

Black Horse Pike Regional School District Spotlight on Alumni (November 2019)



Christopher Stevens, Triton Regional HS c/o 2007

Nominator: Karen Sciscio

Supervisor of Registration, Enrollment and Summer Programs, Art Alessandroni, discussed life after Triton Regional High School with Mr. Christopher Stevens. Here's what Chris had to say:

1. AA: What post-secondary path did you take upon graduation?

CS: "I graduated DeSales University as a double major in 2011 with a B.A. in Theatre and a B.A. in Communication." Today, I am a professional actor. I have toured North America three times with the Broadway National Tours of CATS, Mamma Mia!, and Jersey Boys. I have also had the extreme pleasure of working at numerous regional theatres up and down the East coast.

2. AA: What impact did Triton High School have on your career?

CS: "High school played an enormous role in driving me toward my career. As President of my class, I was always very outgoing and knew everyone who worked at the school, as well as the majority of the student body. I was an honor roll student who was involved in various after school clubs, sports, and activities, so multitasking and time management were up there on my priority list. My career as a performer oftentimes involves a lot of networking and being asked to do several things at once, and

sometimes in various locations throughout any given day. That being said, being so active in high school taught me how to plan effectively and efficiently in hopes that I wouldn't overextend my brain or energy. High school is also where I fell head over heels in love with musical theatre and really started focusing on what it would take to make my Broadway dream a reality. Fortunately, for me, I had an amazing support system in the faculty at Triton High School, as well as, my family and friends who kept my eyes on the prize and working hard every step of the way.

3. AA: What BHP educator(s) had the biggest impact on you and why?

CS: "I cannot speak highly enough of the faculty and staff of Triton High School. There were numerous teachers who played such a pertinent role in my life. Kathy McCollaum kept me engaged and driven on all things theatre both in and out of school, Beth Eastman pulled my heart strings in all things music, Sharon Miken taught me that the best thing I could be in life was myself, Kelly Wierski taught me how to properly think outside the box (even though she gave me a C on my research paper, I will never let her live that down haha), Megan Tavaréz taught me the importance of making a positive change in the world, and Betty Bannon taught me how to make math, a subject I detest, fun and tolerable. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention the teacher who impacted my life the most throughout my career at Triton High School, Stephanie DeCosta. Mrs. DeCosta was literally the best teacher I have ever encountered. She made learning fun, she made it challenging, and she made it relatable. The thing I loved most was the safe space she created for his students. She had an open door policy for her students, if we ever needed anything, we could come talk to her. I had the pleasure of having Mrs. DeCosta my sophomore year for English through the American Studies program. There wasn't a day that passed that she didn't make me laugh or smile, even if she wasn't having the best day. I remember she was always collecting prom dresses for students who were unable to afford a dress for the occasion, and she also always had her hands in other acts of service, trying to encourage her students to give back. I became very close to Mrs. DeCosta and would stop by her room quite often just to talk about life and the every day stresses of a high schooler. She had a way of making me feel like there wasn't anything I couldn't do. At the same time, she also kept me in line and constantly reminded me not to take myself too seriously. I often times would get stressed out and she would have to remind that I was "still a teenager and not capable of solving world hunger." She kept it real, and she kept it honest. I appreciated and respected her for that. I will always hold our relationship and that safe space close to my heart. She has contributed and instilled in me valuable life lessons that helped shape me into the man I am today. I still keep in touch with her and see her as often as possible.

4. AA: What clubs, sports, activities, etc, if any did you participate in at the BHP?

CS: "Short Answer, Yes. Long Answer, I was involved with everything I could fit in my schedule. During my time at Triton, I found it crucial to build up my extracurricular resume so that it would look good for college applications, but I also wanted to it to be filled with things I was passionate about. I was Vice President of my class my freshman year and ended up taking over as President sophomore through senior year. I had the privilege of being a member of the National Honor Society. I was also involved with Key Club, French Club, Renaissance Club, Choir, Chorale, Drama Club, the Spring Musical, the One Acts, the Morning Announcements, and I played Varsity Tennis all four years of high

school. I was also asked to be the voice of Triton High School my sophomore year and had the honor of singing the National Anthem at all of the home sporting events and pep rallies.”

5. AA: Do you have a favorite memory from high school you'd be willing to share?

CS: “There were so many wonderful memories during my time at Triton, but one specifically tops all others. During my Junior year, I was lucky enough to be taking the Western Studies classes and in our history portion, we had spent weeks and weeks learning about the Holocaust. I remember it having such a huge impact on me because I didn't understand how people could be so disgusting and ruthless. Then we started learning about the genocide that was going on in Darfur. It blew my mind that something like the Holocaust could still be going on in our world today. And that is where I finally realized, there are more things happening in the world outside of our United States bubble. At the end of the marking period we were given a group project that we had to write and discuss a topic on the Holocaust and bring awareness to the current events as well. A group of five other students and myself decided we would work together and we put together the most passionate video and slideshow presentation I have ever been a part of. However, what made ours different was that we also were auditioning, hosting, and producing a school wide talent show to raise awareness and money for the victims of Darfur. Under the guidance of Ms. Tavaréz, Mrs. Erickson, and Mrs. Kind, we not only created a talent show that was both fun as well as educational and informative, but it also sold out completely. That night we raised over five thousand dollars for the victims of Darfur and had an absolute blast in doing it. The following year, four of us decided to return once again to host another talent show for the same cause and we raised over six thousand dollars. Keep in mind, there was no project or grade to be earned this year, we simply knew we had to because something good was being put out into the world. I am told the talent show continued for a couple of years after we graduated. That was a pretty special experience, and one that I am proud of.”

6. AA: What advice would you give to our students today?

CS: “YOU ARE ENOUGH. High school is such a weird time in a teenagers life. Your body is changing, your emotions are running on what seems like an endless rollercoaster, everything feels high stakes, your figuring out what you want to do with your life, your dealing with friendships coming and going, relationships and heartbreak for the first time, and trying to balance your studies and perhaps your first job. BREATHE. I promise you everything will be ok in the end. If it's not O.K., it's not the end. No one is expecting you to be a superhero. You, yourself, ARE ENOUGH. You are stronger than you think, and you are absolutely beautiful just the way you are. Don't try and change yourself for any boy or girl. Just be you, because that is the best thing you will EVER be. Put your phones down, take ten minutes to yourself to just disconnect, watch the sunset, remind yourself to appreciate the people in your life and the world in which you live. Be better than you were yesterday, and be the positive change in the world you want to see, lead by example. If you need help, ASK FOR IT. Once a day, say hello to a stranger or smile at them. I'll bet you feel better after you do. Take risks. Be BRAVE, be STRONG, be YOU. And for God's sake PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE...BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER. Love and light to you all. YOU ARE ENOUGH.”