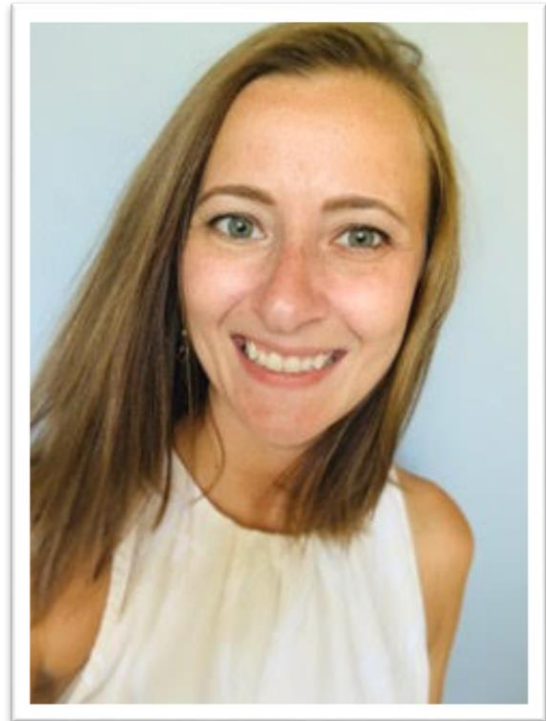




# Black Horse Pike Regional School District Alumni Spotlight - OCTOBER 2021



## Kate Sereno, CO '06



### **NOMINATOR:**

*“ Kate graduated in 2006 and became a teacher upon college graduation. After teaching for 10 years, Kate decided to pursue her Master's at UPenn in Educational entrepreneurship. While leaving the classroom behind, Kate did not leave behind education - instead she decided to focus on neurodiverse adults who could rely on her for her vast knowledge of the working world. Kate now job coaches - and life coaches - 18+ year old students and adults who need some extra support with getting a job. She's started her own company and is successful in collaboratively educating those she is working with directly, as well as teaching businesses how to best interact with populations they may not be used to.”*

*~Emily Dempsey, Triton Special Education teacher*

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

*Kate: I knew I wanted to be a teacher, so I went to Lebanon Valley College for a B.S. in Elementary & Special Education.*

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

*Kate: Good question! I think I would have taken more time to understand how expensive college would be, and how long I would be paying my student loans for. I'm glad I went away to school, and I loved my college, but I wish I put more effort into applying for scholarships to bring the cost down for future Kate.*

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

*Kate: I taught for about ten years in DC, PA, and NJ. About 7 of those years were in special education. In 2020, I earned my masters in Education Entrepreneurship from the University of Pennsylvania. Now, I run my own business as a job and life skills coach for neurodivergent teens and young adults who are transitioning from school to adulthood. My company is called Leap Years Coaching LLC.*

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

*Kate: I felt well-prepared for my college courses. I also had some really incredible teachers at Triton who I looked to as models as I began my own teaching career. I was in the Studies program sophomore through senior year (English and History), which was very project-oriented, and it greatly influenced my teaching style. I think between my classes, extracurriculars, and the friendships I made, I really started to come out of my shell in high school, which was necessary growth so I could be a good teacher and now business owner.*

**5. AA: Was/were there specific teacher(s), coach(es), counselor(s), administrator(s), secretary(ies), or other professionals that had a major impact on you while in school, and if so, who were those professionals? Describe how they helped you along your HS journey.**

*Kate: So many!! But the two that I think had the greatest impact were **Ms. Tavarez (now Haas) and Ms. McCollaum**. I had Kathy McCollaum for Theater Arts, AV Homeroom, and the musical all four years. She was always so encouraging and fun. I really felt like I could be myself in her classes and extracurriculars. I was a really shy kid growing up, but with her help, I grew to be comfortable speaking in front of people and letting my personality shine, which has been invaluable over my career. I had Megan Haas for US II and as an advisor for the History club. I also felt like I could be myself, but*

*this time in an academic setting as opposed to extracurricular. I already enjoyed history, but she pushed me to start thinking critically and to do my best work. She was working on her master's at the time and I remember being inspired by how hard she worked and how passionate she was about her area of study.*

- 6. AA: Which school clubs, sports, activities, etc., if any, did you participate in at THS? Were there any moments or experiences that you can recall that helped you become the person you are today?**

*Kate: I participated in the fall play, the one-acts, and the spring musical. I also did concert choir, history club, and AV homeroom. I think more so than any individual moment, it was the aggregate of these experiences that helped me grow. I met some of my closest friends at Triton (from activities and classes), so I am forever grateful for my time there.*

- 7. 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?**

*Kate: One morning my senior year, our principal came on the speaker and he was talking about something that happened recently. I don't remember what it was, to be honest. But he ended his announcement with this: "Don't be stupid. Don't be disgusting. Shame on you." Our entire class was in an uproar - it was the funniest thing! I wouldn't say that memory is particularly inspiring for today's youth, but it was one of my favorites!*

- 8. 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?**

*Kate: Take it easy on yourself - it's okay to not have it all figured out right now. And have FUN in school! High school shouldn't be that serious. I mean, make sure you learn and you're nice to people... but seriously, try to make it fun, too! Enjoy this time.*

