

**TUCKER SCHOLARSHIP**

# Meet Rachel Gaura: Gardner-Webb's Newest Tucker Scholar

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These photos show some of Rachel Gaura's activities. In the photo at left, Rachel, second from right, plays a game at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes event. In the center photo, Rachel (center) shows books collected to give to children who don't have them in the home. The last photo with Rachel, (seated, first on the left) was taken after her team won the spirit stick competition at the Students in Action Fall Conference.

## High School Senior Demonstrates 'Service to the Gospel with a Heart for Humanity'

Gardner-Webb University's 2022 Tucker Scholar, Rachel Gaura of Chapin, S.C., is known for her willingness to serve her church, school and community with a caring spirit and humble nature. The teacher who nominated her for the Tucker Heart, Soul Mind and Strength Scholarship described how Gaura was the perfect representative of GWU's most prestigious award.

"The Tucker Scholarship recognizes students who demonstrate commitment to carrying out service to the Gospel with a heart for humanity," noted Lauren Brown, a teacher at Spring Hill High School.

"Rachel Gaura is the embodiment of a *heart* for Jesus that reaches out to those around her, a *soul* that is nurtured through the constant study and implementation of God's Holy Word, a *mind* gifted with discernment and intellect, and finally, *strength* found in her Savior that sustains her daily."



- ▲ Tucker Scholar winner Rachel Gaura poses with her friends and family after learning she won the Tucker Scholarship. From left, are Maggie Wilson (friend), Paul Anderson (grandfather), Rebecca Gaura (sister), Mary Beth Nugent (aunt), April Gaura (mom), Caleb Gaura (brother), Chris Gaura (dad), Debbie Anderson (grandmother), and Emma Nugent (cousin).

Established in 2019 by Carolyn and Robert Tucker (<https://gardner-webb.edu/admissions-aid/scholarships-and-grants/tucker-scholarship/>), the scholarship is based on Mark 12:29-31, where Jesus gives the two most important commandments: “Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.” The winner of the annual award receives an eight-semester full-tuition, room and board scholarship.

Gaura was introduced to the Gardner-Webb campus as a child, when she attended her cousin’s graduation. “I was blown away,” she remembered. “The campus was beautiful and my experience left an outstanding impression on me.”

When she came back for a visit in the fall of her senior year of high school, “my experience on the day I toured campus proved to me that a small, Christian university would be the best environment for me to flourish as a young adult,” she stated. “The programs at Gardner-Webb are exactly what I need; the campus and student life are unmatched. After months of questioning and praying about future decisions, I finally felt at peace with college. I know Gardner-Webb will provide quality academics, and opportunities to serve, and support the development of my faith.”

Gaura is thankful for her parents, extended family, church leaders and teachers, whose steadfast faith influenced her character. Their examples of service and her own volunteer opportunities have ignited her interest to major in psychology. “My goal is to work with children going through various life struggles,” she affirmed. “After spending a handful of mornings assisting a course of underclassmen at my high school, I have developed a true love for building relationships and cultivating conversations. I plan to use this experience as a catalyst for my future career: becoming a school social worker. I am so excited to couple two of my most significant passions—people and education—into a daily occupation.”



- ▲ Rachel Gaura, standing, second from left, poses after installing a Little Library as part of a Chick-fil-A leadership program.
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Even as a member of a competitive dance team, Gaura still focuses on serving and learning. “It provides a perfect outlet for me to exercise, make friends, and understand the importance of time management,” she reflected. “Over the past couple of years, I have also been able to utilize my time at the studio to mentor younger dancers and assist with elementary dance classes. While competitions may sometimes be overwhelming, I truly value the memories I have made and the friendships I have grown. My studio has played a major role in my character development over the past six years.”

Additionally, she’s contributed her time to help with club projects and build relationships. As president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), she formulated activities to welcome and engage new students and facilitated group conversations and devotionals. In DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), she was vice president of hospitality and helped to promote club engagement, mentor aspiring club leaders and organize meetings.

Serving as vice president of Students in Action, she arranged a school-wide book drive to enhance literacy levels, donating over 1,000 books to a local non-profit organization. She also helped with one of her favorite events: the Young Athletes Expo. “This is a district-wide Special Olympics for preschool and elementary-aged children,” Gaura described. “I thoroughly enjoy this experience, as it allows me to mingle with students from a gamut of schools, while also spending an entire day encouraging, supporting, and serving students.”





▲ Rachel Gaura, second from right, helped set up for the Spring Hill High School Derby Day.

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At her church, Gaura also uses her communication skills as a co-leader on the youth ministry welcome team. She ensures each first-time visitor feels a sense of belonging and inclusion during their time at her church. She also attends a small group Bible study.

“Being a Tucker Scholar will allow me opportunities to grow in my faith, be challenged academically, and develop skills to fulfill my purpose,” she observed. “I am so thankful to celebrate this opportunity and all of the prayers it has answered. This was the final confirmation I needed to commit to taking this step in God’s plan for my life. I am looking forward to finding my place in the Gardner-Webb community, as well as serving and growing alongside each new friend I make.”

*Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, 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](https://gardner-webb.edu/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/>).*