

Make It **More.**



THOMAS  
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UNIVERSITY

Open Up the  
**Possibilities.**





# Purpose and Possibilities.

**Right now, you're a work in progress.**

You may not know exactly where you're headed, or how far you can go. But you know you want more than just a successful, fulfilling life. You want a life of purpose, of meaning. You want to pursue your professional passion and your personal values. You want to be exceptional.

We're here to tell you that, with a Thomas More education, it's possible. And we have the proof. On the following pages, a few of our graduates share their stories. They've each accomplished remarkable things—for themselves and for others. Like you, they started their journeys with little more than an idea of where they fit in the world. But what they learned here—about the possibilities, and about themselves—prepared them to not only make it in the world, but also **Make It More.**

# It's more than education. It's inspiration.

We'd like you to meet a few of our graduates who are forging meaningful, productive futures. They're each an example of personal and professional achievement. But becoming a success isn't about following in their footsteps. It's about taking the education, support, and values you'll gain at Thomas More and being inspired to follow your own dreams. It's about making your own way in the world and, in your own way, making the world a better place.

If you're ready to write your own story, start today. Arrange a campus tour. Talk to our students, our faculty, and our admissions staff. Get a sense of what's possible. And get ready to [Make It More](#).







# A HUNGER FOR MAKING AN IMPACT.

**Haley Jackson**

B.A. in Environmental Science, 2020

Foundation Relations Associate, Share Our Strength, Washington, D.C.





## “My purpose in life is to serve others.”

On the journey to finding your place in the world, it helps to know what you really want to do.

Haley Jackson always knew. “My purpose in life is to serve others,” she says. “In everything I’ve done, throughout my education and all my life experiences, I’ve been very intentional about getting to a place where I can make a meaningful impact in the life of someone else.”

Haley’s journey may have started in her junior year as an environmental science major at Thomas More. “We started talking about the impacts of food waste and hunger as a social, economic, and environmental issue,” she recalls. “That’s when I knew what I wanted to do. I wasn’t sure how to make a career out of it, but I was sure this was the direction I was headed.”

After graduation, she took a position doing fundraising work at a Louisville environmental non-profit writing grants and working with donors. She enjoyed it but says, “I really wanted to get back into the food security/anti-hunger space. So I went back to school.”

After earning her Master of Public Affairs and completing a yearlong internship at an Indiana food bank, Haley found a job at Share Our Strength, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit. Its hallmark program, No Kid Hungry, awards grants to community organizations that work directly to solve hunger, particularly among children. It also advocates for national school breakfast and lunch programs and other federal food safety nets, educating elected officials on how legislation will impact childhood hunger and its lasting impacts.

As a foundation relations associate, Haley works with 25 organizations around the country, from building and maintaining relationships to writing grants, asking for funding, and updating donors on how their dollars are being put to work.

“I’m working on being a part of the hunger solution,” Haley says, “which is what I’ve wanted to do since my time at Thomas More. It’s a massive undertaking, but I’m at an organization that’s tackling it from the ground up, making sure people have food in the moment while also working to change the systems and the structures that keep people in need.”

# BORN TO LEAD.

## **Jesus Avila**

B.A. in Business Administration, 2018

MBA, 2022

Senior Production Underwriter,

Great American Insurance Company, Cincinnati, OH



# “If I can affect somebody’s life for the better, then I feel I’ve made a positive impact.”

As a high school senior, Jesus Avila was sure about three things: he wanted to work in business, he wanted to play football and rugby at Thomas More University, and he wanted to be an Army officer. He not only succeeded at all three, he did so by displaying the type of work ethic and leadership that have helped him launch a promising career and give back to the community where he grew up.

“Going into my junior year at Thomas More,” he recalls, “it was time to apply for an internship. I wasn’t sure which industry I wanted to go into, so I applied at all the big companies in town. Great American Insurance Company contacted me first. Insurance sounded boring, and I didn’t know what to expect. But they offered me a full-time internship, and I’ve been there ever since. It was the best decision I ever made.”

After his four years at Thomas More, during which he balanced classwork, military service—a second lieutenant in the Army National Guard, he’s completing a 10-year commitment—and his internship, Jesus transitioned to a position as an underwriter at Great American, working with insurance brokers and wholesalers to offer casualty and property coverage to businesses.

“I’m a people person,” he says, “and this job is all about working with partners and building relationships, so it’s perfect.” He then proceeded to earn his MBA from Thomas More.

The leadership skills Jesus has refined during his military service recently led his employer to choose him—from among their 10,000 employees—to represent Great American at Cincy Next, a six-

month leadership development program offered by the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce. “It was a great experience and quite an honor,” says Jesus. “It helped make me a better leader and communicator. The company’s been amazing.”

Jesus has been with Great American for five years. And while he plans to grow in the company, leading a larger team and making a bigger impact, he’s been giving back to his community his entire adult life, volunteering with local non-profits and coaching children.

“If I can affect somebody’s life for the better, then I feel I’ve made a positive impact,” he says.



# A FUTURE TAKING FLIGHT.

**Malia Smith**

B.S. in Nursing, 2019

Flight Nurse, Air Evac Lifeteam, St. Louis, MO

Malia Smith knew she wanted to be a nurse. Initially, she saw herself as a neurological nurse because her mother had suffered a serious brain infection. But as a teenager, after the experience of being in the ER to support a close friend whose father had been critically injured in an accident, she shifted her focus.

“If I can handle a traumatic situation that’s deeply personal to me,” she says about that experience, “I know I can be that strong figure for others.”

After earning her nursing degree from Thomas More, Malia soon passed her boards and the next day was offered a nursing position at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center (UCMC), the area’s busiest trauma center, where she worked for two years.

After another year split between two other Ohio hospitals, her former instructor at UCMC told her about an opening for a flight nurse at Air Evac Lifeteam, near St. Louis, which operates 150 air ambulance helicopter bases in 18 states.

“At UCMC I was fascinated with air care because in a helicopter it’s just you and a paramedic keeping patients safe and alive,” Malia says. “I wanted to do that, but I thought I needed more experience.”

She applied, and after eight virtual interviews was the only candidate offered a personal interview. Twenty minutes later she got the offer. “I was shocked,” Malia recalls. “If you’d told me in my first year as an ER nurse that I’d be flying in two years, I’d have laughed in your face.”

Today, Malia cares for critically ill patients being transported from an accident scene or from one medical facility to another. That often means performing a needle decompression, intubating, or inserting an IV.

“I want to know that I’ve made a positive impact on every patient,” she says, “whether that means keeping them alive or just being there for them. I’ve held many anxious patients’ hands in the aircraft. Sometimes they just need to know someone’s there for them physically, medically, or emotionally. Talking to someone can be just as healing as giving them medication.”



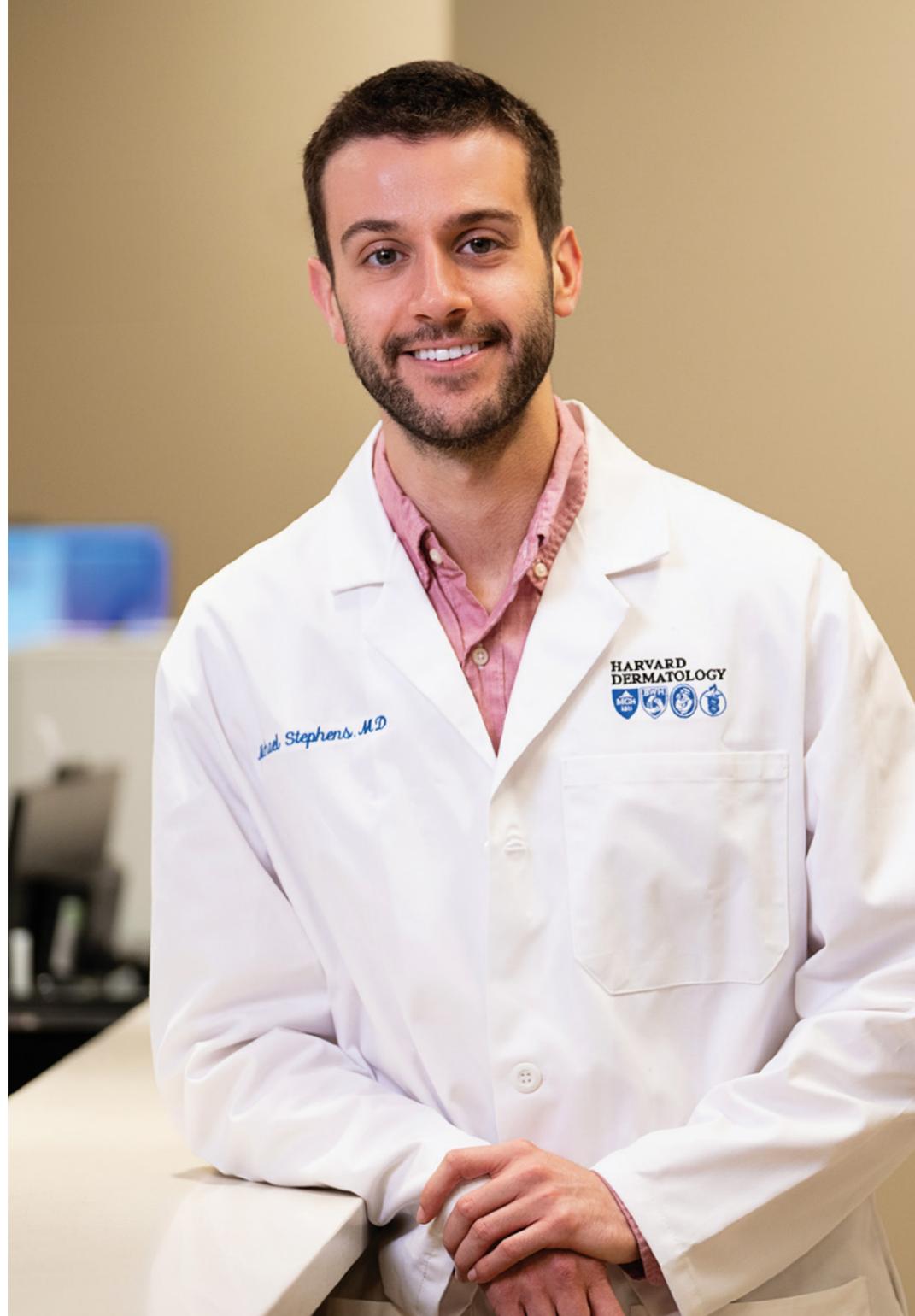
“If you’d told me in my **first year** as an ER nurse that I’d be **flying** in two years, I’d have laughed in your face.”



# BEYOND SKIN DEEP.

## **Michael Stephens, MD**

B.A. in Biology, Associate of Arts in Chemistry, 2019  
Instructor in Dermatology, Massachusetts General  
Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA



## “You’re changing their lives. It’s amazing. I love it, I really love it.”

Preparing to start college at age 16 after attending an accelerated middle and grade school, Michael Stephens had a vague notion of applying to Thomas More, but a chance meeting at a local speech contest sealed the deal. He spoke with one of the judges, Dr. Ray Hebert, beloved Thomas More professor, who told him he’d be a perfect fit at Thomas More.

“Seeing that I had an interest in medicine, he arranged a meeting with Thomas More pre-med advisor Dr. Siobhan Barone,” says Michael. “Both of them helped shape the entire trajectory of my life. Throughout my studies, I developed close, lasting relationships with the faculty. They were all truly interested in my growth and development, in getting to know me as a person.”

As a 20-year-old graduate, Michael went to medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. Focused on internal medicine, he found that the sub-specialties he gravitated toward overlapped with dermatology, where, he says, “you can gain so much information just by what you see. You can give patients answers right away, without waiting for test results. We just look, and the skin tells us the answer. There’s something unique and incredible about that.”

In 2019, Michael started his general/internal medicine preliminary year at Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital, followed by three years of dermatology residency, which he recently finished. He’s now an instructor in dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital, the largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School. Among his duties there is serving as Director of the Bone Marrow Transplant Dermatology clinic, caring for patients with cutaneous diseases after hematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

Along the way he’s become more interested in complex medical dermatology. “I have a particular interest in patients with certain types of cancer; for instance, bone marrow transplants can lead to what’s called ‘graft vs. host disease.’ Dermatology is a specialty where you can see it happen... patients come in with very bad rashes and you prescribe the treatments. To see it happening in front of your eyes is incredibly rewarding. You’re changing their lives. It’s amazing. I love it, I really love it. It’s something I wake up every morning looking forward to.”

# THE ART OF VISUAL STORYTELLING.

**Michael Thompson**

B.F.A. in Art, 2021

Visual Storyteller



# “I get to create my vision every day and put my time and energy into making the world a better place the only way I know how.”

He’s a talented and acclaimed visual artist, writer, TEDx speaker, and poet. But maybe more than anything, Michael Thompson is a community asset. In the short time since Michael graduated from Thomas More, his creative journey has led to some outstanding achievements that are even more remarkable considering he began as an international studies major. “Art had fallen out of my life in high school,” he recalls. “I was interested in international politics. I had no idea what the art department even looked like.”

Thanks to the flexibility of Thomas More’s liberal arts core curriculum, Michael took an experimental drawing course elective as a sophomore. “That course reignited my passion for the arts,” he says. “I changed my major the next year. Having finished all my general education requirements, I spent the rest of my time studying literature, art, and architecture in Spain...two years just creating art.”

Michael came out of Thomas More as the only senior in the BFA program to get a solo show, which he pulled from a large, cohesive body of work that had garnered local media attention. From there, things kept falling into place. He received grants that allowed him to create larger works that earned him invitations to exhibit at local galleries. “A lot of people believed in me and my work early in my career,” he says, “which led to more and more opportunities.

“I’m passionate about innovation within the arts. It’s about pushing a medium in a new way and bringing the arts to audiences in ways they haven’t experienced before.”

Just two years out of college, Michael’s passion has been rewarded with such recognition as the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award for 2022, becoming the youngest-ever grant recipient of an ArtsWave individual grant. Michael’s work has been exhibited in the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, and he’s an artist-in-residence at the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra.

“I have the coolest job in the world,” Michael says. “I get to create my vision every day, put my time and energy into making the world a better place the only way I know how. And I’m having a good time doing it.”

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