



# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022

## A BITTERSWEET GOODBYE



Associate Director, Sequoi Phipps-Hawkins, has been a valuable and irreplaceable part of the GSSM team. So when she submitted her official resignation on August 31st, it was one of the hardest goodbyes I have experienced in a long time. Although I am so happy to see her begin this new chapter in her life and know God called her to serve others in a different way...but man will we miss her more than words!

I wanted to share with you some amazing ways in which Sequoi contributed to the development of GSSM and our programs. She was a natural visionary and our resident tech expert. Some programs she developed were...

- Giving Tuesday/Easter Outreach/Christmas Outreach Fundraising Initiatives
- Sponsor a Student Program
- Alumni Program – connecting graduates with other graduates
- Developing the Graduate Studies and helping two graduates/staff develop their own curriculum to offer to our graduates beginning this January.
- Internship/Volunteer Programs
- Social Media management

**These are just the highlights of the programs she developed from the ground up and we hope to continue to develop them further and leave a lasting legacy of what she has started.**

I am forever grateful for the day that God placed her in my life...it was divinely appointed.

There are never mistakes when it comes to God's plan and there was no mistake that Sequoi was meant to meet me that day on the volleyball court and be such an important part of GSSM's growth and development over the last 4 years. I was coming from a place of my mom's new cancer diagnosis and subsequently requiring her to step back from her GSSM role as the Administrative Director.

Followed by my Dad needing to also step back and care for her full time. So prior to meeting Sequoi I had been running the day to day and acquiring all of these administrative roles solely for almost 4 years.

I had been praying that God would bring me two people to help fulfill the roles necessary to run GSSM effectively. God answered by first bringing me my best friend Aimee Blanks, who is now our Director of Student Relations.

She helped me immensely in directing the students and faculty and developing new procedures to help the school run more efficiently.

CONTINUED...





Then God answered my prayer again by knowing I needed a “Sequoi”. She stepped in and helped me in more ways than I can count. He knew for that season I needed her and her many talents and gifts. I am so beyond thankful for her time with us and GSSM will never be the same with losing her, but I know because of her we are a better organization. And that is what it’s all about isn’t it?! Being obedient to the great commission and helping each other further the Gospel by serving Him daily in whatever He calls us to do!

To those of you that have faithfully provided her monthly support, thank you! I personally was touched by each one of you and your generosity. Without you the last 4 years with GSSM wouldn’t have been possible. If you so choose to redirect your giving there are many areas in which to support GSSM and all that we are doing across the world. Please feel free to contact me or visit our website [globalssm.org](http://globalssm.org) and clicking DONATE to see the areas in which funds can be designated. 100% of your donation goes directly to the designation in which you choose. Thank you for considering supporting GSSM, our students and staff. **Sequoi wanted to leave each of you with a brief note of farewell that you can read on the next page.** She will be greatly missed but we know that our lives will forever be intertwined because of Jesus and what He has done for us! May God go before you, beside you and behind you Sequoi as you continue to serve Him with your whole life and honor Him by being obedient to your calling!

In HIM<><, **Alyssa Carr Mahone**, Executive Director

**Please join me as we pray over her daily while she impacts women of color as they welcome their babies into the world and as she serves with the Birth in Color VA organization which helps advocate for reproductive justice and maternal health.**

## MORE WAYS TO PRAY OVER SEQUOI:

- That God would sustain her through this work as it can be emotionally and physically challenging
- On average doula’s career span only lasts 3 years due to burn out so pray that God would guide and protect her as she learns to make space for herself and choose time for self
- Care so she can be able and ready to serve more effectively.
- Pray over her marriage to Donald that God would always be the center and draw them close together as they begin this new chapter together.
- Pray that God would use her to reach many for the kingdom!

*If you would like to send Sequoi a personal message of thanks for all she has done for GSSM, please feel free to e-mail those to me at: [contact@globalssm.org](mailto:contact@globalssm.org) or you can mail them to P.O. Box 1271 Forest VA 24551.*



## PERSONAL LETTER FROM

# SEQUOI

My journey with GSSM has been an incredible one that started over 4 years ago. I was so blessed to meet Alyssa when I coached Nadiah's volleyball team — I was searching for a job that lined up with the purpose I felt in my heart. I loved every moment of working at GSSM from the beginning. Alyssa, Russ, and Aimee welcomed me in immediately and taught me all I needed to know to grow in my role.

The outpouring of support from so many of you all confirmed once again that I was in the place God wanted me to be. I am so grateful for the abundance of prayers, encouraging words, and financial support that I received from supporters who I've known for a long time, and from those of you who I met through GSSM who supported me from the beginning. Thank you isn't a big enough statement, but please know I am filled with gratitude and deeply humbled.

As some of you may know, this January I was blessed to receive a scholarship to take a doula training. A doula is a person trained to support people during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum; births accompanied by doulas show higher rates of positive outcomes and less unnecessary medical interventions. We are also facing a maternal mortality crisis in the US, Black women die during birth or due to pregnancy related causes three times more than white women. Because of this and other disparities in maternal health care, I felt called to become a doula and support people of color during pregnancy and birth.

This year, Donald and I were also preparing to move to Richmond, Virginia. As we prayed for God to provide, I was unexpectedly offered a job with the same organization who trained me to become a doula. After lots of prayer, I accepted this full-time position and will be serving the Richmond community through doula work. This means that my full-time role with GSSM has come to an end. This is a bittersweet time for me, as I have loved every moment I've had with GSSM and I am simultaneously looking forward to this new journey of offering support to our community in the realm of maternal health.

So again, with a heart full of gratitude I want to say thank you again, to the GSSM Staff and Board as well as the community of supporters who have rallied around me from day one.

What a blessing it has been to connect with incredible leaders all over the world who are passionate about the kingdom of God, sports, and serving their communities. I'll cherish these years, friendships, and connections forever.

*Sequoi*