

Name:

Dan Weeks

Year of Graduation:

2011

Favorite memory at BGHS:

During my time at Barry Goldwater High School, I had a vast array of experiences because of different club and activity involvements. I originally attended BGHS because of the International Baccalaureate program, and after joining the general student population decided to stay for the staff, students, and culture at BGHS. The school promoted an environment which was in many ways conducive to starting my own business and leaving a lasting legacy at Goldwater. My favorite memories are my involvement with the creation of the media club as it stands today and Senior Institute. When I spoke with Mr. Dave Gassdorf, the media teacher at the time of my attendance, the conversation was intended to be about joining the media class. Together we conceptualized a club which provided opportunities to media students to utilize cutting edge equipment and techniques, learning outcomes, and valuable client interaction which prepared students for what lay ahead in their professional journeys as media professionals and this led to me filming club activities on campus, attracting private industry clients, and even working with Senator John McCain and Sarah Palin on their presidential campaign in 2010-11 using the school's video equipment. We were eventually able to turn the club into a profitable venture for students and the school, while providing unique and valuable real-world experiences! I was also the only student involved during the entire duration of the creation of Senior Institute, from the initial think tanks to its roll-out my Junior year; the idea of SI is to encourage students to use their cumulative knowledge from their education careers and turn it into a project which can benefit, and even change, the world around us.

What am I doing now and how does it help the world?

I have a few different day jobs, my favorite of which is working as a commercial pilot. Specifically, I'm a flight instructor with my own aviation business so I teach people how to fly airplanes and make new pilots. Other businesses include a media production company, my position as a Director on the board of multiple 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations over the years, and a few TV shows, one of which was called "Puppy Pilots" and featured me flying to rescue dogs in immediate need meant to encourage viewer action to help reduce shelter populations and euthanasia rates across the country; this show was so popular, we were featured by news organizations across the country, on The Dodo's platforms, and I even had a special episode of *Amazing Stories* made about me and featured on Japanese prime-time TV. In my non-working hours I volunteer as a disaster responder with the American Red Cross and have been deployed around the country to natural disasters. I'm almost always on call as a first responder in the Phoenix area for Companion Pets in Crisis, in which I respond to house fires and other disasters when pets are involved (and people when I'm on call as a Red Cross local responder). On the way to and from work I stop in at a blood donation center and donate plasma 8x per month to help with treatments for trauma and burn victims, people with clotting factor deficiencies, and the creation of medications for all sorts of ailments. In the year 2018 I competed in the TV show *American Ninja Warrior* and am a personal trainer, so I occasionally use that presence to speak to audiences around the world and help them get in better physical shape.

How did BGHS prepare me for the real world or job I'm doing now?

Barry Goldwater didn't directly prepare me for the real world or any of the jobs I am doing now, since in some cases, the jobs and world we're living in weren't even imaginable ten years ago. What BGHS did

however was provide me with some foundational skills applicable in many areas of life, encouraged my first business venture I began as a Sophomore in high-school, and exposed me to diversity of all sorts between staff, students, religions, political views, and more. Program diversity included the culinary, media, and vocational programs, and really allowed students to get a taste of industries which they may want to further explore in post-secondary educational settings or through direct career entry. The International Baccalaureate program and music programs were growth experiences for me and allowed me to get a taste of academia as well as performance industries, which led me to discovering my true passions which lay elsewhere; this was a safe environment to try and fail with no real-world penalties. The special education department and community involvement of the BGHS staff led me to uncovering my passion and skill set for public service, through which I have been able to shape a healthy, productive, and profitable worldview while still actively contributing to at-risk and underserved populations whenever possible.