

Behind the scenes of Homecoming: What does it take to keep the tradition alive?

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Staff Writer

The gym is packed to capacity, with current and former students bubbling with excitement for the homecoming festivities. The loud roar of Alumni reminiscing with old friends, singing and dancing to one of their favorite songs from high school, remembering one of their favorite television shows and all the events that took place during their high school years. Homecoming is without a doubt a huge event at Gaffney High School. Homecoming is a week full of spirit-themed dress-up days, junior class ring ceremony, and, of course, the homecoming assembly and pep rally. It is certainly an exciting time.

But what does it take to make this huge production happen? How much

planning actually goes into it? What different students and teachers make all of this happen? According to Homecoming Committee co-chair, Ben Fuller, planning for the next year's homecoming starts after the current year's homecoming is over. The committee looks at what they thought went well, and what could have been better. As soon as teachers come back for the new school year, the committee hits the ground running and starts planning homecoming events for the current year. Fuller said students from band and choir participate, but that the students performing in the skits during the assembly consists almost entirely of students in the drama department.

This year GHS

welcomed a new drama teacher, Traci Dill. When asked if any other school where she has taught had done anything like GHS for homecoming,



Students perform at the 2018 homecoming assembly.

she replied, "No. We had spirit week, but nothing like what GHS does." She explained how students from advance drama, drama club, and some who just wanted to be a part of the performance are the actors for the skits this year.

Mrs. Dill selects skits based on a list of ideas from the homecoming committee, then selects students for each of the skits. Students prepare

for the skits by rehearsing during class time starting at the beginning of September, as well as during Tribe Time.

In addition to the drama department, homecoming would not be the same without the band and the chorus. According to chorus teacher,

Mrs. Lori Allison, the chorus members have the honor of singing the GHS Alma Mater. She uses as many different students as she can in order to give them all a chance to "shine." Students often have a solo part or duet in the performance, and they also learn some simple choreography as well. As far as practice goes, they start a month in advance using class time, some after school practices, and even practice at home.

The band plays the national anthem for the homecoming assembly. Camryn Reid, a member of the GHS band, stated the only special practice needed for the performance is to practice entering and exiting the gym, since the band already knows the national anthem well.

In the days leading up to homecoming,

practice is required for all senior players, their escorts, and members of the homecoming court. These practices take place afterschool. In addition, the entire day before homecoming is dedicated to rehearsals; all students who have any part in the homecoming assembly participate in this rehearsal, from the skits down to those running the sound system, so everyone knows what to do and where to go on the big day.

As you can tell, planning an event as big as homecoming is no walk in the park, but can be very rewarding. It takes many different people and groups of students to make it all happen, but they all share one common goal: to make an exciting and memorable experience for current and former students.

The Common Grounds: Brewin' Up a Good Time at Zakary's

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Located in downtown Gaffney, Zakary's is a fresh and fun hangout where anyone can go to get their hands on inexpensive coffee. Although Zakary's just had its grand opening on March 5th, 2019, this coffee shop hangout doesn't sell anyone short of a good time or a good drink. In addition to the

fresh and inexpensive coffee, people visit Zakary's for more than just a drink.

The shop is filled with board games and video games, and they host nights like Paint and Sip, Zumba, Open Mic Night, and even Karaoke

Gaffney?", the owner, Zak Sampson, had a look of determination on his face. "Gaffney inspired me," he said. Sampson took a look at downtown

mobile with food trucks and delivery. He also wants for everyone in the community and those from all around to

know that you are capable of being anything you've ever dreamt of, of being anyone that you've ever admired, but at

"You are capable of being anything you ever dreamt of being, of being anyone that you've ever admired, but at the very least, you are always capable of being kind." - Zak Sampson

Members of the community visit Zakary's because of the activities that are included at Zakary's that give it a homey and peaceful vibe.

Night. Zakary's gives off a homey vibe that is meant to make everyone feel welcomed and happy. When asked "Why open this shop in

Gaffney and realized the true potential it had to become a place where anyone and everyone could go to relax, study, and enjoy a nice cup o' joe.

Sampson had always dreamt of opening a business, and when he looked at downtown Gaffney, he knew it was meant to be. The opportunities lined up, and he jumped right in. Sure enough, Zakary's coffee shop was born and has been a huge success ever since.

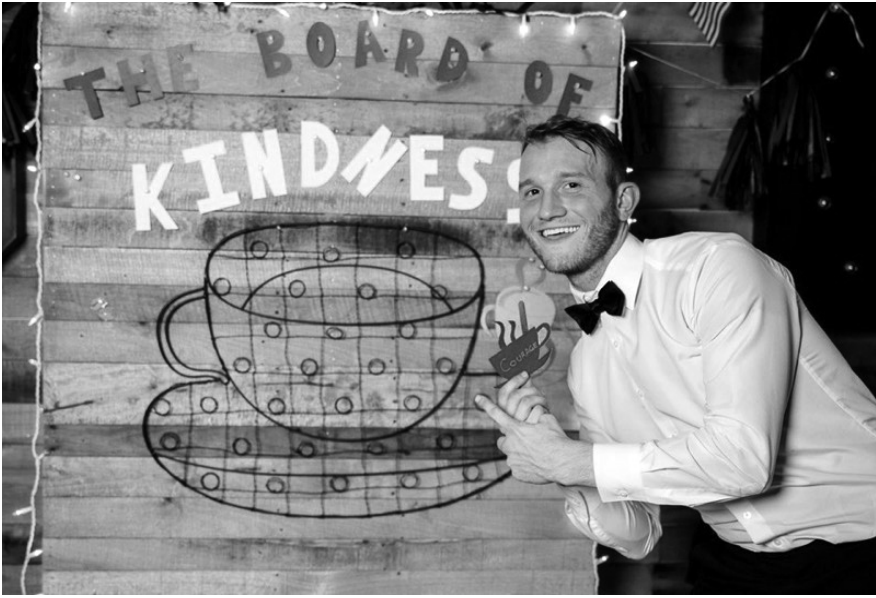
Sampson has big plans for the future of this community coffee shop. He wants to one day expand the business by being

be able to come to Zakary's and feel at home. He wants to continue to unite the community and bring everyone together.

According to Sampson, "Anyone who reads this, just

the very least, you are always capable of being kind."

Zak Sampson is just one person with one coffee shop, but he is making a huge impact daily.



Zakary's owner, Zak Sampson

Senior Spotlight



Katie Bloomer

What is your favorite class?
Health Science III

What is your favorite color and why?
Yellow, it's the color of happiness.

Where do you want to go to college?
Winthrop University

In what field do you want to major?
I want to major in Psychology with a minor in social work.

What role do you have in the Homecoming production?

I am in a singing number for the Class of '94.
If you could be any character from a TV show, who would you be?
Phoebe from "Friends"

How long have you been involved in the Drama department?
All four years!

Super Staffer



Mrs. Donna Phillips

What is your favorite color and why?
My favorite color is yellow because it's the color of daisies.

Where did you go to college?
I got my Bachelors Degree from Winthrop University and my Masters from Gardner Webb University.

What do you enjoy most about Homecoming?
Getting to see all the former students and the spirit of community

Do you have any pets?
A dog named Daisy

How long have you worked at Gaffney High?
Twenty-one years

What has been your favorite vacation?
I have gone to New York City three separate times. That's my favorite city.

If you had to name a teacher of Gaffney High as your best friend, who would it be?
Ms. Sartor or Mrs. Bogan

Feature Teacher



Mrs. Traci Dill

Is this your first year at Gaffney High School?
This is my first year at Gaffney High, but my 12th year teaching Theatre. I most recently working in Spartanburg at Florence Chapel Middle School.

How long have the Drama students been preparing and practicing for the Homecoming assembly?

We have been working consistently for about four weeks.

What is the Drama department planning for this year in terms of productions?

We are doing two Improv and Talent Shows per semester, attending a One-Act Play Competition, and we will be doing Shrek the Musical in May.

What is your favorite color and why?
I truly love black, it goes with everything and is very dramatic.

What high school and college did you attend?
I went to Crest High School in Shelby, NC and went to Limestone College in Gaffney as a theatre major.

How might a student describe you?
I think my students would say, although they know I love them, that I am very moody!