

## **For Grace Colley '13, a Passion for Anthropology, Public Policy, and Time Abroad Began at High Meadows School**

Grace Colley '13 was understandably anxious about starting at a new school as a rising sixth grader. Within minutes of arriving at High Meadows School in August 2010, however, her peers quelled her fears. She immediately made a friend in the Middle Years Courtyard, and High Meadows has been influential in shaping her life ever since. Grace calls HMS “the best investment a family can make” because it helps a child think critically, engage with the community, and care about the environment while forming lifelong connections with friends and faculty.

### **Finding HMS & Thriving in Debate Class**

Grace grew up attending Atlanta Public Schools, but after being redistricted, her family sent her and her siblings to private schools. They enthusiastically enrolled Grace at High Meadows, finding a school where their outdoorsy, animal-loving daughter could be part of a diverse and caring community. “High Meadows was perfect for me,” Grace said. “I love being in nature, and I love animals. I even became a vegetarian at a young age. I always felt supported and at home at HMS.”

As a student, Grace found a passion for debate thanks to Mr. Wolf. With small class sizes, students are encouraged to try new courses without fear of failure. “Debate was challenging,” Grace recalled, “since I had never been asked to use my brain to think quickly and critically. Through debate, I learned how to communicate effectively and engage in civil discourse. I still use those skills today.”

### **The Impact of Off-Campus Trips**

In [Middle Years](#), every student participates in a [week-long immersive learning trip off-campus](#). Sixth graders travel to Jekyll Island, Georgia, while seventh graders visit Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. In eighth grade High Meadows students board a plane bound for Estes Park, Colorado for a snowy mountain adventure as the capstone to their HMS experience.

When she stepped off the aircraft onto Colorado soil, Grace quickly realized how much the experience would impact her. For 10 days, she immersed herself in the outdoors, soaking in the scenic mountain views while mastering challenging hikes. “Colorado was my first time getting on a plane, and it was a huge moment. We learned how to hike on that trip, and I loved it. I have been back to Colorado many times and took my sister. My sister loved the environment so much that she completed her college degree at the University of Colorado.”

### **From HMS to Spain, France, and Beyond**

Grace’s path after graduation did not follow that of a traditional high school student, but it suited her skills and passions perfectly. The summer after eighth grade, she learned about Junior Diplomats, a program that matches United States and foreign students for a high school program. The program, along with fluency in Spanish thanks to Ms. Spinola, became the springboard for her education. “I learned Spanish for three years at High Meadows, so I moved to Spain for high school,” she mentioned.

High Meadows gave Grace the confidence and independence to pursue the opportunity. “You host a student in your home who is the same age as your child but from a different country,” she stated. “I stayed with families in France and Spain and returned to Spain for high school.

Because of Grace’s Spanish foundation, she excelled in Spain, graduating from high school in 2017 before enrolling at Davidson College in North Carolina. There, she majored in anthropology and minored in Hispanic studies and public health. The common tie between Grace and her major was Mr. Wolf.

“High Meadows played an important role in my major,” said Grace. “Mr. Wolf introduced us to anthropology in seventh grade, and I learned about Jane Goodall. I did not even know you could major in a field like that, and Jane became an icon for me. I am so passionate about the field, and I have never looked back. It just felt natural to study it.”

Grace has since moved back abroad and is completing her master's at Yashar University in Turkey while doing freelance work and policy consulting relating to child welfare. She is considering pursuing a PhD in Turkey, relocating to Spain, or remaining in the policy field working for the EU or NATO.

"I owe much of my passion for being a global citizen and social justice activist to my time at High Meadows," Grace stated. "I came to HMS as a shy and sheltered kid, and I left being a loud, energetic, empathetic young teenager. Mr. Wolf and Ms. Lovatt, specifically, fundamentally transformed me into the person I am today. I am immensely grateful for my time at High Meadows, and I hope one day I will be able to give back to the school in some impactful way."

### **Your Child Can Have an Experience Like Grace's**

Grace's HMS journey began with a single visit day on our campus, and yours can too. We would love to welcome your family to experience the same sense of belonging, curiosity, and possibility that shaped her journey. [Schedule a campus visit today and discover the High Meadows difference for yourself.](#)