

By Ryan Balton
Gazette Correspondent

Westfall – Tonight, I graduate high school. I become a complete 13-year product of the Delaware Valley School District.

When I entered kindergarten at Shohola Elementary as a shy, little 4-year-old in 1994, I had no idea I would wind up where I am today. Just Saturday at the DV Relay for Life, as I was helping out with entertainment and logistics, making announcements throughout the day, my kindergarten teacher Mrs. Recchia told my mom, “Ryan sure isn’t quiet anymore.”

After going through DV’s rigorous curriculum, taking advantage of the countless co-curricular and volunteer opportunities, and meeting some fantastic folks along the way – classmates and teachers alike – I’m definitely not quiet anymore.

Alongside my complete, diverse, interactive and safe education at Delaware Valley, I’ve particularly enjoyed co-curricular involvement. I was the school newspaper editor in seventh, eighth, 11th and 12th grades. I worked on the school Web site, on which I founded the world’s first student-produced high school podcast/online audio show (shout out, Mr. Kevin DeVizia!) and I directed the video news show. In the school media – and here on the pages of The Gazette – I followed every sports team from baseball to volleyball with my partner-in-crime, “Nicky T.” Troiano.

Co-curriculars have also meshed with my academic coursework. As of this year, the student newspaper, the Del.Aware, is produced by an academic journalism course, thanks to the legwork of Miss Clementoni. Music performance courses have always taken place during the school day. I was able to pick up the cello the summer between second and third grade with school lessons and orches-



My fellow graduates: Above all, laugh at (just about) everything. And be happy.

tra rehearsals. Since then, music has been an incredibly important part in shaping me and hundreds of other students each year to be creative and focused critical thinkers, and I’ve been under the direction of one of the greatest people I’ve ever met, Mr. Swinehart. He started the string orchestra program in 1989, and now he’s graduating students who are younger than the program.

I was extremely fortunate to have these experiences and to have a school – administration, classmates, faculty and school board – and community that supported making these invaluable opportunities available to me and the now nearly 6,000 other students at Delaware Valley.

Along the way, the Delaware Valley School District has always been about a strong community. With that sense of community, and the influence of my parents, I’ve done PR work and other volunteer work for Pike County

Public Library’s Friends of the Children’s Room, the DV Relay for Life, the annual Delaware River cleanup and other events.

All of these experiences have prompted me to live a life of service to society in the field of communications, and my Delaware Valley education has gotten me into the country’s top undergraduate school for communications/journalism, the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.

Now that I’ve made it to the bittersweet bitter end, I have three challenges for the future.

► **First, to DV:** Continue, for generations to come, to prosper and expand upon the fantastic academic, art/music, athletic, extracurricular, technologic, vocational and volunteer programs I’ve witnessed. From the school board to the student council, make these top-notch opportunities a priority. Without them, the class of 2007 would not be in the

favorable position we’re in now to go out and take control of the world.

► **Second, to students at Delaware Valley (and everywhere):** Get involved. I charge every single student in the high school with the responsibility to get involved with a handful of co-curriculars, whether academic clubs, sports, student government, student publications, or volunteer organizations. Parents and teachers need to encourage their kids to get involved in the school and community. These “extra” activities nurture skills that can’t be acquired in a classroom, while also offering the chance to meet and befriend new people. There is time in any student’s schedule to get involved.

► **Third, to my fellow graduates:** Do extraordinary things with your life. Put a ding in the universe. Above all, laugh at (just about) everything. And be happy. From the fifth-grade field trip



to Liberty Science Center with Mrs. Giteles, to being the first DV team to walk the stage at Odyssey of the Mind world finals in ninth grade; from reporting with Classroom Correspondents, raising chicks in first grade with Mrs. Attick, acting and singing in the third-grade play with Miss Yavorski, watching monarch butterflies spin their cocoons in fourth grade with Mrs. Jacobson, and getting acclimated to the huge DV campus at sixth-grade orientation, to the orchestra trip to Disney World, techno Christmas party in the S-wing, Mr. Thorsen, Relay for Life, Word Wars, homecoming weeks, Student Council meetings, block project nights, Mr. Schneck, “Romeo and Juliet” movie-making, Mr. Bell, Mr. Ioppolo, controversial school board meetings, Rotary lunches with Dr. Finan, Lego Shane, Mr. Robbins, Mr. Crouse, Mr. Burns, Madden and pingpong tournaments, Mrs. Pauling, Mrs. Curran, RB for DV, Steven Courtney concert, Mrs. Bachmann, Hershey trip, PSSA protesting, Ms. Curtin, math fairs, snow days, Mrs. D’Andrea, Dr. Alborano, Tocks Island documentary, volleyball games, middle school pit band, prom and everything and everyone else in between – it’s been a blast.

Thank you.

While Delaware Valley has prepared me for the next chapter of my life, I’ll never be ready to turn the page and leave the current one behind.

P.S. from the editor: As you’ve read, our own ace correspondent Ryan Balton is bound for the respected S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. As he graduates, we thank Ryan for sharing his talents with us. We thank his parents, Bruce and Terry; his brother, Dustin; and Heaven for sharing him with the world. And we wish him Godspeed. We’ll be excited to see how his life unfolds – and we suspect he and the rest of the Class of 2007 will make more than a little ding in our universe. – Tom Leek

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DV seniors determined to MAKE A DIFFERENCE

These profiles of members of the Delaware Valley High School Class of 2007 were written by staff members of the Del.Aware, the school paper. Pick up a copy of the Del.Aware for profiles of additional graduates.

Keith Fritschie

Keith Fritschie doesn’t like to talk about himself. It may be modesty, it may be shyness – but anyone who knows Keith realizes that his soft-spoken nature is reflective of his respect for what’s going on around him. Keith seems to have a quiet reverence of life, and all of the experiences he finds along the way.

That being said, it’s no wonder that Keith wants to travel as an



adult. In mock seriousness, Keith said, in 10 years, “I see myself in New Zealand, a shepherd.”

He certainly has plans to study, and even live, abroad. After attending Colorado College, where he plans to begin studying anthropology and geography this fall, Keith wants to begin a journey that would ultimately allow him to publish an article in the National Geographic magazine.

This, he says, is a goal he wants to see fulfilled in the future – if not once, then many times over.

Looking back on his high school career, Keith has fond memories of playing soccer and being a part of the winning Warriors team that took home the Division 2 championship in 2005.

He also says that being one of Mr. Robbins’ students his first year of AP Language and Composition was a great learning experience. “Comp,” as Keith calls it, was a standout class at Delaware Valley.

The future for Keith looks pretty promising. It’s not clear whether he’ll be found running a nature magazine

or shepherding in New Zealand, but he’ll certainly be exploring the world.

“I don’t want . . . to be bound by houses,” Keith said.

Gina Abbadessa

Alex Sorochinski

“Wonderful. High school was great,” said senior Alex Sorochinski.

Alex has truly made his mark in involvement with both the school paper and relays. Alex has contributed to producing some great issues along with raising more than

\$100,000 for the Delaware Valley Relay for Life. All proceeds are going to cancer research in hope for a cure.

Alex plans on attending Kutztown University to study electronic media and journalism.

Anthony Arroyo



DEL AWARE

Adam Blackman

This year Delaware Valley will be saying goodbye to another

great singer, senior Adam Blackman. He achieved what only three other DV students have ever been able to achieve, getting to sing in the All-Eastern honor choir.

When Adam is finished here at DV, he plans to go to Seton Hall University in order to become a music therapist.

“I want to become a music therapist because my friends come to me for their problems; with music therapy I can combine that with the



thing I love, music,” Blackman said.

He would also like to tell anyone who comes to Delaware Valley that if they have a goal, to go for it with all their might.

“Just two years ago I couldn’t even read sheet music,” he explained. With the help of his voice teacher, Marshall Cooper, and chorus teacher Gordon Pauling, Blackman has managed to go places in music that he hadn’t even thought he was capable of.

When Blackman leaves, he will try and remember all the people he has met during his years at DV, and despite all the other things that he has experienced, Blackman will miss them the most.

Sean Borris

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