



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Virginia Beach Friends School: October 2023

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LUKE SANDLIN '14

BY: ANNA FACEMIRE, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

With the help of current Friends School Alumni Representative, Alex Dworetzsky '13, we were recently able to connect with alumnus Luke Sandlin '14. It was awesome to hear about Luke's personal experiences at the School and to also find out that many of the reasons he holds his time at Friends School near and dear, are still ingrained in our culture at the School today.

Luke's time after Friends School wasn't what some would consider a traditional path. He moved to Florida and took two years off from school before beginning his degree from a local Community College. He now resides in the Northern Virginia area where he is a Policy Advisor for Congressman Tom Emmer, Majority Whip of the US House of Representatives.

The education that Luke received at Friends School made a lasting impression. He thinks of Friends School weekly. Oftentimes, working on Capitol Hill reminds Luke of how impactful the lessons on Quaker SPICES were and how great it would be if some of that transcended on Capitol Hill. When approaching bills and policies on immigration, climate change, family values, and other important initiatives, he looks at them through a Quaker lens and considers the Quaker SPICES.

In discussing with Luke what type of memories and feelings come up when thinking back on Friday mornings spent in Meeting for Worship, he thinks of the powerful lessons of self-control and compounding thoughts. A simple look from across the room from a great friend was enough to nearly send him into laughter and giggles, but the centering that came from taking a deep breath and refocusing was helpful in staying collected. The deep thoughts about a particular query that was presented and the powerfulness that comes from sitting in silence among the entire school are memorable.

Luke thought back to other memories of checking the pH level of water samples, visiting

the Sugar Plum Bakery for sweet treats after field trips, the activities that were planned for Field Day, and playing sports and even scoring on the wrong basketball hoop, with a wide grin on his face. The sense of belonging and inclusion at Friends School was important to Luke.

When asked about any teachers who stood out during his time at Friends School, Luke mentioned Teacher James, who is still our Director of Visual Arts today. Being able to call Teacher James by his first name was really empowering for Luke and created a mutually respectful relationship. In art class, Teacher James allowed students to have autonomy and independence over their work. Luke remembers being passionate about the short films that were made and the woodworking projects that allowed him to explore his true passions. Teacher James is still doing short animation films and is even working in partnership with PIXAR for a co-curricular this semester. It's amazing to know that Teacher James is still touching lives through art today!

"Speaking to Luke was fantastic! The impact our faculty had on him, specifically James, was nothing short of amazing. Luke has taken a unique path to find his passion and knowing his time at Friends helped him create that path to success put a huge smile on my face. I look forward to having Luke on campus for a tour and for our students to visit him on Capitol Hill during our annual Middle School trip to D.C.," said Head of School, Greg Angilly.



Luke Sandlin 2009-2010