

Billings Middle School – Alumni Spotlight



“No one engages with the environment more than Billings.”

-Jordan Smith, class of 2013

Can you describe a specific experience or moment at Billings that still stays with you? Why was it meaningful?

JS: My outdoor experience at Billings has been unparalleled. The moment I remember most vividly is the week I spent on the Olympic Peninsula. I had never been in a camping situation where I faced challenges like the ones presented by the Washington coast. I went into the trip expecting misery, but as time went on I got to enjoy nature with fellow peers and with the faculty.

So what are you up to now?

JS: I am currently a senior at the Northwest School in Seattle. I have been working in the technical theater department for four years now and am the assistant designer for the school. Over my summers I went to Australia and Fiji and did nine days of scuba diving along the Nadi Barrier Reef. I got involved in reef cleanup and produced my own video of the trip. I also participated in a program at the Rose Hulman Institute of Technology called Operation Catapult. High school juniors from various STEM fields join together to make a project sponsored by a professor or created by themselves. I co-founded a team of 4 other engineers to build the world's first Flywheel based basketball free-throw shooter. The objective was to build a machine that was more accurate at making free-throws than the average NBA player. I learned a whole lot of new math for calculating projectile motion (as well as the force required to create that motion), TIG welding, how to use a mill and lathe and learned about general tools to use when going through a scientific design process.

How was your experience transitioning from Billings into high school?

JS: Billings was the first time I enjoyed going to school and the environment created by the faculty as well as its small size allowed me to make friends that I still stay in touch with. It was tough to start over again with a new school, but several students in my grade also came from Billings so I was able to have a portion of that community stay with me. Right away I missed the outdoor trips. No one engages with the environment more than Billings. I also miss the small size because it created such a close and private environment that it was easy to make friends. Because of Billings, I continue camping but with an expanded venue. Although I don't go to a 90 student school anymore, the ease of connecting with a community taught me the skills I needed to be an active member of my new one and has allowed me to make new friends at my high school.

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