

Black Horse Pike Regional School District Spotlight on Alumni

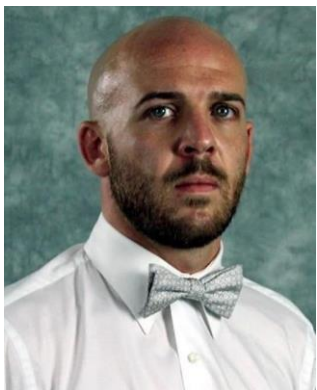
May 2021 - *TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK!* *Timber Creek Alumni*

Each May, we begin the month by recognizing our Educational Superheroes. This May is no different. In a world where the words *zoom*, *hybrid*, *synchronous* and *asynchronous* have become the norm, folks throughout the district have reached out to highlight educators near and far with BHP roots. Congratulations to all of our Spotlight winners!



~TC Staff pic 2020-21

Kevin Birmingham, TC 2011



Kevin is one of the most hard-working and passionate people I know, especially in his career as a college wrestling coach. He has wrestled his entire life, setting and breaking records along the way. Growing up together allowed me to see his passion and devotion pre and post his years at Timber Creek High School. Kevin went on to wrestle Division I at Davidson College and after graduation, began coaching right away. In 2019, he was named head coach at Greensboro College. During the fall of 2020, Kevin made historical changes to the program, adding a Women's Wrestling team. This made Greensboro College the very first college or university in the state of North Carolina to offer Women's Wrestling. He has expanded and elevated his team to new

levels and I could not be prouder of his success. When he is home, Kevin makes time to visit his alma mater and volunteers at the youth programs, never forgetting where it all began.

~ **Lauren Curiale, TC Mathematics Teacher**

1. Kevin attended Davidson College, NC (home of Steph Curry), majoring in Philosophy
2. Today, Kevin is the head men's and women' Wrestling coach at Greensboro College (Division III) in North Carolina.
3. When asked about whether or not he would have done anything differently looking back, coach Birmingham said he wish he knew/learned how to handle being 9.5 hours away from family and friends. It took him some time to learn how to handle free time and the freedom in general.
4. The district's impact traced all the way back to Ralph Ross Sr. and Highland Youth Wrestling. Then in grade 8, knowing TC was where he wanted to be and belonged. He wanted to put TC on the wrestling map and he wanted to do it with his neighborhood friends.
5. Kevin talked about **Ms. Wendy Calandra and the counseling office** in general, his teachers and **VP Rob Milavsky** at length, but his wrestling family of **Mike Davidson, Tyler Fruits, Dave Ritz and Nick Cottone** were his motivation. They were family, they guided him along the four-year journey and he said he will forever remember all the matches, practices, tournaments and trips that to AC and beyond.
6. In addition to the Wrestling team, Kevin was a member of NHS, Spanish Honor Society and President of his class for three years. His accomplishments in his sport included being a three-time district finalist, one-time champion, Region 8 4th, 3rd, and 1st place finishes and a two-time State qualifier, finishing 7th senior year.
7. Kevin's fondest memories include the senior trip, one of the best weeks of his life, and junior year when Eastern v TC was so crowded fans were turned away. His explanation on the rush the size of the crowd was and the fact that the match could not allow people to fit in the gym reminded him of how successful TC wrestling became.
8. Coach Birmingham wants our current student body to know that teachers, parents, coaches and all adults in your teenage life are simply trying to prepare you for adulthood. Listen to them. Work hard to figure out Time Management and Respect for yourself and others.

Lauren Curiale, TC 2003



Lauren Curiale is an amazing math teacher at Timber Creek High School. She currently is a co-advisor for the Class of 2022. She was also the advisor for two other graduating class. She truly cares about her students and puts her everything into her work. She is married with two small children, Hunter, 3, and Elizabeth, 2, that she loves dearly. She is an outstanding example of what our district can be.”

~ Jennifer Ciccotelli, TC Mathematics Teacher

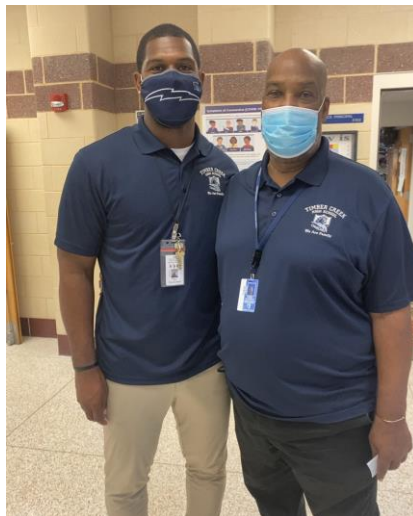
1. *After graduating from Timber Creek, I went to Rider University and transferred to Rowan University. In 2008, I graduated with my BA in Mathematics and received my Standard Teaching Certificate the following year. I always knew I wanted to be a high school teacher, but I wasn't sure what I wanted to study. I began gaining more confidence in math my senior year in Physics and Calculus. I have always loved the subject, especially that there is one correct answer, it isn't subjective. As a teacher, I try to make sure that I show students different ways to come to these answers and hope that something will allow that "aha" moment to happen. I've witnessed this many times in the past 13 years, and it is always the most rewarding feeling.*
2. *It goes without saying that my experience at Highland and Timber Creek had a huge impact on my career choice. Being a product of the district has and continues to motivate me to be a better teacher. I did not know it back then, but I am grateful that my journey led me back "home." While I am proud to be a Charger, I strive to make TC proud to have me back in the classroom.*
3. *Today I have the honor of teaching Timber Creek students the challenging (and fun!) concepts of mathematics. I have been the class advisor to the wonderful students of the Class of 2013, 2015 and am currently co-advising the Class of 2022. Over the years, I have been a part of our amazing coaching staff, working with many different teams and levels: field hockey, basketball, softball, tennis, and cheerleading. I love my job and my students; more importantly, I love my job because of my students.*
4. *As a member of the second graduating class, I was lucky to be a part of many firsts at Timber Creek and set traditions for years to come. As an eighth grader at Mullen, I was even able to vote for the colors and mascot (I am glad the purple/silver dragons didn't make the cut 😊). I was able to attend our first home football game, I was a part of the first pep rally, I was outside for the first 9/11 Ceremony. Looking back, I do wish I had recognized how special being a part of these historical moments really was. And, of course, like most people, there are things I wish I had done differently, things I wish I had said (or didn't say); but in all, I do not think I would have changed my high school experience. I try not to live in the past. I believe that everything happens for a reason and I like to think that all of my past actions have helped shape me into the person I am today.*
5. *I will start by recognizing two very important people. First, **Mr. Powell**, my guidance counselor. He was always someone I could count on for help and words of encouragement. He continued to guide me when I started working at Timber Creek and I was so grateful to have had a familiar friendly face I could go to with questions or advice. Another person who encouraged me throughout my high school career was my Vice Principal, **Mrs. Robinson**. I*

always appreciated her genuine kindness towards me as both a student and teacher. I was honored when she hired me back as a Charger alum. This question is extremely difficult for me. I had so many amazing Timber Creek and Highland staff members who made a difference in my life during my high school career and I am grateful to call many of them my bosses, coworkers and friends today. I want to give a special acknowledgement to my freshman year teachers, and coaches. These educators challenged me, showing what would be expected of me over the next four years in order to be a successful student. I want to thank my teachers **Mrs. Skelly, Sra. Zoladz, Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Szuchy, Mrs. Bayles, Mrs. Hengel, Mrs. Linck** (she was the first person who I told that I wanted to be a teacher). I want to also thank my coaches: **Mrs. Costello, Mr. Senft, Mrs. Sheppard, Mrs. Rigney, and Mrs. Pavelik**. With split sessions, my school day freshman year did not end until 4:00pm; these dedicated teachers would be away from their families until late at night (especially for away games!). Now, as an adult, I realize how much they did and I want to recognize their patience, energy and positivity. It did not go unnoticed and is something I always remember and tried to apply during my coaching years. Again, there are so many other teachers and coaches who I have had over the years and continue to work with and I thought I could not list them all, but I would feel terrible for not recognizing each and every one of you. THANK YOU **Mr. Hart, Mr. Golembo, Mrs. Calandra, Sra. Perez, Mrs. Zeits (Hofer), Mr. Small, Mrs. Deich, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Nelson, Mr. Strong, Ms. Byers, Mr. VanHorn, Mrs. Morris, Dr. Repici, Mr. Tarsantana, Mr. Einstein, Ms. Pettite, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Nordone, Mrs. Strano, Mr. Campbell, Mrs. DiPietro, Mr. Accitelli, Ms. Dziczek, and Mr. Storms**. Each of you made an impact on my life, in one way or another, and I would not be the person I am today without you.

6. *In the fall season, I started as a cheerleader, then junior year, I joined the field hockey team. I played basketball and softball during the winter and spring seasons. I was also involved in a lot of clubs including a class officer for the Class of 2004 Executive Committee all four years, Future Teachers of America, Peer Mediation, Spanish Club, Student Council, and NHS. There were others, but these were the ones I remember most. I loved so many different things and wanted to be involved in all of them. As an adult, I realize that's just not always possible. It has taught me the importance of "quality over quantity" and is something I try to remind my students today. Being actively involved and able to attend every meeting or practice is very important. But being truly dedicated to a million different things is just not possible and can set you up for failure.*
7. *Being nominated and selected for Girls State was an honor and a wonderful experience. It forced me out of my comfort zone and taught me a lot. Other fun memories came from my experiences with my teammates. I don't remember as much about the games as I do the friendships. We pushed each other to work harder, picked each other up, and made each other laugh. There was a true sense of camaraderie. From this experience, I hope that today's youth remember to be kind. Everyone wants to be accepted by their peers. Remember to be inclusive, raise each other up, put aside differences, and work together. "Game day" will come and go, but you will never regret the opportunity to be kind to someone. But my favorite high school memories, the ones that meant the most (especially now) are of my parents and family being at every event for me. Having four kids and two very young grandchildren (my niece and nephew) did not give my parents much time for themselves during my high school years. My parents drove us back and forth from practices, and my dad went into work early so he could make it to our games (even if we weren't playing). My parents learned the rules of field hockey, my mom worked extra hours to send us to summer team camps so we could play on travel teams, and they both sat in the seats for every school talent show, induction, and awards event. My brother and sisters too. We were always each other's number one fans. This love and devotion was greatly appreciated, even if I didn't always take the time to recognize it back then. I know that I wouldn't be the person I am today without my family's constant love and support. From this, I hope students remember to thank and appreciate the people who are there for them.*

8. *When asked, my advice to students is that they should always be the best version of themselves. So this is what I say to you: Don't follow the crowd. Think independently. Be honest. It can be difficult to go against the grain, difficult to admit that you made a mistake or a wrong choice, and difficult to admit that you said something wrong. But never defend these mistakes with excuses. Take responsibility and make the necessary changes where you can, apologize if you have to, and let it be an opportunity for improvement. The same applies to challenges you face that are out of your control - you cannot make excuses. Accept that it might take you longer than others to reach your goal. Things might come easier or more naturally to someone else, but don't let that deter you. Use YOUR talents and put in the effort. And never be afraid to ask for help along the way (teachers, counselors, staff members--we are all in this profession to see you succeed!)*

Tyler Hines, TC 2008



Tyler Hines is a 2008 graduate who has many passions. He obviously loves basketball where he had an outstanding career at Timber Creek winning the group 3 championship. From there he accepted a full scholarship to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore where he captained the team. After graduation he spent some years playing in Europe. This however has nothing to do about why I am nominating him. Tyler's true passion is helping Kid's succeed. He started a Mentoring program in the Community that he had brought to the Black Horse Pike. He has made a difference in so many lives as he is able to relate to our troubled students on so many levels It is a great honor for me to witness one of our students giving back in such an impactful way.

~ Garry Saunders, TC Vice Principal

1. Upon graduation, Tyler was blessed with the opportunity to get a full athletic scholarship to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. I had a few other schools in mind but going to a Historically Black College and University was always one of my dreams. Also played professionally in Europe for 6 years after graduation (Greece, Germany, Austria, Cyprus, Macedonia, Serbia and Puerto Rico).
2. Looking back, Mr. Hines would change nothing at all. "I feel as though everything happens for a reason and I am extremely blessed for everything in my life today."
3. Today, he is the Lead Mentor and Community Liaison for Black Horse Pike Regional School District
4. BHP changed my entire outlook on life. The reason why I majored in (English) is my freshman and sophomore year of high school I had **Mrs. Linke and Ms. Wood** and they inspired me and opened my eyes to reading different books and learning new things. I always admired the counselors and administration at Timber Creek so being able to work with them as a current Mentor is a full circle moment.
5. This list will be tooooooooo long but I would like to shout out the **ENTIRE staff at Timber Creek High School**. I was honored to have such a great group of educators, teachers, administrators, mentors, resource officers, secretaries, nurses, counselors, coaches, librarians, and custodians. Every time I walked around the hallways at TC I felt a big family atmosphere. I am extremely blessed of everyone.
Fun Fact * Mr. Alessandrone was my school counselor *
6. Tyler played Varsity Basketball for four year. My senior year, we were the first team to win a sectional championship and make it to the State Final for basketball at TC. I was also a member of Teen Pep.
7. Any fond memories? "On my first day of high school, I told my English Teacher Mrs. Linke how I had dreams of becoming a ESPN reporter and wanted to talk on television and travel around the US. I was very shy and did not like to read in front of my peers during class. Mrs. Linke would make me stand up in front of the entire class and read different stories and books so I could conquer my fear of being shy. One day I was so upset I walked out of class and went to my counselor's office and complained that Mrs. Linke was picking on me. Later on that day she sat me down and said Tyler you said you wanted to work for ESPN Right and talk on national television? I answered Yes!! and she further explained how she was making me read in front of class so I could get out of my comfort zone and follow my dreams. As a student I did not understand what Mrs. Linke was doing but now as an adult I am grateful to say she helped me get out of my comfort zone and although I don't work for ESPN, I do get paid to travel around and do different speaking engagements. Very thankful for Mrs. Linke.
8. The best advice I would give to our current student body is to network and use all of the resources that BHPRSD provides. Also to have fun and enjoy the moment. If I could have done something different in high school, I would have been in more clubs and activities outside of basketball.