



open access
COLLEGE

STUDENT ACHIEVERS

of Open Access College

Inspirational role models
& their stories

April 2017

STUDENT ACHIEVERS

of Open Access College

The students' stories contained here are a microcosm of all Open Access College students, and by celebrating this small selection of students we are acknowledging and celebrating the achievements of all students at Open Access College.

As you read the stories in this book you will be struck by the amazing achievements of each of these individuals. The one constant is that each of these students set themselves goals. The goals these students chose were individual, challenging, achievable, personally meaningful and future focused.

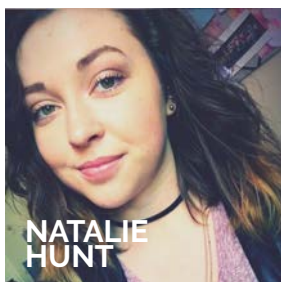
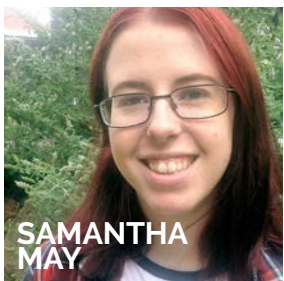
It was not an easy road to travel to achieve their goals, but because they were focused and determined they took every step and fall along the way as a learning experience, making them better learners, problem solvers and creative thinkers.

As you read you will also note all of these students have achieved this success in complex circumstances. They are isolated. They are parents and carers. They are travellers. They have chronic illness. They are juggling work, family and study.

They all acknowledge that the flexible learning environment of Open Access College has enabled them to continue to study and achieve their goals.

We know that their successes at Open Access College are a solid foundation for future achievements and we wish them – and all students – positive and rewarding futures.

CONGRATULATIONS!



The **Register of Student Achievers** celebrates all Open Access College students. It acknowledges their determination and individuality in achieving their goals.



ALEX LAWSON



MY NAME IS ALEXANDRA.

I prefer to be called Alex. I am 17 and I was diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome 4 years ago. I live with my parents and younger sister, in Adelaide. I love all things to do with my pet rabbits, gardening and video gaming.

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MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I started Open Access mid-2014. Before then, I studied at home, as I was unable to attend a mainstream school due to my health. I struggled and still do with my studies due to a lack of energy, memory and concentration.

Besides that, other physical and mental symptoms can prevent me from completing work on time. When this happens, OAC makes work much more flexible. I can email my teachers with the circumstances, and allows me to negotiate when I hand in the work, within reason.

I try to attend all my scheduled classes, but if I am unable to, I am fortunate that Open Access allows me to catch up easily with lesson recordings, or a one on one lesson. I don't believe mainstream schools could provide that support.

My health still fluctuates a lot, but I am very fortunate that the impact is minimised as I am able to work from the comfort of my own home.

AND TODAY...

I completed all of Year 11 in 2016, Heading into Year 12 in 2017. I am aiming to not only complete year 12 and my SACE, but achieve the highest grades that I can. I wish to continue my education regardless of my health, and would love to eventually study Psychology or Social Work at University.

I am honestly so thankful and appreciative that Open Access works for me, I couldn't have asked for a better opportunity to finish my education.

EDWARD JENKINS



MY NAME IS EDWARD...

I live in a small town in the Adelaide Hills called Kanmantoo. I live with my mum, younger brother, our Jack Russell and lots of chickens. My hobbies include playing piano, ukulele and the trumpet. I play hymns on the piano at church.

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I also Like 2D and 3D animation, programming and using the computer. I like to play Minecraft and Mario games. Sometimes I make YouTube videos about Minecraft too. I like reading about History and how household objects work. I like to read the Bible. I have a few autistic tendencies; I was also born with multiple birth defects. I only have about 1/3 of vision in my left eye.

MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I started OAC in the middle of 2014 because they were offering free Music lessons for year 9 and I always wanted to play trumpet. I started learning Spanish through OAC too. Things got tougher in year 10 because I couldn't cope with the workload. I dropped PLP at that time. My Spanish teacher was very supportive of me and helped me to improve – not just in Spanish but in other areas.

I couldn't do music in year 11 in 2016 so I did literacy instead.

I got extra time for my last Maths test because of my health issues. That extra fifteen minutes helped me to pass maths. I also studied a Cert III in Screen and Media. In the second semester, I had to redo PLP along with Research Project. I fell behind but in a spurt of excellent weather I managed to get it all done and I finished my SACE.

I thank all my teachers and my mum for the help they gave me.

AND TODAY...

I am studying for my ATAR at OAC and I hope that they shall be able to help me and autistic children in the years to come. I intend to get a career in programming.

EMILY CAMERON



MY NAME IS EMILY.

I am 29 years old and I reside in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. I am a single mum to my two beautiful daughters who are 5 and 8 years old.

I enjoy being creative and find a lot of happiness and self-satisfaction in creating handmade projects.

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MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

After only completing year 10 back in 2002, I never strived to achieve much more, I felt that school was not for me and having little faith in my academic abilities, I just gave up.

In 2014 I became a single mum and knew that in order to provide my daughters with a better life I would need to go back to school. I wanted to complete my SACE and gain an ATAR but I lacked self-esteem and confidence.

After discovering Open Access College, I enrolled in English Communications and Modern History for the 2015 school year. The way the subjects were delivered online suited our lifestyle perfectly and meant that I did not need to create a lot of change to my daughters lives, which was important to me.

The patience, understanding and support given by my teachers in that first year was incredibly meaningful for me and enabled a positive outcome that gave me the confidence and determination to succeed in my second year subjects.

I learnt a lot about myself throughout my time at OAC and have gained a new outlook on life that continually inspires me. The teachers truly are amazing and will go above and beyond to help you succeed.

AND TODAY...

After gaining a competitive ATAR, I was offered a place in the Bachelor of Midwifery at Flinders University. I am excited for the coming year and incredibly thankful that I made the decision to come to Open Access College.

**EMILY
CAMERON**

ELISABETH PERGOLETO



MY NAME IS ELISABETH.

I am 17 years old and I live with my parents, four brothers and one of my two sisters, in a town called Port Augusta. I volunteer at Meals on Wheels in my local community and I am also involved in the Cancer Council's Ambassador Project.

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My interests include visual arts, creative writing, cooking and sewing. I also enjoy listening to music, watching movies and having fun outdoors during my free time.

MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I was home-schooled until year 8 when I was given the opportunity to study French and Music through Open Access College. In year 10, I began full time study with OAC. I completed my Stage 1 studies in 2016, working towards my SACE.

Throughout my time at OAC, I have really appreciated the flexible learning environment OAC provides. The flexibility of lesson times, for example, allowed me to continue volunteering at Meals on Wheels, while studying full time. I was also able to participate in activities such as the Education Perfect World Series, a series of global competitions testing students' knowledge in a variety of subjects.

Furthermore, the one-on-one support I have received from my teachers has been very helpful. They have always been approachable should I have a question. They were really invested in helping me to succeed with my studies.

AND TODAY...

Currently, I am beginning my Stage 2 studies with the hope of successfully achieving my SACE.

Whilst I am still undecided as to what path I will choose after finishing year 12, I am looking forward to the challenges ahead.

SAMANTHA MAY



MY NAME IS SAMANTHA.

I am eighteen years old and live with my family of five in Gawler, South Australia.

My interests include music, creative writing, history and politics.

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MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I began my schooling with Open Access College a semester into year eleven and continued with them through my year twelve studies. I successfully graduated last year from OAC with great results in English Communications, Society and Culture, Modern History and Psychology.

Through studying with OAC, I developed an independence that would not have been replicated if I continued with the traditional education system. Although I found that little face-to-face contact was challenging, it provided a stable foundation for skills such as self-discipline, time management and motivation. These skills will later assist me with tertiary studies.

A highlight of my experience with OAC would be the supportive relationships I shared with my teachers. Every teacher was incredibly consistent with their communication and

assistance, always offering guidance, from assignments to time management.

In particular, I would love to express my deep gratitude for Anna Christo, who was my teacher for years eleven and twelve. Her belief in my potential and constant guidance in my work has led to an accomplished year twelve graduate who has the world at her feet.

AND TODAY...

This year, I am planning to embark on a life-changing adventure as a camp counsellor in the US. Through this, I will travel (something I have always had the yearning to do) as well as build my independence. Who knows what I will do following this adventure? I could end up at University studying political science or travelling the world. All I know is that OAC has given me the perfect platform to begin the rest of my life.

BETHANY OATS



MY NAME IS BETHANY...

I am nineteen years old I have attended Open Access College since 2014. I dropped out of school once I turned seventeen in 2014, however I returned to complete my studies the following year and graduated in 2016.

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I live in a very creative household with my three brothers and father. We are all artists of different styles and I am an abstract artist myself. I also really enjoy films and music.

MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I chose to change over from my then current school to Open Access once I came across some health issues which made face to face schooling really difficult.

I initially tried to complete Stage 1 with subjects I wasn't passionate about which led to me dropping out. However, when I decided to return to school I made the decision to do subjects I loved, such as Visual Arts. I completed Stage 1 between 2014-2015 and then took on a full course for Stage 2 in 2016.

Open Access really aided in the improvement of my health as it allowed me to work within a flexible timetable which

gave me the opportunity to attend doctor's appointments and study when I was well enough to.

AND TODAY...

I have been accepted by the Australian National University to study fine arts, although I will be taking a gap year first before moving to Canberra. I plan to spend this year developing as an artist and hopefully volunteering at an art gallery. Eventually, I would love to work either in art administration or curatorship so that I can always be surrounded by art.

JACK HADINATA



MY NAME IS JACK.

I'm an eighteen-year-old amateur artist based in Bali, Indonesia. After attending Australian International School for most of my primary and high school years, I switched to OAC to complete year 11 and 12. I live with my mother and have 2 older sisters. My interests include painting, drawing and photography.

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MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

Despite attending Australian International School since year 4 as I approached senior high school I started to find it incredibly hard to cope in a busy school environment. At first I was unsure about leaving AIS and starting at OAC but as time passed I started to enjoy the subjects and appreciated the wonderful help the teachers gave to me.

Learning from OAC has been a great experience as I've been able to work at home, which felt more comfortable, as well as make my own timetable and working hours, which gave me a good sense of independence.

When I started Open Access in year 11, I took Biology, Mathematical Application, Personal Learning Plan, Art, Digital Manipulation and Research Practice. In year 12, I did Art, Photography, Business and Enterprise and Psychology. I completed my Research Project in year 12.

AND TODAY...

OAC was fantastic; all the teachers were so supportive, caring and kind. I developed good communication and relationships with the students and teachers despite not physically seeing each other. OAC made it very possible for me to not only work efficiently but to have a sense of flexibility and do well in all subjects and not feel the pressure that I did at my previous school.

This year I'm taking a gap year to sort myself out as well as concentrate on my art and photography. I have attended a few photography workshops. I also intend to travel taking my camera wherever I go. I'm excited about what's ahead.

GRACE HOLLOW



MY NAME IS GRACE.

I live in Gladstone, a town 200km north of Adelaide, with my parents and older brother and sister. I enjoy reading, knitting, sewing, playing netball and spending time with the animals on our farm.

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MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I began studying at Open Access College as I had previously been home-schooled and wanted to complete my SACE subjects through a school.

I started by doing PLP and Stage 1 English in year 10 before commencing a full workload in year 11. In 2016, I completed year 12, studying Physics, Chemistry, Mathematical Studies and Specialist Mathematics.

Studying through Open Access College helped me to learn how to be self-motivated, organise my studies and gain a familiarity with technology. OAC also helped my learning by providing me with a wide range of subjects to choose from and flexibility with lesson times and subject schedules.

What I most appreciated at OAC was the individual teachers' desire to help me and the other students in my classes to achieve.

They would make themselves available at any time, by email or phone to help with problems and queries as they arose. I also appreciated that the school was made available for "Come In" days, where we would complete practicals or exam workshops. This gave me the opportunity to meet and form friendships with other students.

AND TODAY...

I have now completed year 12, received my SACE and achieved an ATAR of 97.50. I have also just started work at a local sawmill, helping out in the office.

NATALIE HUNT



MY NAME IS NATALIE.

I am 19 years old and I live in Port Germein South Australia.

Music has been my passion ever since year 4, after beginning on recorder through School of the Air.

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MY EXPERIENCE AT OAC...

I graduated from Open Access College in December 2016.

In 2015, about half way through second term of year 12, I decided to completely change my career path of studying to become a Veterinary Nurse to a music pathway.

Last year, I graduated from year 13 with a Stage 2 and a Certificate III in Music. I learnt then that sometimes, you shouldn't be scared to really change your mind about something.

After applying and auditioning to study music at TAFE SA and The James Morrison Jazz Academy, I was knocked back with rejection for the Academy and I withdrew from TAFE.

I decided the TAFE course was not really what I wanted. I was pretty distraught but I picked myself up with the knowledge

that there is always another way to get to where I want to be. So I opened my eyes and ears.

AND TODAY...

Thankfully, I have found that I have family connections in the United Kingdom to a great Jazz saxophonist who is really interested in helping young female musicians to achieve their dreams. And so I got in touch with her. Now, with help and support from my entire family and friends, I am leaving for the UK on my own to strive for a career in music.

It's mad to think that a life can change in a split second. I'm beyond excited but I am also beyond nervous. With the flexibility of Open Access College, I was always able to put music first. Now, I am traveling to world because of it.

THANK YOU

Thanks to every student featured here, for telling your story. Whether you are continuing your studies or moving into the workforce, we wish you all the very best for your future.



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