

S1: This week on a very special ninety point seven, Chatt Tech.

S2: I would have been on the streets, I probably would have been selling drugs.

S3: We've all been a college student before. We know sometimes a budget can get a little bit tight.

S2: I felt like I was an arrow and I was able to kind of launch forward through my career a lot quicker than most people, and it just was mind blowing.

S1: Ninety eight point seven Chatt tech, where ninety eight point seven percent of our students earn a career. Today's episode is a special edition of the podcast. We're going to talk to some of the people who donate to the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation and find out why they support the school and the students. First, let's meet a student who has benefited from donations from people like you.

S2: Well, I'm Jada, Christie. I currently am in the paramedic program, hopefully to have my associate's degree from Penn Medicine in May 2022, so it's right around the corner. Right now, I'm 20 years old. I come from a huge family. I was born and raised in Florida and we moved here back when I was 15 and I've been in Georgia ever since.

S1: Jada won her scholarship from the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation by writing an essay about the hardships she faced growing up, and she's pretty blunt about her situation.

S2: I grew up Trailer Park Trash. I'm the oldest at home out of nine kids, and from a very young age, like, I had to make tough decisions. You know, I would babysit other kids just so I could give my mom some money so we could go out and eat something as simple as McDonald's, you know, from a very young age. My mother built it into me that she did not want me to be another statistic.

S1: If Jada had not been given this opportunity at Chatt Tech, where would she be? We asked, and she answered,

S2: I would have been on the streets. I probably would have been selling drugs. More than likely because I was exposed to that was like such a young age, how selling drugs was quick money and then all of my problems, when I was younger, even now, come from lack of money. Simple. So if I wouldn't have gotten into where I am at today, I probably would have been out on the street somewhere, selling drugs, making quick money, trying to make sure that my mother and my family was taking care of.

S1: Not every student has a story as unique as Jada's, but every student does have a story.

S3: Hi, my name is Jason Westbrook. I'm an alumni of Chattahoochee Technical College. I graduated from Chattahoochee Tech in 2014. While I was there, I completed the HVAC or Air-Conditioning technology program and then also received my associates of applied technical management. So I was very fortunate and blessed. Growing up, I wouldn't really say that I had hardships. I had two very loving parents and made sure that my brother and myself were very well taken care of. But I think, as you know, we people go into adulthood and sophomores are stepping out on their own. I mean, there's always, you know, things that come up. It's, you know, first go around for everybody. So, you know, and trying to navigate life and balance expenses, living expenses, eating expenses, you know, everything like that is you're learning as you go as far as how to handle these finances and things. So, you know, going to school, that is a big finance that a lot of people take on. And then, like I said, having the help of scholarships, grants, or whatever it may be, to provide some sort of assistance, you know, can be a huge change for a lot of people.

S1: Jason is another Chatt Tech student who received a scholarship from the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation.

S3: I don't recall the exact amount. I want to say it may have been a thousand dollars, which for me going into that, the air conditioning technology program, was enough to really cover just about every tool that I needed. You know, going into that program, it's not. It can be a daunting list when you first look at it, like I said, being a college student and, you know, seeing this expense. But it was a huge help for me and it allowed me to get, you know, not just tools, but, you

know, nice tools at that. Yeah, I was able to get a lot of nice brand new things, which stuff I still even have to this day, stuff that I use through my HVAC career. You know, the things that I got with that scholarship still carry me today.

S2: So I'm Jennifer Nelson and vice president for Advancement for Chattahoochee Technical College. In that role, I also serve as executive director for the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation. Our students come to us with a lot of different needs and from a lot of different backgrounds. Most of them are able to get some type of financial aid, but it's never enough. Financial aid does not cover 100 percent. There's always gaps. So we help fill that gap with scholarships. We also do things like provide textbooks. Textbooks are very expensive and we have a lending book program. We provide emergency grants for students who may have a car problem. Maybe they need to get their car fixed so that they can get to school or get to class. So we work with students to meet those needs that are outside of academics or just life obstacles that get in the way. We have a child care program to support single moms who if they're in a health care program, those are full time programs, you need child care support. So our mission is really to give those students a leg up to make sure that they graduate and go to work for our community and that we bridge any gaps that we can provide for the college as a whole.

S1: Just like Jennifer said, the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation is here to give students a leg up, not a leg out. Hang on, a leg up, not a leg out? Don't you mean a hand up, not a handout? Who wrote this?

S2: I feel very passionate about workforce, I feel very passionate about Chattahoochee Tech in particular because, you know, I think our students are special and unique. We hear a lot about four year colleges. That's all you hear about for your colleges. But we know when, when you have a pandemic, who are the essential workers? Who are the people who keep our world running? And that is graduates from Chattahoochee Technical College. They keep our world running day to day, they are the front line, the bottom line, and our students are very committed. They're very passionate. They get into their programs and they fall in love with what they're doing. And then they take that, that love and that knowledge into the workforce. And then they're truly making a difference because they've overcome something. When you talk to them, you just become inspired. And I just, you know, want to share that message with people about how great our students are. And I just tell them, you're making a difference in multiple ways. You're making the difference between an individual and the change in their life, but you're also making a difference in the community as a whole, because now that person is going to be an integral part of our community making a difference in their work environment that's going to serve you.

S1: Donating to the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation can absolutely change lives, but that's not the only reason to give. Let's take Pete, for instance. He's the general manager at Ed Voyles Honda, and his reasoning for giving to the Chatt Tech Foundation is a little different than you'd expect.

S5: We got involved with Chatt Tech by initially doing scholarships for some of their students, and it was kind of selfish on our part because one of our challenges today is finding technicians to work in our service department. We figured working with Chattahoochee Tech would be a great way to do that. Not only were we making an investment in these students that hopefully, with fingers crossed, some of them would come to work for us as well. I currently got five students working for us right now doing a great job. I had one that I've had for a number of years, Victoria. I loved her.

S4: So, I'm Victoria Sweedin, and I went to Chattahoochee Tech for about two years. I ended up graduating in winter of 2021 with an associate's in automotive technology, and it was a fantastic experience.

S5: and I got to work with her and found out that she was real excited about coming to Honda and learning as she studied. And I got to tell you, she did a phenomenal job. She was just one of our stars.

S4: It's enabled me to, it gave me the start that I really needed. It gave me, you know, basically like my foot in the door. It helped jumpstart my education. So I was going, you know, on the two year degree path. But it just gave me so many more resources to just kind of like, launch forward in that way. And there's also another scholarship. It was a tool scholarship that was also through Chattahoochee Tech. And so with a combination of having the opportunity to intern with Ed Voyles and, you know, be hands on like a technician and then the tool scholarship, which was incredibly amazing because, you know, you do have to supply your own tools and having, you know, a lot of tools being, you know, given to you through a scholarship. I just I felt like I was an arrow. And it just through those two things, I was

able to kind of launch forward through my career a lot quicker than most people, and it just was mind blowing.

S1: Pete and his team at Ed Voyles benefit directly from donating to the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation.

S5: Well, number one, it's the right thing to do. These are kids that want to learn a trade, want to learn a trade, a trade that can provide a living for themselves and their family and creates a career for them. Whereas if we did not do this, some of these kids are going to not make it. They don't have enough money for college. If we don't do this, if we don't support them, well, we're not going to have any quality technicians, at least for, in our case, coming our way. So we need to be supporting trade schools. We need to be supporting schools that teach heating and air, plumbing. These are jobs that are never going away. Right? I myself wish I had learned a trade. The only thing I learned how to do is to talk. But when you're a technician, these guys can go anywhere in the world, anywhere in the world to work, right? They just take their toolbox. I want to live in California, I drive to California. They say, I'm a technician. I went to Chatt Tech, I got my degree. I've been trained at a car dealership and they go, Oh, when can you start? And it's the same with any other plumbing, heating, air, any trade that these students learn. They're going to have a job and they're going to be well-paid. So why do we do it? It's the right thing to do, number one. And number two, it's selfish because we do end up benefiting by getting some of these students in our stores and developing them. I don't know how you don't donate, really.

S1: Pete's candor is refreshing, but he's not the typical donor. Martha Kirby Ferrera established an endowed scholarship for nursing students in honor of her mother. The endowed scholarship is special because it's the gift that keeps giving on in perpetuity.

S6: My mother decided to go back to school in her 40s when my sister and I were in high school about to start high school, and my mother felt like she needed to go back to work, make some extra money to help with college expense. And she just had more time on her hands because now we were driving and involved in our own activities. She decided to, after looking at different training that she could receive, she decided to get some nursing training because her background had really only been in office work. Now computers were coming along. She was not all that versed in computer technology, but she was well versed in being a caregiver. She had done that for her own family, for an aunt that had developed cancer, and she helped her a lot and she just felt like that was sort of her calling to be a caregiver. And she had a friend in Marietta who was a trained nurse and actually taught nursing at the Marietta Cobb Area Vocational Technical School. So Mother talked with her, and decided to enter that program at Marietta Votech, which she did in 1969. So she finished that and worked as a nurse for many years at Kennestone Hospital, felt that that was really a fulfilling job. And when she passed, my husband and I just wanted to do something in her memory that we know she would like. And education was that thing that we felt would be important to her, and we wanted the money to stay in the Marietta area, the local area. And so I just approached Chattahoochee Tech about the practical nursing program, since that was mothers alumni situation. And so that's what we decided on.

S1: There's a million reasons that donors give to the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation.

S7: My name is Elizabeth Smith Williams and I am with the Beacon Foundation Charitable Trust. It is a family foundation whose main goal is poverty relief and the opportunity to give to those things not otherwise funded through traditional means. So Chattahoochee Tech is a perfect example of the kind of students that we would like to help for them to be able to do what they would like to do and not always have to worry about where the dollars are going to come from, for what they like to do. Since we believe education is education, and for those students that might want to do something that is trade related because I am a believer that a four year college is not for everyone. We wanted to be able to support this kind of students. And while Beacon Foundation does support students that take a more traditional route, we're so glad to be helping students at Chattahoochee Tech.

S1: Elizabeth has had a chance to talk with the students that her foundation helps.

S7: In my experience and meeting the students because I have had that opportunity, they're so gracious and grateful, and I love hearing the stories. So it's everything from someone that did get a four year degree and realized they didn't love what they were doing, or someone that said early on in their education process, I know exactly what I want to do, and the best place for me to get that kind of education is at Chattahoochee Tech.

S1: Elizabeth mentioned helping students that already have four year degrees. Sounds a little wonky on the surface, but I'd like to quickly introduce you to Catherine. She's in the nursing program at Chattahoochee Tech.

S8: One reason that I'm applying for scholarships and grants is that I don't qualify for financial aid anymore because I already have a bachelor's degree. So, any schooling that I go to or that I'm obtaining now, I have to pay for out of pocket unless I want to take out a loan like a personal loan, not an educational loan. I can't even get really educational loans because that qualifies as financial aid, and I can't get that.

S1: Should Catherine be penalized because she found her true calling after earning her business degree? Of course not.

S8: And I've said it so many times like, I feel like, why should I be held back or punished for trying to further my education? You know, I can't get another scholarship or another loan or extend like my HOPE scholarship, you know, because I graduated with honors with my bachelor's degree.

S1: Elizabeth sums up why she donates to the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation nicely.

S7: I want each of these students to have the opportunity to feel encouraged, know that someone is behind them and feels great about what they're doing, and is supportive of them, even if they don't know who they are. Even if they don't know me, they know there's someone that gave money to Chatt Tech that, in turn, has trickled down to them.

S1: What do you need to get started? Call Amanda.

S9: My name is Amanda Henderson, and I'm the advancement coordinator for the Foundation. I handle our scholarships, student grants, all of our accounting and finances, I've been in the Foundation for almost eight years in March and I've enjoyed it. I enjoy meeting our students and our donors. It's just been a great place to work and to see that full circle from receiving the donation to awarding it. If you establish an endowed scholarship, that scholarship will live on forever and we award full percent of the value of it each year. So that's typically if you start at twenty five thousand, you know, it's \$1000 that rolls off each year as a scholarship. And then if they go the annual scholarship route, it's a little more affordable, a lot more. It is a thousand dollar minimum commitment for three years, so three thousand total and I just work with donors to see which one sounds like what they want to do and then we establish criteria that they want to award from. We add it to our online scholarship software, and then it's awarded with all the other scholarships.

S1: Part of the criteria for the scholarship that Victoria was awarded included writing an essay.

S4: Yeah so I wrote an essay, a short essay, kind of giving my background and how I, you know, kind of what my intentions were in the field and what, you know, where some positive changes that I wanted to make in the field with my education. And for me, that's, you know, being a woman in a male dominated field. You know, kind of stemmed from, I just wanted to be a great example. I wanted, you know, just to be the example of, you know, our minority or, you know, lack of females in the field. So that was a big part of it. And, you know, just to create positive change and, you know, I guess they really liked that, and I was selected out of, I think, hundreds of applicants, so that was incredible.

S9: We get a lot of over-the-moon students. A lot of our students are just trying with anything and everything they can to graduate and become employed. So, when we email like a single mom and she's like, oh my gosh, I can let go of one of my two jobs, you know, now since I don't have to pay for all of my tuition. It's a really great and rewarding moment.

S1: Chatt Tech Award certificates, diplomas and associate degrees in more than 50 programs of study for students to become highly skilled professionals in some of the nation's fastest growing, high demand career fields. The college also offers customized workforce training, continuing education classes, and adult education programs that include free GED preparation classes. You can make a difference in the life of a student at Chattahoochee Technical College, and support workforce development in your community by supporting the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation.

S2: I don't know anyone else out there that is making some 15 year old freshman high school girl's dreams come true,

besides people that gave you the money to go to school, and that is the biggest thing ever because so many people in life are not doing what they love. They are doing what is making the money, and it just so happens that my dream makes me money. And then they have given everything to me, this all I have ever wanted, and I will tell them and express that it probably even quite a tad bit and just let them know that how truly grateful I am for them.

S1: If you're interested in learning more about the Chattahoochee Tech Foundation or would like to make a donation, visit Chattahoochee Tech Dot Edu slash foundation.

S5: This podcast is a production of BG Ad Group. Darren Sutherland, executive producer. Jeremy Powell, creative director. Jacob Sutherland, director. Producers Jason Genter, Roller and Matt Golden and CÃ©sar Copywriter. All rights reserved.