

THE BEACON

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Dear Parents, Students and Friends,

Far and wide! That is exactly where many of our former students are right now. They are pursuing their passions through their education and career choices far from the borders of New Hampshire. This issue of the Beacon will highlight just a few such SST alumni. Their stories are exciting and make all of us proud. Here they are:

- ***Sara Jette '09, Biotechnology***

I graduated in 2009 after attending SST's Biotechnology class my sophomore and junior year. I continued on to Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. I graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Environmental Studies and hope to continue on to receive my Ph.D. in Human Medical Genetics. I am writing to tell you how my two years of Biotechnology at SST shaped my entire life. Before I began the class I had no real interest in the sciences and no knowledge of how the field of biotechnology was integrated into daily life. Throughout my time at SST, I created glowing microscopic nematodes, cloned sheep DNA and completed a paid internship at UNH's graduate school microbiology lab. I also attended a trip to Bermuda with my Biotechnology II class where I participated in oceanic research, swam in underground caves and snorkeled at shipwreck sites. When I attended college in sunny St. Pete, I was already far ahead of my classmates with the knowledge and experience I had gained during my time at SST. I took part in independent laboratory research in genetics and microbiology with one of my professors and even have published work. Had I not taken part in the Biotechnology program, I would never have come to realize how much interest I had in the biology field and I most certainly would not be where I am today.

- ***Amy Costa '00, Early Childhood Education***

I graduated from the SST preschool in the early 1980's. While in high school, I attended the Early Childhood Education program at SST. I attended undergraduate college at Endicott College and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 2004. During one of my internships at Endicott, I completed my student teaching at the Wright Start Preschool, focusing on emotions in children. I received my Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy in 2008 and am currently a doctoral candidate at Alliant International University in California. I have been working in the field of eating disorders since 2004. I also have extensive experience working with adolescents, as well as adults and families. My time as a student at both the Wright Start Preschool and SST are a big part of how and why I work in the eating disorder field. Learning about child development and the importance of a positive childhood continue to fuel my goals as a therapist. The connection I made with Carla Ranks, my SST teacher, followed me since childhood and all that I learned in her class continues to support the work I do with parents and parent education.

- ***Jay Rice '06, Welding Technologies and FFA Member***

I started out my SST career in Technology Careers with Mr. Andersen and from there moved into the Welding Technologies program. I spent two years in the program and learned a lot from Mr. Theberge. I graduated and moved back to New York to go to SUNY Cobleskill, majoring in John Deere Agricultural Engineering. After being a machinist for two years and with my resume on CareerBuilder.com, out of the blue one day I got a phone call asking if I wanted to move west and work for a John Deere dealership. At first, I thought it was a joke or a telemarketer, so I played along. The person calling ended up being a real headhunter, a scout looking for technicians since they hire for over 140 John Deere dealerships across the country. To make a long story short, I got hooked up with Barker Implement in southern Iowa. They flew me out for an interview and it turned into a full-fledged job. To be honest, this was a dream to me, to be able to move west and work for John Deere. After three years, I'm almost a Master John Deere Technician. I specialize in skid loaders and combines. I love my job and the Midwest. It is very laid back out here and there are lots of great people. I'm glad I took the chance to see where life would take me. I thought when I moved out west if I didn't like it, I could always move home. I have fallen in love with the Midwest, which brings me to my next point - I have found love in the Midwest and plan on staying out here.

- ***Ryan Keith '03, Animal & Plant Science***

After high school, I got my Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Jacksonville University in Florida. When I completed my degree, I joined the Peace Corps and moved to Kenya, where I lived for over two years. I was a high school physics and biology teacher and guidance counselor to my students - 200 girls between the ages of 14 and 18. One of my successful projects had me contacting Ms. DeMarco, the Animal and Plant Science teacher at SST, and asking for her help. I needed some textbooks for my students since my freshman biology class had 60 girls, but only one book. Instead of sending me a few books, Ms. DeMarco and her students collected and shipped over 500 textbooks all the way to Africa. With their help, I was able to build a library on my school campus - the only library within hundreds of miles.

- ***Taylor MacDonald '11, Marketing Technologies***

I have always thought of myself as a homebody, but I don't think that has been very true for a while. I am a junior at Ithaca College and now at the age of 20 I have already lived abroad for a four-month study abroad semester in London, England. Because I was able to live in England as a sophomore, I will spend my junior spring semester working and living in New York City. I believe I have gained the confidence to live just about anywhere I need to. I strongly believe I am taking advantage of everything possible at college and I have the Seacoast School of Technology to thank for the motivation and courage to do that. At SST we were constantly pushed to try new things and step out of our comfort zone. I am very confident in saying that the two years I spent at SST are what got me an acceptance into college and on the right path for a career. In London, I worked with one of the biggest charities in the city, Children with Cancer UK. Twice a week I would work from 9-5 in the office to plan for the 2013 Virgin London Marathon. SST taught me the importance of professionalism and my British co-workers were impressed by my attitude and maturity. I think this skill that I developed at SST has put me ahead of my peers, allowed me to study abroad earlier than most students and hopefully will ensure I have a job lined up after graduation. I am extremely fortunate to have had these opportunities and I never would have even considered them if I hadn't been pushed at SST.

- ***Evan Woss '10, Digital Media Arts***

After I graduated SST in 2010, I attended Full Sail University in Orlando, Florida. Twenty short months later, I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Film. I ended up moving to New Orleans, where I am currently a freelance 1st AC for feature films and occasionally TV (also known as a focus puller). I basically get paid to play with really expensive cameras and hang out with the actors all day. New Orleans, and the film industry as a whole, sure are a lot different than what I was used to in New Hampshire. There aren't many things in the north that can prepare you for a night on Bourbon Street carrying millions of dollars' worth of gear. A big benefit to working in this industry is the special access to places and events I wouldn't normally get to see. Thanks to a bit of camera work, I really got some good views of the Superbowl and Mardi Gras this year! Living my life through the lens has shown me how amazing this city really is. In the eight short months since I graduated college, I have been fortunate enough to travel from the swamps of northern Louisiana with Candice Cameron Bure (D.J. Tanner from Full House), to the giant land of Texas with Kevin Sorbo (Hercules) and Dean Cain (Superman), to the runways of New York City with Heidi Klum for Project Runway. It has also brought me on a few music videos for artists like Boyz II Men, Beyoncé and Busta Rhymes, along with some neat commercials for Converse and Red Bull to fill the time between films. I really love what I do, which makes all of this work seem like I'm just at a fun summer camp. I would really like to thank Ms. Groleau in Digital Media Arts for showing me how much fun I could have with some silly little cameras.

- ***Tucker Plimpton '09, Culinary Arts***

Over the past four years since graduating high school, I have focused on two major points in my life - my education and my career. I earned my Associate's Degree in Culinary Arts at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island in 2012. By doing so, I have continued to fine-tune my skills in both culinary arts and management. Currently, I work as the chef at the Red Fez in Providence. I am responsible for ordering, preparing and cooking the food and preparing our staff for the day. I love how creative I am able to be, as well as how much learning I am able to do on a daily basis. It is very important to teach yourself new information, in addition to learning from the people around you. It has been an amazing experience moving from a small town to a city like Providence. I have explored the city extensively and have eaten at some amazing restaurants, as well as going to great shows and events. It has really broadened my view on life and I look forward to seeing more of the world soon!

- ***Eric Mallon '06, Computer Programming***

After graduating in 2006 and spending two years at SST in Computer Programming, I majored in computer science at Rochester Institute of Technology. RIT has a five-year program, which includes a year of Co-op's - essentially paid internships. I spent three months working for Sugar Labs making games for the One Laptop Per Child program, designed to teach third grade math. After that, I spent six months with IBM working on administrative tools for their Lotus Notes mail client, and six months with Tertl, in Vermont, working on a programming environment designed to teach children programming. In the two years since graduating RIT, I have been working at Casenet, where I am working on Case Management software, which large insurance and healthcare organizations use to keep track of all of their members, in particular the sickest portion of the population. We track every aspect of the members' health and interactions with clinical personnel to ensure they are receiving proper care. Our software is currently being used to manage the healthcare of about 3% of the population of the U.S. and that number is growing rapidly. It presents many interesting technical problems related to big data (millions of members with many, many pieces of information), performance (thousands of concurrent users) and data modeling.

- ***Desiree St. Jean '01, Early Childhood Education***

Growing up I always wanted to be a teacher; however, school never came easy for me. In high school, I was given the opportunity to take an Early Childhood Education class at SST. I learned the fundamentals of teaching. With the help and encouragement of Mrs. Ranks, I was able to find something that I was good at and something that came easily to me. In 2001, I followed in Mrs. Ranks' footsteps and attended Wheelock College in Boston, Massachusetts. From there, I moved to San Antonio, Texas. In 2006, I obtained an Inclusion Assistant job at Luna Middle School and was later hired on as an English teacher. In my first year of teaching I was awarded the *Middle School Teacher of the Year Award* for Northside Independent School District. I later attended the University of Texas at San Antonio and received my Master's in Special Education. For the past two years I have been working as a Special Education Case Manager, working in a behavior management class and co-teaching in ELAR (English, Language Arts and Reading) classrooms. My experience and my amazing teacher at SST gave me the skills and confidence I needed to follow my dreams.

- ***Melanie Berndtson '02, Animal & Plant Science***

My life since SST has brought me to incredible places and I have to thank my Animal and Plant Science teacher, Anne DeMarco, for much of that. I enrolled at the Thompson School of Applied Science and continued at U.N.H. and then Penn State to receive three degrees in six years: my A.A.S in Applied Animal Science, my B.S. in Agricultural Education and my M.S. in Agricultural and Extension Education. It was a long road through school but SST helped me be prepared. I was able to travel to several countries and take part in countless experiences in agriculture through those six years. I also stayed involved in the FFA after graduation, being a two-time state officer, receiving my American Degree and serving as New Hampshire's FFA National Officer Candidate in 2003. It was a simple note of encouragement from Ms. DeMarco that helped push me in the right direction of my current career. She shared with me one day that she thought I should become an agricultural educator like her. I still have that note today. Since 2008, I have been a high school agriscience educator in a comprehensive high school in Pennsylvania. I teach Animal Science, Plant Science, Natural Resource Management and Leadership courses. We have had a state champion forestry team and have been the runner up twice. I am a regional vice president in our state association of agricultural educators and was named the Pennsylvania Outstanding Young Agricultural Educator in 2013. I am also serving as a National Agriscience Teacher Ambassador this year and am implementing a new STEM-based agriscience curriculum in my introductory course called the CASE curriculum this school year. I couldn't imagine doing anything else with my life since I have found my passion for teaching agriculture.

The Seacoast School of Technology was the first stamp on the passports of these impressive young adults. We will be stamping about 230 new passports this year and I can't wait to see where our newest graduates will go.

Sincerely,

Margaret E. Callahan
Principal