

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### ALWAYS IN STYLE - NATALIE (KIM) WELLS, '00



Since her time at The Cornerstone School, Alumni Natalie Wells has been busy building a clothing brand and helping others turn their ideas into a reality. We caught up with her this past spring to find out what else she has been up to.

**Where did you go to high school after you attended The Cornerstone School?**

Forest High School.

**What did you do after high school?**

After graduating from Forest, I attended the University of Florida where I majored in English. When I was at the University of Florida I started a GAME DAY DRESS line (collegiate clothing). I would sew and sell custom dresses to wear at football games. I grew my company for 4 years while I attended school. When I graduated I had 2 employees and was selling to over 45 boutiques nationwide. After graduation, I followed my dream and continued to manufacture and sell my clothing line to boutiques nationwide. I owned my clothing line for 10+ years.

**Do you feel that your time at Cornerstone prepared you for your high school/college career?**

YES! I only attended Cornerstone for Middle School, but I truly feel that my teachers gave me the tools to be successful in high school and college. I attended a public elementary school, when I came to Cornerstone I felt extremely behind. I eventually caught up, but I do remember feeling like I was not given the same foundation of learning that the students who had been at Cornerstone for elementary school. Also, Cornerstone has always focused on respecting others and treating others kindly. I feel that having this strong moral code during middle school was very important in my most formative years.

**What brought you back to Ocala?**

I have always known that I wanted to live in Ocala. I was born here and I really enjoy the sense of community that our small town has to offer. I moved back to Ocala after graduating and met my husband. We are both grateful to raise our two kids in a town where we have roots.

**What are you up to now?**

I am now happily married to Cody Wells, and we have two kids (Cameron 5, Naomi 2). We live in the heart of downtown Ocala. I am currently working as a Product Developer for Siyufy International. I help clients design, manufacture, and distribute their products. I work for the company that manufactured my clothing line. Over the years I developed a desire to help others manufacture their products instead of my own. I find great joy in seeing people's ideas and designs come to fruition.

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**Your oldest child is now a Cornerstone student. Why did you decide to have him come to Cornerstone?**

Cornerstone left a lasting imprint on my heart. I attended Cornerstone during middle school which is a tough chapter for most. Cornerstone offered me a safe place to grow and be myself. We chose to send our child to Cornerstone because my husband and I believe that a solid education is the biggest gift you can give your child. Cornerstone offers a very balanced learning environment, and we appreciate that they do not cater to a "one size fits all" when it comes to learning. Cameron is a very busy child. He came into this world ready to do all the things! He has been at Cornerstone for 2 years and I feel his teachers have done an excellent job at helping him funnel his energy into learning. Since sending Cameron to Cornerstone we have seen an overall positive shift in his happiness and attentiveness.

**As a successful entrepreneur, alumni, and parent, do you have any advice for our recent graduates?**

Take pride in how far you have come. Have faith in how far you can go. But don't forget to enjoy the JOURNEY!

