

Pathfinder

JANUARY 2025



GOALS CAN HELP US ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS IN 2025



From left to right:
Mrs. Duerksen,
Ms. Carlson, Miss
Rubio, Miss
Rendon, & Mrs.
Costa



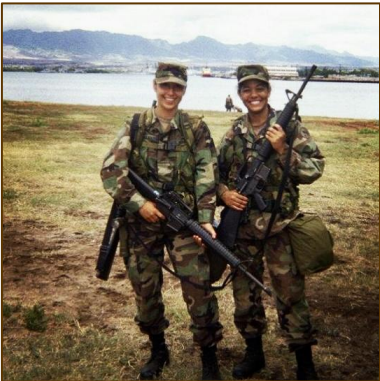
The new year is a perfect time to reflect on hopes and dreams for the coming year. Setting goals and working towards them is a valuable tool to help us make dreams a reality. Golden West administrators are great examples of setting and achieving goals. Mrs. Duerksen said, "Setting goals has been instrumental in shaping my life by giving me clear direction and purpose. From making the state Olympic development soccer team in high school, to jumping 4-foot courses on my horses, each achievement has built my confidence and motivation, driving me to tackle the next challenge." Ms. Carlson said, "Goals keep me motivated by providing something meaningful to strive for. Breaking larger objectives into smaller, manageable tasks helps me manage my time better and prevents me from feeling overwhelmed." All GW students have a counselor who can help them set goals for success. Counselor Mrs. Costa recommended that students set mini-goals, like Ms. Carlson mentioned. She said, "It's like playing a game with yourself and that competitive feeling sets in, and you feel 'I have to do this! I am going to do this!'" Miss Rubio said that goals help students "narrow down an area of focus they would like to improve on or work towards", also helping to build a routine of discipline and determination. Miss Rendon mentioned the positive effect of setting and achieving goals, stating that this cycle can "significantly increase students' confidence and drive, helping them overcome challenges and stay focused on their academic and personal growth." If you need help setting or working toward your 2025 goals, reach out to a GW administrator, teacher, or counselor. Let's make 2025 an amazing year!

SPOTLIGHT ON TRAILBLAZER TALENT: WINTER SHOWCASE

The VAPA Winter Showcase in December was a huge hit! Jazz Band (directed by Mr. Whitfield), Advanced Orchestra (directed by Mr. Sosa), Advanced Dance (directed by Miss Martin), and Performance Dance (directed Mrs. Cullum) performed to music from Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular. GW Jazz Band and Orchestra performed live while dancers from Performance and Advanced Dance classes performed student choreographed dances. The audience was impressed with the talent displayed. Mrs. Cullum said she loves the winter shows because "they feature multiple Performing Arts programs working together to put on entertaining, family friendly performance."



MILITARY SUPERSTARS AT GOLDEN WEST



Ms. Hooks during her time in the U.S. Army



David Nunez (12) holding a cake from his first-responder's academy class

Did you know one of our GW counselors is a U.S. Army veteran? That's right! Ms. Hooks was in the Army for five years. She was inspired by the 1997 movie G.I. Jane starring Demi Moore. She was also motivated by a recruiter who told her she could receive money for college through the Army. She completed boot camp at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and then did training at Fort Lee in Virginia. Ms. Hooks described boot camp as "the toughest thing physically and emotionally" that she had done. To be successful, she kept a positive mindset and prayed. Eventually, she got really lucky, and was stationed at Schofield Army Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii. She served the rest of her military career there. The military helped her gain confidence and become goal-driven. It also gave her time to plan for her future. Ms. Hooks wants to encourage students to consider the military as an option after high school. She said the benefits outweigh the risks. Thank you for your service, Ms. Hooks.

Golden West senior, David Nunez, graduated early in December 2024 to enter the U. S. Marines. Before David left for bootcamp, he answered some questions for the Pathfinder. Thank you for your service, David.

How long have you known that you wanted to join the Marines?

I've known since my Junior year that I wanted to join.

What made you choose this branch of the military?

There's a big difference between all the other branches. I chose the Marines because they are known for their willingness to fight, win, and their adaptability. They also have core values of honor, courage, and commitment which I find important.

Do you have any family or friends that are military veterans?

No I do not; I will be the first in my family to enlist into the Military.

When do you start boot camp and where is it located?

I go to boot camp on January 6th for 13 weeks. It is located in San Diego and it is called Camp Pendleton.

Will you be able to return for graduation with your class of 2025?

I hope I can return for graduation, but it's not a guarantee because it will be a tight schedule when I come back.

What are you looking forward to about being a Marine?

Developing a whole new mindset and gaining the experience to have better opportunities as well as going up in the ranks of the Marine Corps. I am also looking forward to getting the chance to travel the world at the same time as I get to serve my country.

Is there anything you're nervous or anxious about?

I am nervous about traveling on a plane on my own for the first time and most anxious about being away from my family, my girlfriend, and my friends for 3 months.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

New Year's Eve is a fun time around the world. People everywhere are filled with hope for the coming year. Many countries have very unique, fun traditions. Several countries believe that eating certain foods as the clock strikes midnight will bring good luck for the next year. Grapes are a common lucky food in Spain, Portugal, and most of Latin America. In France, people start the New Year with a stack of pancakes, and in Germany people eat marzipan shaped like a pig for good luck. In the Philippines, wearing polka dots and eating round fruits promotes prosperity. Wearing white on New Year's Eve is a Brazilian tradition with African roots; it symbolizes peace and cleansing. In Denmark, people will jump off a chair or sofa to literally jump into the new year and bring luck. Happy New Year Golden West!