

# Black Horse Pike Regional School District

## “Spotlight on Alumni” - HIGHLAND

APRIL 2021

### Nick DeMatteo, class of 1987



*“Nick DeMatteo is a film, stage, voice & commercial actor; a singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, music producer & recording engineer; and a film director & producer. Nick lives to create and perform.*

*He was born in Philadelphia, PA, and raised in South Jersey's famed Camden County. He attended Rutgers University, where he majored in Acting & Music. In 2000, Nick moved to NYC, and has lived there ever since.*

*In 2002, Nick helped to co-found the theater group, Ten Grand and a Burger Productions. He served as a producer, actor, and composer for several stage productions, including the Cherry Lane Theater's Masquerade. In 2004, Nick founded the band, REC, as its singer/songwriter. REC has released nine albums, the latest being the five-album box set, The Weird Objective.*

*In 2008, Nick co-founded Feenix Films LLC, acting as Vice President and Music Director until 2017, during which time he helped to bring forth six feature films, contributing a producer, director, actor, sound engineer, editor, graphic designer, and composer. In 2010, Nick co-founded the music production team, The Drop. The Drop has since produced tracks for several films and artists, including Leighton Meester.*

*In 2014, Nick co-founded the web series, Nick & Daniel Present, with Daniel Cousins. It featured both comedy skits and original music videos. In 2018, Nick began the audio, stage & multimedia project, MUSIC is not a GENRE, featuring songs produced, arranged, composed & performed by Nick, with a loose narrative illustrating Nick's history in music, and the idea that all music is connected. He also founded the accompanying YouTube channel, MUSIC is not a GENRE, featuring podcasts and live & recorded music of all kinds. The podcasts are now available on many streaming channels: [STREAM IT HERE](#).*

In 2020, Nick completed his band REC's magnum opus, The Weird Objective, consisting of five albums in multiple styles in collaboration with several bands and vocalists. In 2021, Nick portrays Frankie the Guitarist in the film prequel to The Sopranos titled *The Many Saints of Newark*.

Nick is the voice of Ozempic in all its commercials. Nick is a veteran audio producer & engineer, with credits ranging from solo artists to full bands to film & commercial audio to film, TV & web music to voice over reels.

Nick has three children, all of whom are totes awesome and brilliant and funny and are involved in music and acting.

~ Robert Adams, Music Teacher, Triton HS

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

**Nick:** Bachelor of Arts in Music at Rutgers, New Brunswick - I've been a musician my whole life - born into a musical family.

**2. Describe your career/profession today?**

**Nick:** I call myself a creator/performer, because it's quick & easy :), and it covers everything I do. That includes work as a: singer/songwriter, music producer, podcaster, voice actor, stage/film actor, graphic designer, t-shirt designer/seller. These titles include my band REC, my other band Cathryn+Nick, my podcast MUSIC is not a GENRE, and my t-shirt company SnerkShirts by FEEK.

**3. AA: Looking back, would you have done anything differently and why?**

**Nick:** I would have trusted myself more. Though I graduated as co-valedictorian (with Tina Slickmeyer), and went to Rutgers on full scholarship & graduated with a 4.0 in my major & minor, I left feeling unsure of my abilities as a musician & songwriter. Looking back on all my work, I realize the only thing missing was faith. That is, belief in myself and the work I was doing every step of the way. I would have worried less about the money I was (or wasn't!) making, and focused more on the joy of working in a profession I love.

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

*Nick: I had so many supportive teachers, some of whom helped me through difficult situations. And I was VERY OFTEN called on to step up and participate in ways I wouldn't have chosen on my own. For example, I was compelled to join Interact, eventually becoming the Treasurer. I was compelled to run for class office, becoming Vice President. I joined more clubs than I can even recall. And my passion for acting & music had very strong outlets & support at Highland.*

**5. AA: Were there specific teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, secretaries or other professionals that had a major impact on you while in school, and if so, who were those professionals and describe how they helped you along your HS journey.**

*Nick: I wish I could remember everyone's names! Our chemistry teacher, **Dr. Leek**, helped me through a very emotional 10th grade - even so far as to set me on a better path for the rest of my years at Highland. I have fond memories of **Mr. DiPonziano** (calculus). He was an open, kind, funny, supportive & very effective teacher. And my Honors English teacher (**Mr. McKee**) left me with quite a few gems of wisdom that have helped shape the work I do in more ways than even I realize. Finally, the head of the TV Club, **Mr. Welch**, treated us like adults. He allowed us freedoms many other students didn't have, which taught me that when trust, responsibility & respect work together, you get to experience a whole lot more of life and in richer ways. In closing, **Bob Adams**. Bob's thoughtfulness and dedication was unmatched.*

**6. 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?**

*Nick:*

*Interact - getting comfortable with community service at such an early age has helped me stay community minded.*

*Class Office - though I was reluctant to run for office, I did so because one of my two best friends (**Rob Franks**) ran for president. Together we made a good team, and that kind of teamwork has carried through almost everything I do, especially when I became co-founder & Vice President of an independent film company.*

*Theater - We did such a wide range of plays and a fairly decent selection of musicals. We even got to stage original works. It absolutely helped me to get accepted into Mason Gross School for the Performing Arts at Rutgers - a very competitive and intense program.*

*Music - I got to solo a lot in choir, but the ensemble work was equally impactful. It showed me how important it is to blend voices together - both literally and figuratively. And Highland was the first place I learned to play guitar - not easy since piano was always my first instrument. I have to mention a great friend, **Mike Smith**. He inspired me to get into acting and music.*

*Valedictory speech - Being able to give that speech, one coincidentally very similar to that of our keynote speaker, **Jim Florio**, helped me understand how important a well-crafted oration is. It's no doubt helped inform all my podcasting work.*

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

***Nick:** I met my first wife there, with which we had our three amazing children. I have a handful of friends today that I went through school with - high school and even earlier. The education was top notch - something I don't take for granted now that education everywhere is at such a crossroads. The activities and clubs gave me both freedom and responsibility in ways that were as important as the academics, if not more so.*

**8. What advice would you give to our current student body?**

***Nick:** If you know what you want to do with your life, do it. Don't let anything or anyone sidetrack you from it. Have the confidence and faith that your instincts & passions are correct, and that whatever difficulties you'll encounter along the way are A.) part of the joy of the journey, and B.) will all be worked out the way they're meant to. Focus first on the work, and the rest (money, success, etc.) will follow. If you DON'T know what you want to do, don't rush into a decision. Take as much time as you need to explore and discover, in whatever ways work for you. That "time lost" in the beginning of your adult life will translate to time gained exponentially for the rest of your days.*

### ***Career Highlights:***

- ~ I've released over a dozen albums as NICK and/or REC, all of which are available for streaming everywhere;
- ~ I'm currently the voice of Ozempic in all its commercials;
- ~ there are now 100 episodes of my MUSIC is not a GENRE podcast streaming worldwide;
- ~ I portrayed Frankie the musician/comedian in The Many Saints of Newark - the movie prequel to the Sopranos - to be released on September 24.

### **LINKS:**

- ~ REC music: <https://recarea.bandcamp.com/>
- ~ MUSIC is not a GENRE podcast: <https://www.patreon.com/MUSICisnotaGENRE>
- ~ more music & podcasts: <http://youtube.com/nickdematteo>
- ~ t-shirts & mugs: <https://snerkshirtsbyfeek.com/>



***Where Inspiring Excellence is our Standard and Student Achievement is the Result!***

