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## Alumnus Highlight

Howard Harlan



Howard Harlan, Cornerstone alumnus, is working as a chef and he is giving credit to Cornerstone for helping him achieve his dream career. Harlan, a 2015 Cornerstone alumnus, says that his mom chose Cornerstone for him because she felt it was the best option in Detroit. "I wasn't involved in any clubs or anything at my previous school, and I wasn't really doing well in school," he explains. When he arrived at Cornerstone, Harlan remembers being invited to the Art of Leadership camp before he even began classes so he could start the school year off right. "We were able to meet other students, teachers, and leadership staff." That experience helped him to feel more comfortable with his new school environment.

Harlan's junior year afforded him academic and personal growth, partially due to the individualized attention from teachers. "They were always willing to help with questions or problems," he says. "My college and career counselor, Ms. Wattrick, helped prepare me for college and exams. It was such a relief to have someone to guide me through the process. I always figured I would graduate high school, but I hadn't put much thought into my future, and she helped me make a plan." He also took advantage of clubs and programs because he felt more comfortable with his classmates and the family-like environment that Cornerstone offered him. "I immediately got involved in music class and joined the after-school Glee Club. It was a great environment for me."

Harlan speaks with a joyful passion about his career field. "I love cooking, I love to see the smiles on people's faces when they taste my food, and I love how happy food makes people." Harlan has enjoyed cooking for people ever since he was a child, so following a path in the culinary arts seemed natural for him. "Ms. Wattrick helped me get into culinary school," he adds. He graduated with his culinary diploma in 2017 and he currently works as a chef at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Warren, Michigan. "The job requires long, hard hours, but I absolutely love it," he says.

"Cornerstone gave me a lot of support so I could follow my dreams," Harlan explains. "My Partner was Janice Perzigian through Cornerstone's Partner Program, and she always encouraged me and kept in touch. Having a personal bond with my Partner was essential to my success. I believe having that support and love from a caring adult is the key to any student's success." He also mentions other connections with supportive adults that he made while at Cornerstone, such as meeting CEOs and other executives through corporate field trips taken during his senior year.

Harlan offers advice to anyone considering Cornerstone: "I would tell anyone thinking of sending their child to Cornerstone that it is a safe and welcoming place with a lot of support to help your child succeed in life."

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