for what she wants when her father was diagnosed with lymphoma. Watching him fight for his life and turning to her faith, instilled in Amanda a determined work ethic and a need to want to help others. Growing up, Amanda also learned to admire her mother for being the person who has always held the family together and keeps it running like a smooth machine.

No matter how demanding her school obligations are, Amanda still has been heavily involved in community service dedicating her little free time to causes that are near and dear to her such as the annual Relay for Life, helping out at her church, and mentoring younger children through athletics and contests. That is why it's not surprising that Amanda after graduating from George Whittell High School with an honor's diploma and a GPA of 4.16 is excited to begin her path to becoming a high school English teacher. A career that will give her the opportunity to marry the two things she loves, English because she believes there are no definite answers, and teaching which gives her the opportunity to help others. Amanda is well on her way to achieving her goal and her next step will be to pick between McDaniel College in Maryland or Coker College in South Carolina, as they've both offered her a scholarship and the opportunity to play volleyball.

Sierra Forvilly

I have gotten to know Sierra for the dedicated and all-around great individual that she is.

Sierra has always been dedicated to her academic endeavors.

She currently is on track to graduate with an honor's diploma and she has a GPA of 3.94. During her high school career, Sierra has consistently found her place on the honor roll as well.

Like her peers, Sierra has learned how to balance a rigorous class schedule with extracurricular activities. Sierra has a deep passion for athletics that was instilled in her by her father, a former USC athlete. She credits her father for teaching her work ethic and giving her the tools to become the strong and independent young lady that she is. Sierra's first sport of choice is track. Because we live in a small community that lacks coaches, she's had to rely on her father for guidance. But it was Sierra who took the initiative and dedicated long hours to practicing so that she could compete at a high level. Her dedication paid off, as last year, Sierra led her team to the state championship title and Sierra broke and set a new record in the 300-meter hurdle. This fall, Sierra as team captain led the varsity soccer team to the state runner-up title for the first time in 15 years. Sierra was able to accomplish all of this all while participating in cheerleading.

Off the field, Sierra's other love is singing. As a member of our Black and White Choir, she truly enjoys any the opportunity she gets to perform. Sierra is also our school newspaper and yearbook editor. This is a huge responsibility for Sierra as she has had to learn how to manage her time and balance her schedule between her academic obligations, athletics, cheerleading, and choir all while ensuring that her classmates are on task so that she can meet her deadlines.

As well as being an exemplary student involved in all aspects at Whittell High School with excellent grades and citizenship, Sierra has dedicated what little free time she has left to community service. Sierra understands the importance of giving back and she has enjoyed doing so by volunteering her free time to mentoring younger students and coaching them in track

and soccer.

In speaking with Sierra, I asked her how is she able to manage to get everything done in addition to working part time for her family's business. Her response is that she has always liked to keep busy. It isn't always easy, but as she has learned in track, life will always have hurdles and it is all in how you approach those hurdles. With this attitude, I have no doubt that Sierra will achieve her goal of someday becoming a doctor.

Emily Harris

As her new counselor, I have gotten to know Emily for the well-rounded student that she is. Emily, like her twin Amanda, is a great example of the complete George Whittell High School Student. I say this because Emily's school involvement spans across all facets. She is an honor student and a member of our Black and White Choir, Christian Club, National Honor Society, Academic Team, and Youth Groups. In addition, Emily continues to dedicate much of her free time to serving others in the community.

At a young age, Emily's father was diagnosed with lymphoma. This diagnosis and seeing her father fight for his life had a great impact on Emily. She didn't completely understand the details of his diagnosis; all Emily knew was that he was going to fight it. The other person Emily truly admires is her grandfather. Listening to him proudly speak of the time he served in the navy and his stories about Vietnam and Korea have truly inspired her. Both her father's determination and her grandfather's service have made her equally determined to win every challenge that comes her way.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Emily has immersed herself in sports and she has relied on her faith and close family bonds to help her become the strongest student athlete she can be. Whenever she is faced with an obstacle, she tells

herself that like her father and grandfather, she must continue to fight and give her best. Due to this drive, Emily has earned numerous athletic awards and honors including First Team All League in both basketball and volleyball this year.

Emily's enthusiasm for athletics has carried over into the classroom where she has challenged herself academically by enrolling in AP and honors courses. Emily will be graduating in June from George Whittell High School with an honor's diploma and a GPA of 4.21. Emily is excited to continue on her path and like her sister, Amanda, Emily has been offered scholarships and the opportunity to play volleyball both at McDaniel College in Maryland, and Coker College in South Carolina. Emily looks forward to the small college atmosphere these schools have to offer and embarking on a new experience. Although Emily is undecided as to what specific career she is interested in pursuing, Emily does know that no matter what challenges she is faced with she will fight through and land in a profession where she will help others.

Nicki Simon

Nicki Simon will also be graduating with an honor's diploma and she has a GPA of 3.96. Nicki credits her mother as the person who has influenced her the most. Watching her mother go back to school later in life and start a career in nursing has been very inspiring to Nicki.

Like her peers here today, Nicki is not only a great scholar, but she has also learned how to balance academics with extracurricular activities. She has been playing basketball, varsity softball, and varsity soccer since her freshman year. Nicki credits these experiences for teaching her the importance of hard work and dedication, and how to become the senior and the captain that she is today. This fall Nicki was awarded the Coach's Award for her participation in soccer.

In addition to athletics, Nicki is the Key Club president,

executive vice president, a member of the National Honor Society and a senior class representative. With these credentials it is no surprise that Nicki's favorite class is American Government as she finds learning about laws and how they affect our society very interesting. Nicki is grateful to have attended a small high school, because by having had the opportunity to be involved in athletics, academics, and numerous other activities including the Black and White Choir, it has given her the ability to grasp what she enjoys doing most.

Nicki really enjoys being a part of humanitarian efforts, she has volunteered for numerous causes including Relay for Life, Special Olympics, and Breast Cancer Awareness to name a few. But it was an organization called Invisible Children that really caught her attention in the eighth grade. She learned how the organization was about ending the war in Central Africa and bringing peace back to the affected communities and this really had an impact on Nicki. She spent the next four years of her life supporting Invisible Children by participating in awareness events and raising money for their cause. It was these experiences that gave Nicki feelings of satisfaction and self-worth that she could only find by giving of herself.

After graduation, Nicki will be traveling to Africa for three months in the fall to work in underdeveloped communities where she will learn about the local culture and people. Some of the work she will be doing includes tracking and rehabilitating rhinos in Uganda, teaching English at an all girls academy in Kenya, and working in a medical clinic in Tanzania. Nicki is excited for her trip and hopes to come back with a better idea of what type of education she would like to pursue, one thing she does know for sure is that helping others will be a lifelong mission for her.

