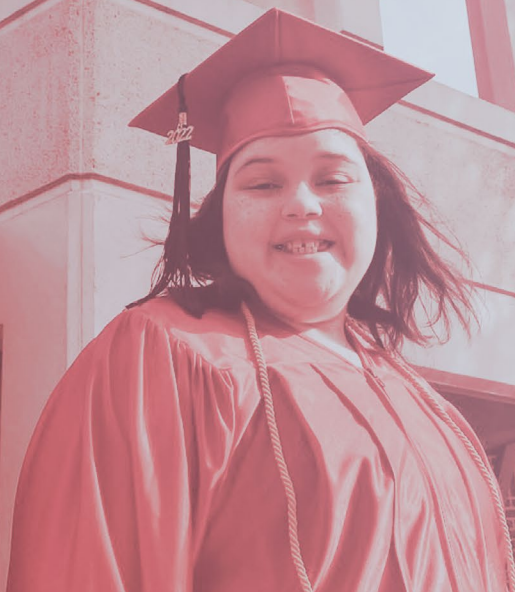




UMFS
CHAMPION

Summer 2022

What's Next
for Sophia
Beasley



Meet Sophia Beasley.

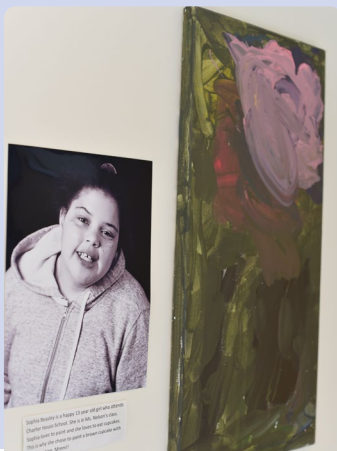
Future horticulturist. Or cosmetologist. Or veterinary tech. Actually, at 18 years old, and having just finished her 12th year at UMFS's Charterhouse School, Sophia is not yet sure what she wants to do. That's what her next four years at the school that has been such a big part of her life will help her figure out.

Faithful readers of The Champion may remember Sophia and her adoptive parents, Rai and Marie Beasley. We first introduced them to you four years ago when 14-year-old Sophia was beginning to reach her potential as a student at Charterhouse, the UMFS school where kids with emotional, behavioral or developmental challenges get the specialized attention and care they need. For more than 40 years, Charterhouse has delivered cutting-edge programs and a broad array of services to kids like Sophia.

Charterhouse, says her mother, has been the place where Sophia “has done nothing but soar.” The Beasley’s have watched her grow, first as a young grade-schooler who had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and was easily distracted in the classroom. At the time, she was prone to the kind of overstimulation that was present in her former school setting. That led to heightened behavioral challenges.

But at Charterhouse, Sophia found an environment that fit her needs. Classes were small and set in a campus-like location where therapeutic greenspace was just beyond the doors. And the teachers “got her,” her parents say. “They could see her and read her and anticipate her episodes. They were so in tune with her, and you could see the impact that had on Sophia.”

“Sophia’s growth while at Charterhouse has been tremendous.”



Over the years, Sophia gravitated to a variety of interests. Horticulture was just across the walkway and working with plants gave her a sense of purpose and a connectedness that she didn't always get with people.

The Charterhouse team introduced her to SPARC, a local nonprofit that helps bring the arts to kids. And then came art class and an innate talent for painting. Despite

her struggles with dexterity and controlling the muscles in her hands, she enjoyed her art class and soon she was painting with watercolors, making striking images of how she saw the world around her.

Sophia's art provided a window into her world, but these days, the teenager has grown to the point where she has enough confidence to share her perspectives outright, something that her parents could not imagine years ago.

“Sophia’s growth while at Charterhouse has been tremendous,” Marie says. “I look at her now, and I can see her paying attention to other people, reading them, communicating with them. She’s self-aware, and she can read people pretty well, and she’s now quick to voice her opinion. She advocates for herself...and for others.”

And what's she going to do next? Marie and Rai are working with

Charterhouse teachers and staff to introduce Sophia to a range of possibilities. Given her love of plants, could there be a career in horticulture in her future?



Lately, she's shown an interest in cosmetology where she especially enjoys tending to the mannequins though is not especially keen about dipping her hands into a customer's hair.

Most recently, Charterhouse has been working on finding her volunteer opportunities at a local animal shelter. Her fondness for animals could lead to supporting roles in the veterinary field.

Whatever her interests, recent renovations and the new addition in progress at Charterhouse are all designed to help students explore their potential. New career and technology classrooms are all designed to recreate real-world environments that will help prepare students for the next important transition in their lives.

The Beasley's are thankful that Sophia's growth and development over the years at Charterhouse now puts her in a position where she has choices.

"You can't put these kids in one particular box," Rai says. "The children at Charterhouse run the gamut, and over the years, we've watched them grow beyond what we ever believed possible."

Your support made a tremendous difference in Sophia's life. Because of you, students with behavioral, emotional, and developmental challenges are able to benefit from a curriculum that balances academics with the development of critical behavioral and social skills. Learn more at UMFS.org.



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Children need support every day. Especially when they're in crisis.

When you make a donation to UMFS, you empower high-risk children and teens to reach their full potential. Monthly supporters make a critical impact by providing sustainable funding to ensure kids have the resources they need when they need them.

Sheelagh and Dick Davis shared why they became monthly supporters:

"We strongly believe in the mission of UMFS and the ability of the staff to help children overcome life's obstacles and reach their full potential. We admire the dedication of the UMFS staff who are devoted to putting these lives back together, restoring confidence by giving expert support, drawing out each child's strengths, and giving them hope for the future."

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