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Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "Gardner-Webb Alumnus Travels the World on Carnival Cruise Lines" (2022). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 2425.
<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive/2425>

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ALUMNI

Gardner-Webb Alumnus Travels the World on Carnival Cruise Lines

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MARCH 16, 2022



▲ Austin Buzzard is working on the Carnival Cruise Lines ship, Miracle. (Photo at left by Eliza Walker)

Austin Buzzard, '21, Uses his Communication Skills to Serve Passengers

Austin Buzzard is from Harrisonburg, Va., went to school at Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina and had only traveled to two other states in his lifetime: New York and Florida. Now, he's traveling the world.

Buzzard, a track and field student-athlete at GWU, was hired as a member of the Junior Fun Squad for Carnival Cruise Lines before he graduated from GWU in December 2021. His first assignment was traveling to Hawaii, Mexico, and Alaska. He started considering the benefits of working on a cruise ship during his first year at Gardner-Webb, and the dream stayed with him.

"I never really traveled anywhere and was excited to see what else the world has to offer," Buzzard noted. "My time has been incredible, truly 'FUNtastic.' I have met people from all over the world, because each person on the Fun Squad is from a different country. We just got back from Hawaii a couple days ago and I was able to get off and explore. It was a remarkable experience."



- ▲ Austin Buzzard's job on the cruise ship, Miracle, is to make sure passengers have fun.
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Not only is Buzzard getting paid to travel the world, his job involves making sure people have plenty of activities to enjoy on the cruise. "That entails a lot of different things, such as trivia, karaoke, dance parties, game nights and a whole lot more," he described. "Pretty much any fun activity that goes on, and I'll be there. Now that I am starting to know my way around the ship and know what is expected of me, I can start making things my own and putting my own Buzz spin on things."

The cruise line follows COVID-prevention protocols to keep everyone healthy. The only thing Buzzard needs to pay for on the ship, outside of personal items, is tipping the person who cleans his room every day.



- ▲ Photo by Eliza Walker
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Buzzard is well suited for the job, because he enjoys meeting new people and talking to them. One of the reasons he chose to attend Gardner-Webb and run track was the family atmosphere he

encountered the first time he visited campus. He had the feeling that GWU would provide the opportunity to develop lasting friendships. “I realized it was such a small tight-knit community, and I thought it would be great for me,” he shared. “I found so many new people at Gardner-Webb and learned more about people from all over the world.”

Because of his outgoing personality and his love for making videos, Buzzard chose to major in broadcast journalism with a minor in graphic design. As he learned technical and practical skills in his classes, he said he grew as a person.

“Gardner-Webb is truly a special place—where you meet people that you end up loving like a legit family,” he affirmed. “I learned so much about life and growing up. There was always people caring for me and helping me. Being at Gardner-Webb gave me the opportunity to become my own person. I learned who I truly am, and that God has an incredible plan for my life. I was very sad to leave, yet excited to be able to continue my journey of life.”

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.