

Highlights



The professors, students and alumni who shine in Madison's constellation

and JMU where she earned a B.S., *magna cum laude*, in interdisciplinary liberal studies with math and science in 2012, and a Master's in Teaching with certification in algebra in May 2013.

"My dream job has always been to be a teacher," she says, calling herself one of the lucky ones who has always known what she wanted to do. "I used to teach my little sister." Her sister, Katelyn ('14), is a rising senior at JMU.

Since middle school in Midlothian, Va., Bailey has volunteered in her community, worked with the homeless population and taught low-income students to read. "My 'I want to teach moment' came," she says, "while I was working for Partners in Education," an organization that Bailey and her best high-school friend, Samantha Karnes ('12), brought to the newly-opened Cosby High School when they were redistricted.

Through PIE, Bailey worked in a low-income area with students who couldn't read. When she arrived, the teacher in charge identified one child: "He's the naughty kid. You're wasting your time."

So Bailey asked to work with him and, by the end of her term, he was reading.

"I love helping people," Bailey says. "I love to inspire people to do something for themselves. Not to do it for them, but to help them achieve." It's a surprising confession for the Cosby senior voted "shyest."

"Yep," she admits, "Shyest. But JMU completely changed that for me."

When Bailey first came to JMU, she followed the conventional wisdom: She studied and stayed focused. "I didn't get involved," she says. By the middle of her freshman year, JMU wasn't working for her. Yet, she ventured out enough to apply to be a Freshman Orientation Guide or FROG. When she was chosen, she decided to fulfill that duty — and then transfer.

But everything changed when she got involved.

During her work as a FROG, she met Archie Duncan ('13), who became her best friend. Bailey also became a TEACH ambassador. Teach Education Ambassadors Cultivating High Achievers is a student-to-student mentoring program started by Margaret Kyger ('80), JMU professor of exceptional education and assistant dean of the College of Education.

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Mulalo wasn't sure he had anything to write on his freshly-cut-out paper star. "Write your hope, dream, desire or wish," Jennifer Bailey ('12, '13M) instructed her South African students. "Then we'll hang the stars from the ceiling."

"They were so excited," Bailey says of the students she taught as a JMU senior during a short-term Study Abroad with Teresa Harris, Fulbright Scholar and JMU professor of elementary and early childhood education.

"They had never worked with colored paper before," Bailey recalls. Her students' excitement was one part of a rich educational experience for Bailey.

One student wrote "doctor." Another student wrote "teacher." Another student wrote a wish — to pass the matricular, South Africa's test to become a teacher. By Western standards, the children had little, yet they had dreams.

Except Mulalo.

Bailey and a fellow JMU student talked to Mulalo. They persuaded him that yes, he could dream. He could succeed. "By the time we left Mulalo was saying, 'I know I can do this.'"

On the morning of their group's departure, Mulalo appeared at 7 a.m. He pleaded with them not to go.

(Left): Jenn Bailey ('12, '13M) says being a teacher is her "dream job." Before she graduated, she had already changed the lives of hundreds of students like Mulalo.

"As we drove away, he got on his bicycle and followed us. I was in tears," Bailey says. "That is why I teach."

Bailey returned to the states

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— JENN BAILEY ('12, '13M)

BRIGHTLIGHTS

tude however, with the help of his 4-year-old daughter, Quinn, and 7-year-old son, Jack. He and his wife, Carolyn, spend much of their free time with the children. Finnegan is assistant baseball coach for his son's team, and he tries not to be that guy on the baseball field who checks his smart phone every few minutes. "We've

hired smart people so the paper will get out with or without me," Finnegan says. "But sometimes they just want to show me a photo like the one of the captured brother [Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev]. That's why I'm checking my phone, not because I think I'm important."

Finnegan is ultimately responsible for all the *Times-Dispatch's* print and digital output as well as long-term planning, strategy, technology, production issues, vendor problems, and "thankfully," even editing. "I edit PolitiFact and I still do the final edit on all the columnists," he says. "That's the highlight of my week." **MI**

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"I didn't know what I had signed up for. I went in not expecting anything," Bailey says.

TEACH had several projects on the horizon. One was a book drive for Patrick Country, Va.-based Meadows of Dan Elementary School that had burned.

"I can do a book drive," Bailey thought. So she signed on. "I constructed this artwork in the shape of an apple." The apple, displayed in Memorial Hall, featured suggested book titles. Bailey was amazed at the results. "I always knew JMU was a giving community," Bailey says, "but it really opened my eyes as to how giving."

JMU professors donated 50 books. Custodians and building and grounds employees donated books. Students bought brand new books to donate. In the end, the drive collected 2,200 books.

Bailey next organized the innovative program Raising an Organization of Trained Educators. The four-year program places JMU education students in the same school, two hours a week, throughout their undergraduate experience. "Students get to see what and who it takes to run a school. So many people do so many things that you have no idea about."

For instance, Bailey says, students confined to a classroom don't see the important role of a school nurse or administrator. "When you do your practicum, you only get to see one thing — the classroom," she says.

Through ROTE, students see every facet of a school's operation. As freshmen, students spend time with individuals like librarians, nurses and cafeteria workers — "with hair nets," she says. This helps give students a universal view of the school. As sophomores, students work in the classrooms as teacher's aides. The key to ROTE is giving students the time and

depth to get to know an entire school community, not just one grade, one teacher and one classroom.

The first placements — 15 to 30 stu-



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dents — occurred in fall 2012 at two Harrisonburg schools, Skyline Middle School and Smithland Elementary School. "But other schools have asked for JMU students," she says.

As the first director — and with graduation looming — Bailey realized last year that she wanted to make sure ROTE continued. "I knew I was leaving and had to pass it down."

Two current education students now run the program. Jesse Humphries ('14) of Leesburg, Va., oversees the elementary portion, and Allie Daczkowski ('15) of Sterling, Va., runs the middle-school program. Bailey is confident that they will do a good job. "I have never been so proud of two ladies," she says. "This project was my baby."

Bailey adds, "Kids don't care how much they know until they know how much you care." And Bailey has received her own measure of caring. During her master's year, she student-taught at Smithland Elementary under Norris Bunn ('95). She says, "This year changed my life. I learned so much from him. By the end of the year, we were finishing each other's sentences."

Together they taught a dual-language class of 40 students, separated into halves. One half was taught in the students' native language, the other in English.

Not too long ago, Bailey ran into a friend she hadn't seen since high school days. "You have changed so much!" the friend told her. Bailey was no longer the shyest girl.

"JMU completely changed that for me." The difference was getting involved. "The best thing about JMU," Bailey says, "is the people. We're a big school of 20,000, but once you start getting involved, this goes from 20,000 to a family." **MI**