



Natalie “Chessey” Thomas – Class of 2010

College: *University of Tennessee*

Major: *Communications*

Current Professional Role: *Police Officer*

Where have you been between college and your current professional role? What brought you there?

After graduating from Tennessee (and a brief professional golf stint), I spent six years coaching Division I college golf (University of Idaho, University of Washington & University of Nebraska). Additionally, I worked in sales for Hudl and ran youth sports leagues for the YMCA while living in Nebraska. After moving back to the Inland Northwest in April of 2022, I knew I wanted to become a first responder and serve my community.

What’s a typical day in your current professional role? Is there something that particularly interests you in your field?

There is no such thing as a “typical day” in my line of work which is one of the many reasons I love what I do. I am still new to the profession and embrace any opportunity to take calls for service in areas I am not as well-versed in so I can learn and broaden my knowledge for officer safety and case law. I hope to become a field training officer one day which would mean I would assist in training new officers as they begin their careers in law enforcement.

What would you recommend to a current SGS student who is interested in your profession?

For those interested in the field, I would recommend joining an explorer program or consider obtaining a criminology major in college. Additionally, many current police officers have a military background or have worked as detention officers prior to joining patrol.

How did SGS prepare you for college?

SGS prepared me for college in many ways. The transition was seamless largely due to the time management skills I developed during my time at SGS. Being a communications major, I felt particularly prepared in terms of my writing skills thanks to the rigorous English courses that I was able to take as an upper school student. I still utilize those writing skills in my current job on a daily basis.

What's one piece of advice you would give a current SGS student?

I recommend looking for opportunities to get involved in whatever interests you may have, even if it's scary or you think you may fail and come up short. The sooner you can learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable, the better. Fear of failure, or failure itself, is far easier to deal with than the regret of not going after something you truly want in life.