

# Black Horse Pike Regional School District Spotlight on Alumni Spotlight - HIGHLAND JANUARY 2021



## ZACHARY SAMALONIS, CO 2016

*“Zachary has recently graduated from Thomas Jefferson University with a degree in Industrial Design. While at the university, he worked on a variety of projects aimed at improving people's lives, such as a project that helps people neurological disorders walk. For his senior project, Zach has created an innovative leg prosthesis, with the specific purpose to help leg amputees practice certain sports, particularly surfing. He is just starting a bright career, and is currently working at a design firm in Philadelphia developing new innovative projects to help improve people's lives.”*

*~ Ygor Carvalho, Technology Teacher, Highland HS*

### 1. AA: Upon graduation, what post-secondary path did you take and why?

**ZACHARY:** *I chose to attend Philadelphia University (now Jefferson University after a merger) and study Industrial Design. I went into high school with the assumption that I would become an engineer. I loved to build with Legos as a kid and enjoyed taking things apart and looking at how they functioned. But I also enjoyed how products looked and how people interacted with them. I learned of a different profession, Industrial Design from a new teacher at the time, **Ygor Carvalho**. With his degree in Industrial Design from Philadelphia University, Ygor brought a new view to how the engineering classes were taught. He was able to see that what I really wanted to do was Industrial Design and I just did not know it. After showing me real world examples, along with his own work from Philadelphia University I knew that he was right, and I was meant to study design.*

### 2. Looking back, would you have done anything differently and why?

**ZACHARY:** *Knowing what I know now about Industrial Design, I would have taken more art classes and focused on my drawing skills. I started taking some art classes my Senior year, but if I could, I would have started this earlier. I also wished I would have stressed about what was yet to come. As a Junior and Senior in high school it's easy to get lost because it feels like everyone is telling you to take a different path. The time I spent in college working through projects taught me I am in control of what happens next. Most of the time I know what I want to achieve, I just have to make sure I don't get into my own way. Take some time to listen to yourself.*

### 3. AA: Describe your career/profession today?

**ZACHARY:** *Industrial Design is a career path that flies under the radar, but is apart of everyone lives, they just don't realize it. I like to refer to it as the intersection of art and engineering. Everything around us is designed by someone and many things have to be considered. Most people think engineers are the ones who tackle this, but in reality, it is a team of people consisting of both designers and engineers. As an Industrial Designer I am taught to observe the world around me and how people interact with people and objects. Industrial designers are responsible for how a product looks and is presented. They are also in charge of human factors or how a customer interacts with a product. If you love to draw or take things apart, you should definitely take a look at Industrial Design. The cool thing about being an Industrial Designer is that I have the ability to work across a wide variety of fields. For example, people who study Industrial Design can work on anything from the lights or faucets in your bathroom to the couch you use in your living room to your Xbox or iPhone. The skills you learn are super transferable. Currently I work as an Industrial Design consultant at a design firm, Phase One Design in Philadelphia, PA. Phase One has experience working on a variety of projects, across multiple fields. I started as an intern last summer and since then have started working Full-Time. Currently I am working on a project in the home goods market (think the kitchen) as well as a larger, more complex project in the medical space. Each day is a little different, but I am always solving problems. Some days I spend sketching*

*different ways a product will look and other days I am exploring the manufacturing feasibilities of a part we designed digitally.*

**4. AA: What impact did your BHP high school have on your career path/profession?**

**ZACHARY:** *My experiences at Highland helped shape where I am at today. Meeting **Ygor Carvalho** was the catalyst for discovering Industrial Design. The reinvention of the “tech” classes at Highland that Ygor ushered in helped me realize what it was I really wanted to do. I was able to learn about this whole other profession and the cool products that come out of it. Later when I got to college, I had experience with tools and techniques that many of my fellow freshmen had never used before. In turn, I was able to pass some of the knowledge that I had learned down to them.*

**5. AA: Which school clubs, sports, activities, etc., if any, did you participate in when you attended your BHP high school? If so, were there any moments or experiences that you can recall that helped you become the person you are today?**

**ZACHARY:** *I was part of the Cross Country and Track teams all 4 years at Highland and was coached by **Bob Wagner (Wags)** and **Josh Krowicki**. My time on Highland’s XC and Track teams are some of my best memories from high school. Even before I started high school I was meeting behind the school for practice. **Wags** loved his craft and passed down everything he had learned to his athletes. He taught us what hard work could result in. **Krowicki** spent everyday and weekend keeping an eye on us by running with us and constantly pushing each of us. Whether it was 20 degrees out and snowing or 104 degrees and raining we were out running.*

*My time running taught me teamwork and mental toughness, something I used every day to get through my time at Jefferson. My time running in high school also paid off, as I was able to secure a scholarship at Philadelphia University. Without it, it would have been difficult to attend. Being a student-athlete in both high school and college had its challenges, but it led me to awesome opportunities and meet some of my best friends. Oftentimes, in college my course work lead to late nights in the studio, and then the following mornings I would have to attend practice. But the lessons I learned running at Highland helped prepare me for the challenges. Many of the lessons I learned in running, I have been able to transfer into my career as a designer.*

**6. AA: Please share any other favorite memories of the Black Horse Pike Regional School District, your HS in particular, that would inspire today's youth?**

**ZACHARY:** *I have many fond memories of staying late after school for various clubs such as Renaissance with my best friend. We started dating junior year and have been together since, even as we attended different colleges. The memories we made at Highland as friends are something, we both cherish. Whether it was eating lunch in the library, building something in Carvalho’s class or working overtime on a weekend to get a set ready she was always by my side.*

7. **What advice would you give to our current student body? What would you have done differently in high school if you could turn back time?**

**ZACHARY:** *Take your time to figure out what you really enjoy doing. That might mean college and it might mean something else. There is so much pressure to go to school to then go and get a job, but none of it is worth it if you're not enjoying what you're doing. Take some time to talk to the older people in your life and try and gain some perspective on just how many things there are out there to do. Do not be afraid to ask questions, you might just discover something you didn't even know existed (and love it!) Have any questions about what I am doing? Feel free to reach out to me at zachsamdesigns@gmail.com.*

