



Brianna Gaillard

“They call me the baby,” says Brianna Gaillard with a laugh. At 17, she’s already halfway through her college career – and that’s what drew her to the Early College of Forsyth back when she was in middle school.

Like many of the students in the Early College program, Brianna relished the idea of getting a jump start on her education. “I’ve been in the program since freshman year, and what attracted me was the fact that I could get a college education while I was still in high school. I knocked off two years I would have spent getting a four-year degree.”

Brianna has her future planned. In the fall, she’ll transfer to East Carolina University, where she’ll be working on her Bachelor’s degree in nursing. After that, she hopes to get into ECU’s Physician Assistant program. Her goal is to be a PA in either pediatrics or orthopedics.

Her inspiration came from the two weeks she spent in the summer of 2010 at the Triad Biosummer program at Wake Forest. “It’s a two-week session, and they walked us through all sorts of institutions in Winston-Salem. One of them was the PA program. After that I knew it was something I would love to do.”

But the decision to enter the Early College program wasn’t an easy one. “I really struggled at first with the thought of not having a regular high school experience,” she remembers, “but after I really thought about it, it seemed like the right decision for my future.”

Brianna especially appreciates the smaller classes and the individual attention she gets in the program. “It’s a smaller community; everybody knows everybody,” she notes. “You get that one-on-one teacher-student relationship, and they push you to be the best you can be. That’s something I really needed.”

She now feels the sacrifice was worth it. “I think you really have to put your education before anything else; there’s a level of maturity you have to have. I would definitely recommend it to students who are serious about their education.”

“There’ll always be the fact that I can’t go to sporting events, chorus, band, stuff like that,” she admits. “But I wouldn’t trade any of it, honestly.”