

Honors Outlook*

**Pandemic Edition, Fourth in a Series*

HONORS CITY AS TEXT™ : EXTENDED REMIX

**BY HANNAH HARRIS, CLASS OF 2023
AND CAT STUDENT COORDINATOR**

UMW Honors' signature orientation experience, City as Text™, took on a different format this year. Instead of completing the preparation, walkabout, and presentation in a matter of days, students were enrolled in HONR 101, a one-credit course for the first eight weeks of the semester. The goals for early arrival were refocused; students did a campus scavenger hunt, took a trolley tour, and visited both the Fredericksburg Battlefield and Area Museum (FAM). They attended panels with Mary Washington faculty and students as well as several city officials on topics including local African American history and the problems and strengths of Fredericksburg. The HONR 101 class then met every Monday night to hear from campus experts on topics including urban planning and the built environment, conducting ethnographic research, equity, inclusion, and social justice. For the core walkabout experience, each group of students was assigned to a street in the Fredericksburg area and set off to explore it, accompanied by an upper-class student leader. The first-year students reflected on their experiences, sharing images, videos, and anecdotes, during a closing night of presentations which was attended by many UMW and community members including Mayor Greenlaw and President Paino. Below, two first-year Mary Wash Honors scholars share their experiences.

LOOKING CLOSELY

by Kevin Halpin, Class of 2025

During the CaT experience, one feature I found particularly rewarding was finding local bugs. What started out as a meme between me and my friends on the walkabout with our group soon became something that I was actually really interested in. I noticed the way that the bugs interact with the Fredericksburg environment, which helped me notice how beautiful parts of Fredericksburg could be. From the flowers that the bees pollinate to the trees on street corners, the Fredericksburg community is full of life, and I think it is so cool that there are so many insects living here because to me that means that the community, or at least Hanover Street, is healthy. It was refreshing to hear birds singing and insects flying in the air, reinforcing the idea that nature is a factor tied to many other factors of this community. I was actually surprised to see this abundance of life because I assumed that a city like Fredericksburg would be mostly buildings and while it is, there is so much more life and movement here than I expected, something that reminds me of my neighborhood at home. This connection I could make between my home and Fredericksburg helped me feel more at home here, giving me more confidence in a new environment such as this one. The CaT experience was very rewarding for me, and I think I have developed a new appreciation of the environment from it.



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HONR 101

(CONTINUED)

THE BIGGER PICTURE

by Meghan McAndrew, Class of 2025



When I first learned about the City as Text™ program as part of the Honors Program at the University of Mary Washington, I was intrigued. I plan to be a Historic Preservation major focusing on urban planning, so I was thrilled to have the chance to wander around downtown Fredericksburg and observe what truly went on in the city. When it came time for our walkabout, I was really excited. I had not gotten much of a chance to explore downtown Fredericksburg due to the demands of my studies, so this was one of my first times seeing the city on my own. My walkabout group accidentally took the wrong route, but I am so grateful that we did, because it allowed us to see a more authentic view of the city. It is easy to go on a tour of a city and focus on the shops, the restaurants, and the quiet neighborhoods. Our final walkabout route, however, took my group and me through neighborhoods with abandoned buildings, uneven sidewalks, and unkempt lawns. We passed a sign in a park that let visitors know that they were not welcome to sleep there, which is hostile to the city's large unhoused population. The city of Fredericksburg has a lot of work to do to best serve all of its citizens, and City as Text™ has made me aware of some of the problems, and has also given me some ideas on how to help.

First Person Singular: What/Why I Do

by Hollis Cobb, Class of 2023

Hi! My name is Hollis Cobb, and I am a member of the class of 2023 in the Honors Program. As an English major in the Education program at Mary Washington, I have always had a passion for the promotion of literacy. During the pandemic, access to literature became significantly more limited with schools and libraries closing, and new books becoming a luxury many struggled to afford. This summer, I launched Bookmobile Fredericksburg to attempt to solve this problem. The Bookmobile's mission is to promote literacy and a love of literature through the distribution of free books and WIFI to Fredericksburg, Stafford, and Spotsylvania. Since then, the program has grown incredibly quickly, and the community has fallen in love with the Bookmobile. It has produced numerous smiles from parents and children alike. I adore the work I get to do with the Fredericksburg community, and I'm excited to see where it leads me before I conclude my time at UMW. There is so much good that the Bookmobile can do, and our programming will only continue to grow and flourish in the coming months.



I started the Bookmobile with a general sense of what I wanted to get out of it, but the program has proved more fruitful than I could have ever imagined. I've become well versed in the banking, licensure, and incorporation procedures of businesses and nonprofits; I've developed into a strong leader managing an entire staff and a much more practical planner than I was previously. The life skills I've had to learn have been numerous. The Bookmobile project is the best preparation for the future that I could have asked for. I don't know where the project will end up, but I often dream of incorporating more vehicles and expanding to other parts of the state, bringing our mission as far as it will go. Who knows what the future holds, but I'm ready for it!

To follow Bookmobile Fredericksburg:

Instagram: [@bookmobile.fxbq](https://www.instagram.com/bookmobile.fxbq)

Website: <https://bookmobilefxbg.com/>

Making Our Mark in the Commons

by Samantha Vaughn & Rylie Vann, Class of 2025

The Honors Program occupied its new space in Lee Hall just a few months before the pandemic scattered us, and it had just begun to get homey. To address this problem and have a community study break, we had an Honors Program logo painting party, using the new logo designed by a UMW Honors scholar last year. We traced the new logo onto canvases with carbon paper and painted them. Then they were collected to be hung up in the Honors Commons in order to beautify the space and to claim it as ours. We plan to make this an annual tradition as our colorful visions accumulate on the wall of our collaboration room.

Rylie: I decided to partake in the Honor Program's logo painting party partly because I was curious, and partly because I wanted to help beautify the Honors Commons. I had been in the Commons several times before, and the barren nature of the walls made the space feel like a warehouse that I wasn't really supposed to be in. I was really excited to indulge in my creative side with the chance to just paint with no worries about how "perfect" my design might look. It was also an amazing chance to spend time with my friends, the Honors advisors, and other students in the program!

Samantha: I hadn't gotten much involved in the honors program activities before I did the painting party, besides the City As Text course that all freshmen did for part of the semester. I wanted to better get to know some of the people in the Honors Program and painting with friends seemed like a great way to do that. It was also a nice relaxing activity that not only benefited me, but the Honors Program as a whole, which was a nice feeling.



The Return of the In-Person Honors Gingerbread Contest— Featuring Surprise Celebrity Judges Troy and Kelly Paino!



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