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TEACHER Sharon Froedge and Principal Max Petett

be congratulating William and Graham on achieving this, one of many of their important goals. Both these boys scored 34 on their ACT tests this year," Petett said, noting that the national average composite ACT score is 20.

Petett went on to say that it was no big shock to see these students do so well on a college admission test normally taken by juniors and seniors. "William came to me one afternoon asking about forming an ATC prep club, and I told him to go find a sponsor," said Petett, "and soon after, I remember looking into a room and seeing him there with a whiteboard, talking to four or five students who all had their pens up taking notes. As for Graham, every time you see him he's got his nose in a book or a computer...These young men have earned themselves the equivalent of an $80,000 scholarship."

"My sister went to Gatton when I was in third grade, and since then it has always been my dream," said Stephens. Both students expressed gratitude to family and to faculty at both MCHS and Gatton for shepherding them through the application process and preparing them to succeed.

Gatton selects students based on a combination of grades, standardized test scores, extracurricular activities, teacher and community leader recommendations, a personal interview, and interest in a science, mathematical or engineering career, and has regularly been ranked the nation's top high school by publications like Newsweek and the Daily Beast. MCHS teacher Sharon Froedge has seen her own two children succeed there.

"The only hard part is we won't have William and Graham here with us, which has been great," she says. "But I'm thrilled for them. Gatton is top notch academic opportunity and it's also fun; all the GA students live together in a dorm with a bit more supervision than older undergrads, getting a real taste of college life. And my daughter who went to Gatton? She had two masters' degree at 23, and zero college debt -- she used that money to buy a house."