Erin Flathers, a Rixeyville resident, is currently enrolled at Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) and attends classes at the Fauquier Campus. Erin participates in community service through various 4-H clubs in the area. She also volunteered with Fauquier Hospital last summer, and this summer she hopes to earn her Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification.

Erin was a home-schooled student, as were her siblings. She decided to attend LFCC because all three of her older siblings had taken classes at the College and appreciated their relationships with their professors and fellow students. “They didn’t have the same opportunity for ‘one-on-one’ attention at the larger universities,” she said.

Erin is working toward her associate of arts and sciences degree at LFCC. She is interested in science, because she loves the challenges and constant changes that occur in the field. Upon graduation from LFCC, she plans to transfer to a four-year institution. James Madison University and George Mason University are currently her top choices.

LFCC has been a terrific fit for Erin. “I love being able to ask my professors questions and be a face and name to them and not just a test grade,” she said. “I also like all the activities happening around the campus. There’s always something going on!”

In addition to LFCC activities, Erin loves horses and has been working at Grovespring Farm in Culpeper, Va., for two years. At the farm, she helps teach children about riding and leads trail rides. She also measures grain and supplements for the horses, a task that involves great attention to detail and intricacy.

When asked about solving a world problem, Erin mentioned she would like to work toward ending human trafficking. “I would work with law enforcement to tighten border patrol, and I would set up more programs for people who have survived modern-day slavery.” Erin would like to earn her bachelor’s degree in international relations, criminal justice or forensic science – ambitious educational goals that could certainly lead to work in human rights and advocacy. As she looks to the future, Erin is focused on “where the world is going and the difference I’m going to make in it.”
**Setting an Example for Her Children is Student’s Number One Goal**

Malinda Fisher knows what it means to persevere. A full-time mother of four children, Malinda will realize her dream of obtaining an associate degree when she graduates from LFCC.

“I have always enjoyed history. I grew up in Europe and was always fascinated by the architecture,” Malinda said.

Not only does Malinda attend classes at LFCC and care for her family, she also volunteers at her children’s school, helps with the local 4-H club and participates in activities planned by LFCC’s Fauquier Campus chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges. “I think it is important to give back to the community by volunteering. I lead through example. I want my children to understand what it means to work hard and help out,” said Malinda, who also volunteers with her children at the local animal shelter. “My greatest accomplishment in life is being able to raise great kids.”

**Future Film Director Gets Start at LFCC**

In May 2009, at age 18, David Hall will graduate from Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) with an associate degree in liberal arts. The future is bright for this budding film director. While most of his peers will be enrolling at colleges and universities as freshmen next fall, David will be a junior at Old Dominion University (ODU) and will be halfway toward obtaining a bachelor’s degree in film.

David began attending LFCC at age 17 after completing his high school coursework. David, the oldest of eight siblings and a Remington resident, was homeschooled through high school and “fell in love with the College by attending an NSO (new student orientation). The staff and professors are great.”

David has involved himself in the life of the College by working as a student assistant through the work-study program and serving as the vice president of the Fauquier Campus chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges. Work-study job opportunities are funded through a College and federal partnership. Most work-study students work 10 to 15 hours per week “LFCC deeply believes in the motto, ‘Your future, Our focus.’ Everyone is completely dedicated to it,” David said. “That is admirable.”

This summer, David plans to travel to Europe and enjoy some free time before enrolling at ODU. David’s goal is to work full time as a substitute teacher and attend ODU part time. Although he has always thought it would be fun to teach, David does not plan to make it his career goal. His passion still remains in film. After completing his bachelor’s degree, he hopes to move to New York City and pursue a master’s degree in filmmaking while he begins his movie-directing career.

Outside of school, David enjoys traveling and assisting with the drama program at Mountain View Community Church. In addition, from age 6 to 17, he was involved in Boy Scouts. “My greatest personal achievement has probably been becoming an Eagle Scout,” he said. To obtain this status, David had to complete a special project: building a bird sanctuary. Unfortunately, he experienced many obstacles, such as a hurricane that destroyed part of the sanctuary and a tornado that demolished his home. After much perseverance and reconstruction, David finished his project and became an Eagle Scout.

From the caring employees and leadership opportunities to the exceptional faculty and financial assistance that he has received, David values his time at LFCC. “It’s been great!”

**Returning to College Was Best Decision Ever**

Ross Buckles, 24, entered college directly after high school, but, because of an unexpected employment opportunity, he was not able to remain enrolled. After about four years though, Ross determined that the direction his life was taking did not make him happy. He decided to enroll at Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC), one of the best decisions he has ever made, he said.

Ross, a Collepeper County resident, has been so successful with his educational endeavors that he is able to count making the president’s list at LFCC as one of his greatest personal achievements! After graduating from LFCC with an associate degree in liberal arts, Ross plans to transfer to either George Mason University or the University of Mary Washington. After obtaining his bachelor’s degree, he wants to attend law school.

In his spare time, Ross likes to watch football, play video games, hunt and spend time with his family and friends. When asked about his biggest hero, Ross said, “I attribute my positive personality traits, work ethic and overall moral values to the manner in which my father raised me.” Ross can also credit his father and family for his dedication to the Washington Redskins. “I come from a family of die-hard Redskins fans,” he said.

Ross works in the Office of Student Success at the College’s Fauquier Campus through the work-study program that study job opportunities are funded through a College and federal partnership. Most work-study students work 10 to 15 hours per week.

Ross has advice for those trying to choose an institution of higher education. “Make sure you choose the right school for the right reasons. Picking a school based on hearsay or popularity may be tempting, but it is certainly not the best idea,” he said. Based on his success at LFCC and his ambitious educational and career goals, Ross has certainly benefited from his own advice.

**Workforce Training Begins at LFCC**

Individuals who enroll in professional development courses offered through LFCC’s Office of Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education leave with confidence in their newfound knowledge, skills and abilities. Industry experts train individuals in a variety of course areas, including computers, construction, customer service, health care, human resources, security and trades. Courses are offered online, on site and at LFCC’s Fauquier Campus.

The success of the courses lies in the testimony of the students and clients: • I’d like to say thank you! I obtained my Medical Billing/Coding certificate through LFCC Workforce Solutions and Gatlin Education online. I was able to obtain employment shortly thereafter at Blue Ridge Orthopaedic Associates in Warrenton, Va. I had no prior hands-on experience either! Thank you so much! Mr. James is trouble for me and my family!” said Lisa Cooper, a student in the online Medical Billing/Coding Certificate class.

• “The Authority is very pleased with what the staff has learned and accomplished. The staff plan [at the Authority] is excellent, and these educational opportunities have provided us with the opportunity for further improvement,” said Burch Farley, deputy general manager of the Fairfax County Water and Sanitation Authority located in Vint Hill. The Authority needed to enhance its staff’s technological abilities, and, with the help of LFCC, the Fairfax County Water and Sanitation Authority is proud to say it is now becoming a technologically savvy workplace!