



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Virginia Beach Friends School: January 2024

www.vbfschool.org/about/alumni



ELIZABETH THOMAS '17

BY: ANNA FACEMIRE, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Elizabeth Thomas came to Friends School as a third grader and graduated as a twelfth grader in 2017. As a proud alumna of Friends School, Elizabeth fondly reminisces about the years she spent as part of the school community. The values of friendship, inclusivity, and respect ingrained in the school's ethos left a lasting mark on her character. Elizabeth cherishes the connections made with classmates and teachers alike, fostering a supportive environment and sense of belonging. After her time at Friends School, Elizabeth went on to graduate from Virginia Tech with a degree in Human Nutrition which she uses daily in operating her own business, "Elizabeth Eats," a provider of healthy and nourishing foods. (elizabethheatsgood.com)

Some of her best memories of Friends School are of the close knit community, playing volleyball, going to basketball games, school trips, and buddy time. She occasionally sees her former buddy in our local area and remembers the times spent together fondly! Buddy Time is still a tradition that takes place today and has served our student body well.

The Quaker principles that guide the school's philosophy continue to resonate with Elizabeth, influencing her approach to relationships and contributing to her sense of social responsibility. The Friends School experience remains a cherished chapter in Elizabeth's life, shaping her perspective and leaving her with gratitude for the lessons learned. The testimony "integrity" is the one that sticks with her the most. She's learned the value of owning up to mistakes when they're made, standing up for what she believes in, and recognizing wrong in the world and trying to fix it.

Looking back, Meeting for Worship was a grounding experience for Elizabeth. At the time, sitting in silence seemed like a goofy thing to do weekly, but in hindsight Meeting for Worship was one of the best moments in her schooling. There were so many lessons in

self control when the giggles crept in, but sitting in silence was “powerful and beautiful.” Being at a Quaker school really taught Elizabeth that she could be her true self and find true happiness. She was in an environment where she was free to express herself and learned that she could be whoever she wanted to be.

After her time at Virginia Tech, Elizabeth moved to Costa Rica for a year to be a family's private chef where she continued to explore her passion for the world of nutrition. She recounts her time at Friends School as igniting her love of travel. There was no overwhelming pressure directly after college to become the successful entrepreneur she is today, so the time spent in Costa Rica was incredibly fulfilling. Friends School taught her that she would never regret taking the trip! One of the most memorable trips she took as a student was to Peru to hike and visit Machu Picchu with Teacher Jacquie Whitt.

Since returning to Virginia Beach, Elizabeth is a successful entrepreneur who embarked on a journey to promote health and wellness in our community. Fueled by a deep commitment to providing nutritious options, she founded her business, “Elizabeth Eats”, specializing in wholesome goods. She showcases her products at local farmers' markets and shops, where she has quickly gained recognition for the quality and freshness of her offerings. Through her business, Elizabeth not only provides delicious and nutritious options but also inspires others to make healthier choices, fostering a culture of well-being in our local area. The “Elizabeth Eats Nut Butter” is most popular.

In speaking with Elizabeth, we updated her on the thriving garden program here at Friends School being run by Teacher Kate Leon, and she was thrilled that we were introducing our students to healthy and organic foods. Elizabeth is passionate about foods that taste good AND are good for you, so she loved that our students were being exposed to the tastes of fresh organic produce such as broccoli, kohlrabi, snap peas, kale, squash, green beans, zucchini, and the list goes on!

During our conversation, Head of School, Greg Angilly and Elizabeth had a major *aha moment!* Greg is currently living in Elizabeth's childhood home. He mentioned that “VBFS” was carved into the cement in the basketball hoop area of his backyard, and Elizabeth immediately knew. Her younger brother Walker (also a Friends School alumni!) left that souvenir there when he was little. It just goes to show that the history and connection of Friends School runs deep in the Virginia Beach area! Be sure to look for “Elizabeth Eats” products in our local community and support her endeavors if given the opportunity!

